

CHRISTIAN ORIENT

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ECUMENISM

EDITORIAL

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THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST

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*"Your Nativity, O Son of God, is a wonder and my mouth is inadequate
to narrate your great story with my enfeebled tongue.*

*Your revelation is exalted above all human mouths and how is it possible
that I who am feeble should narrate
the story of your nativity?"*

-Jacob of Serugh.



The period of Annunciation invites us all to reflect on the marvellous mystery of the incarnation. With a pure heart and a serene mind let us approach this great mystery of the Church.

**Happy Christmas!
Happy New Year!**

EDITORIAL

We have entered into the new Millennium with hopes and expectations of a better world for the entire humanity. We are hopeful that the ecumenical initiatives undertaken by the Roman Catholic Church and other churches and ecclesial bodies under the divine guidance of the Holy Spirit during the second half of the 20th century will bear ample fruits in the new century. The third Millennium appears to be an era of convergence. Today nobody sees religion as opposed to science and progress. On the contrary, there is emerging an earnest religiosity throughout the world. There is a special quest for the spiritual in the new world. There is a renewed interest in matters religious and spiritual. Man, the image of God, is becoming more and more human. Here one realizes more and more the inner necessity and the innate nature of man of recognizing and proclaiming the Paternity of God and the fraternity of humankind. It becomes very evident recently when almost the entire humanity, all nations and all men of good will, joined hands in the fight against organized crime and terrorism and turned to the Creator for divine assistance.

Human beings have experienced the lie and falsehood of atheism and its collapse. Atheistic communism is a dead thing of the past. There is no more the cold war among nations. The tendency everywhere is for globalization, interdependence and plurality. Man is today more and more dependent on man; nations cannot survive without the other nations. No population or nation can live in seclusion and isolation or as closed entities. The whole world is growing together to be one. The world is today a global village.

The divided Christian communities and churches are realizing more and more the urgent necessity to come to full visible communion as the Lord wishes. They want to fulfill their God-given mission in the world in the new Millennium: to unite the whole humankind in the New Man, and to be the salt and light of the world. They know that, this can be effectively achieved only by a united Christianity. The mission of the Church is compelling the divided Christians to be united. Even in the divided situation they are seeking ways and means to collaborate, co-operate, co-exist and commit themselves to be one and to dialogue with the other religions in the world.

Recent ecumenical and inter-church meetings have enabled the churches, especially the Apostolic Churches to realize that, what was considered to be points of disagreement and divisions are no more valid reasons to be separated, rather they are merely plurality of expressions; they realized with joy and surprise that the content of faith in several churches is the same, the difference being in the form of expressions. The churches can now accept the "hierarchy of truths" and the plurality in theology. The typical example is the consensus arrived at the Christological faith. Today the Chalcedonian position (one Person in two natures), the Oriental Orthodox position (one nature -one person- of God the Word Incarnate) and the Assyrian position (two kyane-natures in abstract-two qnome -concrete natures-and one parsopa of Filiation-person of the Word) are equally valid and complementary and not contradictory. All the three explain the mystery of Incarnation affirming the oneness of the Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ and his divinity and his humanity without confusion, without separation, without division and without mingling. Ephesus and Chalcedon were points of contention for centuries. They are no more issues of division. If the Churches can mutually recognize the dogmatic formulations, especially of a very important issue such as Christology, the other points of contention are easier, especially the administrative issues. The churches should find a way out and a way of living together. Ecclesiology need not be an insurmountable issue in the ecclesial relationship. But alas, it is the stumbling block of the moment. Not Christ but the Churches themselves. God has given us the grace in our time to be his ambassadors of unity.

The recent agreement between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East regarding the participation of the mysteries between the Chaldean and the Assyrian Church is a great step forward in the path of the ecumenical pilgrimage. The document recognizes the validity of the original **Anaphora of Addai and Mari** as it is. It is also a great break-through. The Catholic Church took the courageous step to enter into ecumenical dialogue with the Assyrian Church of the East and we find that God is blessing these humble ecumenical pilgrimage of these two sister churches. On the whole the tendency everywhere is for mutual love, mutual recognition and mutual trust. The tendency of uniformity is a thing of the past.

There is always a tendency in some churches to be traditional and be on the defensive. It can be seen in any church. But it is seen more and more in those churches which are relatively less numerical, or churches which did not have sufficient opportunity for wider contact with the other churches and ecumenical

developments. Some continue the prejudices of the past and harbour on them and it retards their ecumenical pilgrimage. Some may even take a hostile attitude, which is in no way conducive to any fruitful dialogue. They appear to be afraid of any change and reform. They seem to follow a blind and petrified traditionalism and consider it as the essence of Christianity. Perhaps they think mistakenly that such an attitude is necessary for their survival. Some churches, in fact, had a bitter past history and are not fully freed from the bleeding wounds from the past. In such cases there should be a process of purification of memory. Unless this purification takes place, any amount of bilateral dialogue or ecumenical activity will bear no fruit. Unless the memory is purified and freed from prejudices against one another, the churches will be imprisoned in a frozen dogmatism, petrified institutionalism and blind traditionalism. These churches, which have not succeeded in purifying their memories of the “injustices” of others, are still lagging behind in the ecumenical pilgrimage. Others should enable them also to look forward and walk with others. They have to turn their attention to what the churches can do together and how they can move together as Christians. The other sister churches have a grave obligation to enable such churches to be freed from such pathetic situation and strengthen them in the authentic faith of the Lord.

Past history is relevant for us, but we live not for the past. We live in the present for the better future. What happened in the past is part of history. We cannot wipe it out. But we can be freed from the bitterness of the past. We can purify our memory. Our Christian obligation is not only to keep intact what we have inherited from the past as a sacred legacy, but also, perhaps more, what we can do or what we should do for the modern humanity, surrounded by multitude of problems. The churches are not museum pieces to preserve what we have received. The church is not something to be kept, but the church is a mission to be realized. The churches must be prepared to redefine their vocation and mission in the present. Churches must be able to present the shining face of Jesus who came to make us light of the world and salt of the earth for the glory of the Father who wishes that all should be saved. The mission of the church in the modern world enables the churches to appreciate more and more deeply the prayer of the Lord for the full communion in the Spirit and the Lord in a visible manner, so that all who call upon the name of the Lord can celebrate His Pascal mystery around one table.

Geevarghese Chediath

GUIDELINES FOR ADMISSION TO THE EUCHARIST BETWEEN THE CHALDEAN CHURCH AND THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST

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 has been made to provide for admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East. This request has first been studied by the *Joint Committee for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East*. The present guidelines subsequently have been 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*.

1. Pastoral necessity

The request for admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East is connected with the particular geographical and social situation in which their faithful

are actually living. Due to various and sometimes dramatic circumstances, many Assyrian and Chaldean faithful left their motherlands and moved to the Middle East, Scandinavia, Western Europe, Australia and Northern America. As there cannot be a priest for every local community in such a widespread diaspora, numerous Chaldean and Assyrian faithful are confronted with a situation of pastoral necessity with regard to the administration of sacraments. Official documents of the Catholic Church provide special regulations for such situations, namely the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, can. 671, §3 2-§ and the *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms of Ecumenism*, n. 123.

2. Ecumenical rapprochement

The request is also connected with the ongoing process of ecumenical rapprochement between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East. With the '*Common Christological Declaration*', signed in 1994 by Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV, the main dogmatic problem between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church has been

resolved. As a consequence, the ecumenical rapprochement between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East also entered a further phase of development. On 29 November 1996 Patriarch Mar Raphael Bidawid and Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV signed a list of common proposals with a view to the re-establishment of full ecclesial unity among both historical heirs of the ancient Church of the East. On 15 August 1997 this program was approved by their respective Synods and confirmed in a *'Joint Synodal Decree'*. Supported by their respective Synods, both Patriarchs approved a further series of initiatives to foster the progressive restoration of their ecclesial unity. Both the *Congregation for the Oriental Churches* and the *Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity* support this process.

3. The Anaphora of Addai and Mari

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, one of the three Anaphoras traditionally used by the Assyrian Church of the East. The Anaphora of Addai and mari is notable because, from time immemorial, it has been used without a recitation of the Institution Narrative. As the Catholic Church considers the words of the Eucharistic Institution a constitutive and therefore indispensable part of the Anaphora or Eucharistic Prayer, a long and

careful study was undertaken of the Anaphora or Eucharistic Prayer, a long and careful study was undertaken of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, from a historical, liturgical and theological perspective, at the end of which the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith on January 17th, 2001 concluded that this Anaphora can be considered valid. H.H. Pope John Paul II has approved this decision. This conclusion rests on three major arguments.

■ In the first place, the Anaphora of Addai and Mari is one of the most ancient Anaphoras, dating back to the time of the very early Church; it was composed and used with the clear intention of celebrating the Eucharist in full continuity with the Last Supper and according to the intention of the Church; its validity was never officially contested, neither in the Christian East nor in the Christian West.

■ Secondly, the Catholic Church recognizes the Assyrian Church of the East as a true particular Church, built upon orthodox faith and apostolic succession. The Assyrian Church of the East has also preserved full Eucharistic faith in the presence the Eucharist. In the Assyrian Church of the East, though not in full communion with the Catholic Church, are thus to be found "*true sacraments, and above all, by apostolic succession, the priesthood and the Eucharist*" (U.R., n. 15). Secondly, the Catholic Church recognises the Assyrian

Church of the East as a true particular Church, built upon orthodox faith and apostolic succession. The Assyrian Church of the East has also preserved full Eucharistic faith in the presence of our Lord under the species of bread and wine and in the sacrificial character of the Eucharist. In the Assyrian Church of the East, though not in full communion with the Catholic Church, are thus to be found *"true sacraments, and above all, by apostolic succession, the priesthood and the Eucharist"* (U.R., n. 15).

Finally, the words of Eucharistic Institution are indeed present in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, not in a coherent narrative way and *ad litteram*, but rather in a dispersed eucho- logical way, that is, integrated in successive prayers of thanksgiving, praise and inter- cession.

4. Guidelines for admission to the Eucharist

Considering the liturgical tradition of the Assyrian Church of the East, the doctrinal clarification regarding the validity of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, the contemporary context in which both Assyrian and Chaldean faithful are living, the appropriate regulations which are foreseen in official documents of the Catholic Church, and the process of rapprochement between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, the following provision is made:

1. When necessity requires, Assyrian faithful are permitted to participate and to receive Holy Communion in a Chaldean celebration of the Holy Eucharist; in the same way, Chaldean faithful for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister, are permitted to participate and to receive Holy Communion in an Assyrian celebration of the Holy Eucharist.
2. In both cases, Assyrian and Chaldean ministers celebrate the Holy Eucharist according to the liturgical prescriptions and customs of their own tradition.
3. When Chaldean faithful are participating in an Assyrian celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the Assyrian minister is warmly invited to insert the words of the Institution in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, as allowed by the Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East.
4. The above considerations on the use of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari and the present guidelines for admission to the Eucharist, are intended exclusively in relation to the Eucharistic celebration and admission to the Eucharist of the faithful from the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, in view of the pastoral necessity and ecumenical context mentioned above.

Rome, July 20th, 2001



ADMISSION TO THE EUCHARIST IN SITUATIONS OF PASTORAL NECESSITY*

Provision between the Chaldean Church and the
Assyrian Church of the East

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity recently issued a document entitled "Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Church" (Oss Rom. English Ed. 31-10-2001). This document has been elaborated in agreement with the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith and the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. The purpose of the article at hand is to clarify the context, the content and the practical application of this provision.

1. The Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East

Since the very early times of Christian missionary activity, a flourishing local Church developed in Mesopotamia or Persia. As this Church was situated outside the eastern borders of Roman Empire, it became commonly called the "Church of the East". In 1552, after a series of individual conversions of bishops or provisional unions, part of the "Church of the East" entered into full communion with the Apostolic See of Rome. Since then, the

particular Church in full communion with Rome has usually been called the "Chaldean Church", while the other particular church took the name of "Assyrian church of the East". Both particular Churches, however, still share the same theological, liturgical and spiritual tradition; they both celebrate the Sacraments or Sacred Mysteries according to the East-Syriac tradition.

On November 11th, 1994 Pope John Paul II and Mar Dinkha IV, Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, signed a Common Christological Declaration. This declaration removed the main doctrinal obstacle between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East. Both Church leaders declared: "Whatever our christological divergences have been, we experience ourselves united in the confession of the same faith in the Son of God who became man so that we might become children of God by his grace. We wish from now on to witness together to this faith in the One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, proclaiming it in appropriate ways to our contemporaries, so that the world may believe in the Gospel of salvation.(...) Living by this faith and

* Theological explanation of the "Guidelines for the Admission to the Eucharist...", Published in *L'Osservatore Romano*, 14 Nov. 2001, N. 46, (1718) P. 6-7.

these sacraments, it follows as a consequence that the particular Catholic churches and the particular Assyrian churches can recognise each other as sister Churches”.

In their Common Christological Declaration, Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV also pledged themselves “to do everything possible to dispel the obstacles of the past which still prevent the attainment of full communion between our churches, so that we can better respond to the Lord’s call for the unity of his own, a unity which has of course to be expressed visibly”. For this purpose they decided to establish a joint Committee for the theological dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East. This joint committee started its regular activities in 1995; during its annual meetings, it mainly dealt with questions of sacramental theology, in view of a future “Common Statement of Sacramental Life”. The Common Christological Declaration also paved the way for a process of ecumenical rapprochement between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East. Since 1944 Mar Dinkha IV and Mar Rapheal I Bidawid, Patriarch of the Chaldean Church, supported by their respective Synods, approved several initiatives to foster the progressive re-establishment of ecclesial unity between the particular Churches. This process is supported by both the Congregation for the Oriental Churches and the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity.

Nowadays, many Chaldean and Assyrian faithful are living in a widespread diaspora. Due to various and sometimes dramatic circumstances, they left their motherlands (Iraq, Iran, Turkey) and moved towards the West. The great majority of the Assyrian faithful now lives in the Middle East, Scandinavia, Western Europe, Australia and North America; only a small minority remains in the motherlands. Although a majority of Chaldean faithful still lives in Iraq, about one third of them moved to the Middle East, Europe and North America. Both the Chaldean and the Assyrian Church are thus confronted, in various parts of the world, with a similar pastoral necessity, namely that many faithful cannot receive the sacraments from a minister of their own Church.

Given the great distress of many Chaldean and Assyrian faithful, in their motherlands as well as 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 has been made of a pastoral arrangement for admission to the Eucharist, when necessity requires, between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Church.

2. The Anaphora of Addai and Mari

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, one of the three Anaphoras traditionally used by the Assyrian Church of the East.

This particular Anaphora must have originated in Mesopotamia, possibly in the region of Edessa. There is no hard evidence for the dating of its final redaction: some scholars situate it about the year 200, others in the beginning of the 3rd century, others in the course of the 3rd century. The Assyrian Church of the East highly respects this Anaphora as an essential element of the apostolic heritage they received from Addai and Mari, whom they venerate as two of the 72 disciples of Christ and as the founding missionaries of their particular Church. The Anaphora of Addai and Mari, however, as reproduced in the oldest codices retrieved, as well as in the uninterrupted liturgical practice of the Assyrian Church of the East, does not contain coherent Institution Narrative. For many years, scholars discussed which version of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari might have been the original one. Some scholars argued that the original formula of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari was longer and did contain an institution Narrative. Other scholars are convinced that the Anaphora of Addai and Mari did not contain a coherent institution Narrative and that the short version is consequently the original one. Nowadays, most scholars argue that it is highly probable that the second hypothesis is the right one. Anyhow, this historical question cannot be resolved with absolute certainty, due to the scarcity or absence of contemporary sources. The validity of the Eucharist celebrated with the Anaphora of Addai and

Mari, therefore should not be based on historical but on doctrinal arguments.

The Catholic Church considers the words of the institution as a constitutive part of the Anaphora or Eucharistic Prayer. The Council of Florence stated "The form of this sacrament are the words of the saviour with which he effected this sacrament. A priest speaking in the person of Christ effects this sacrament. For, in virtue of those words, the substance of bread is changed into the body of Christ and the substance of wine into his blood" (D.H.1321). The same Council of Florence also characterised the words of the Institution as "the form of words [*forma verborum*] which the holy Roman Church [...] has always been wont to use [*semper uti consuevit*] in the consecration of the Lord's body and blood" (D.H. 1352), without prejudice to the possibility of some variation in their articulation by the Church. Although not having any authority as to the substance of the sacraments, the Church does have the power to determine their concrete shaping, regarding both their sacramental sign (*materia*) and their words of administration (*forma*) (cf. CCEO, can. 669). Hence the doctrinal question about the validity of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, when used in its short version without a coherent institution Narrative. Do the words of administration (*forma*) correspond to the conditions for validity, as requested by the Catholic Church? To answer this question, three major arguments have to be taken into due consideration.

In the first place, Anaphora of Addai and Mari is one of the most ancient Eucharistic

Prayers, dating back to the time of the very early Church and the first liturgical regulations, It was composed and used with the clear intention of celebrating the Eucharist in full continuity with the Last Supper, in obedience to the command of the Lord, and according to the intention of the Church. The absence of a coherent institution Narrative represents, indeed, an exception in comparison with Byzantine and Roman traditions, as developed in the 4th and 5th century. This exception, however, may be due to its very early origin and the later isolation of the Assyrian Church of the East. The validity of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, in fact, was never officially contested.

The Assyrian Church of the East also uses two other Eucharistic Anaphoras, which are some centuries more recent: the Anaphora of Nestorius, reserved to the five liturgical occasion, and the Anaphora of Theodore of Mopsuestia, used from the beginning of the liturgical year till Palm Sunday, for approximately sixteen weeks. The Anaphora of Addai and Mari, however, is used during the longest and most important period of the liturgical year, which goes from Palm Sunday till the end of the liturgical year and covers about two hundred days. Moreover, the use of these three Anaphoras is not free, as in the Latin tradition, but prescribed by the liturgical calendar. In conscience of faith, the Assyrian Church of the East was always convinced to celebrate the Eucharist validly and so to perform in its fullness what Jesus Christ asked his disciples to do. She expressed this conscience of faith, whether using the Anaphora of Theodore of

Mopsuestia, the Anaphora of Nestorius or the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, independent from the fact that only the first two Anaphoras, of later origin, contain the Institution narrative. It should be added that, for the period of the Catholic Patriarchate under Patriarch Sulaka (1551-1662), no document exists to prove that the Church of Rome insisted on the insertion of an Institution narrative into the Anaphora of Addai and Mari.

The Assyrian Church of the East also practices the so-called sacrament or mystery (*rasa*) of Holy Leaven. From times immemorial, the Assyrian tradition relates that from the bread Jesus took in his hands, which he blessed, broke and gave to his disciples, He gave two pieces to St. John. Jesus asked St. John to eat one piece and to carefully keep the other one. After Jesus' death, St. John dipped that piece of bread into the blood that proceeded from Jesus' side. Hence the name of "Holy Leaven", given to this consecrated bread, dipped into the blood of Jesus. Until this day, Holy Leaven has been kept and renewed annually in the Assyrian Church of the East. The local bishop renews it every year on Holy Thursday, mixing a remainder of the old Leaven within the new one. This is distributed to all parishes of his diocese, to be used during one year in each bread, specially prepared by the priest before the Eucharist. No priest is allowed to celebrate Eucharist using Eucharistic bread without Holy Leaven. This tradition of the sacrament or mystery of Holy Leaven, which precedes the actual Eucharistic celebration, is certainly to be seen as a visible sign of historic and symbolic continuity between the present Eucharistic

celebration and the institution of the Eucharist by Jesus.

Secondly, the Catholic Church recognises the Assyrian Church of the East as a true particular Church, built upon orthodox faith and apostolic succession. The Assyrian Church of the East also preserved full Eucharistic faith in the presence of our Lord under the species of bread and wine and in the sacrificial character of the Eucharist. In the Assyrian Church of the East, though not in full communion with the Catholic Church, are thus to be found "true sacraments, and above all, by apostolic succession, the priesthood and the Eucharist, whereby they are still joined to us in closest intimacy" (U.R., n. 15).

Finally, it must be observed that the eastern and western Eucharistic Anaphoras, while expressing the same mystery, have different theological, ritual and linguistic traditions. The words of the Eucharistic institution are indeed present in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, not in coherent way and *ad litteram*, but rather in dispersed eucharological way, that is, integrated in prayers of thanksgiving, praise and intercession. All these elements constitute a "quasi-narrative" of the Eucharistic Institution. In the central part of the Anaphora, together with the Epiclesis, explicit references are made to the eucharistic Body and Blood of Jesus Christ ("O my Lord, in thy manifold and ineffable mercies, make a good and gracious remembrance for all the upright and just fathers who were pleasing before thee, in the commemoration of the body and blood

of thy Christ, which we offer to thee upon the pure and holy altar, as thou hast taught us"), to the life-giving mystery of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection, which is actually commemorated and celebrated ("that all the inhabitants of the world may know thee... and we also O my Lord, thy unworthy, frail and miserable servants who are gathered and stand before thee, and have received by tradition the example which is from thee, rejoicing and glorifying and exalting and commemorating and celebrating this great and awesome mystery of the passion and death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ"), to the eucharistic offering for the forgiveness of the sins, to the eschatological dimension of the eucharistic celebration and to the Lord's command to 'do this in memory of me' ("And let thy Holy Spirit come, O my Lord, and rest upon this offering of thy servants, and bless it and sanctify it that it may be to us, O my Lord, for the pardon of sins, and for the forgiveness of shortcomings, and for the great hope of the resurrection from the dead, and for new life in the kingdom of heaven with all who have been pleasing before thee"). So the words of the Institution are not absent in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, but explicitly mentioned in a dispersed way, from the beginning to the end, in the most important passages of the Anaphora. It is also clear that the passages cited above express the full conviction of commemoration the Lord's paschal mystery, in the strong sense of making it present; that is the intention to carry out in practice precisely what Christ established by his words and actions in instituting the Eucharist.

A long and careful study was undertaken of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, from a theological, liturgical and historical perspective, at the end of which the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on January 17th, 2001 concluded that this Anaphora can be considered valid. Pope John Paul II subsequently approved this decision.

3. Pastoral Provision

The Catholic Church provides special regulations for situations of pastoral necessity, such as those the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Church face today. The Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, can 671, §2 and §3 states: "if necessity requires it or genuine spiritual advantage suggests it and provided that the danger of error or indifferentism is avoided, it is permitted for Catholic Christian faithful, for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister, to receive the sacraments of penance, the Eucharist and anointing of the sick from non-Catholic ministers, in whose Churches these sacraments are valid. (...) Likewise Catholic ministers licitly administer the sacraments of penance, the Eucharist and anointing of the sick to Christian faithful of Eastern Churches, who do not have full communion with the Catholic Church, if they ask for them on their own and are properly disposed". The Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms of Ecumenism, n. 123 and 125, gives the same regulations.

This provision of the Eastern Catholic Church Law and the Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on

Ecumenism can henceforth be applied between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East. When necessity requires, Assyrian faithful are permitted to receive Holy Communion in a Chaldean celebration of the Holy Eucharist; in the same way Chaldean faithful for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister, are permitted to receive Holy Communion in an Assyrian celebration of the Holy Eucharist. In both cases, Assyrian and Chaldean ministers should continue to celebrate the Holy Eucharist according to the liturgical prescriptions and customs of their own tradition, especially regarding the use of the Anaphora (cf. CCEO, can 674, §2).

When Chaldean faithful are participating in an Assyrian celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the minister of the Assyrian Church is warmly invited to insert the words of the institution in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari. This possibility already exists in the Assyrian Church of the East. Indeed, the Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East, assembled in 1978 in Baghdad, offered ministers in the Assyrian Church the option of reciting the words of the institution in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari. Although this option does not affect the validity of Anaphora of Addai and Mari, it might have a particular relevance from a liturgical, as well as an ecumenical viewpoint. From a liturgical viewpoint, this might be an appropriate means to bring the present use of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari into line with the general usage in every Eucharistic Prayer both in the Christian East and in the Christian West.

From an ecumenical viewpoint, it might be an appropriate expression of fraternal respect for members of other Churches who receive Holy communion in the Assyrian Church of the East and who are used, according to the theological and canonical tradition of their proper Church, to hear the recitation of the words of the institution in every eucharistic Prayer.

It should be noticed, that the present considerations on the use of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari and the guidelines for admission to the Eucharist, are exclusively concerned with the admission to the Eucharist between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Church. The Anaphora of Addai and Mari pertains to the liturgical patrimony and ecclesial identity of the Assyrian Church of the East, since time immemorial, and should remain so. The Assyrian Church of the East cherished and respectfully transmitted this Anaphora from age to age, avoiding any alteration or adaptation in its recitation, out of respect for its venerable origin, traditionally related to the apostolic period. Because each particular Church celebrates the sacraments according to its own traditions, principles and norms, it would be liturgically improper to transfer particular elements of one liturgical tradition into another liturgical tradition. Liturgical traditions, indeed, are like languages, having their particular vocabulary and grammar; essential elements from one liturgical tradition cannot be transferred into another without taking from the particularity of the first and

harming the coherence of the second.

Conclusion

The present Guidelines have been transmitted to both H.H. Mar Dinkha IV, Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East and H.B. Mar Raphael I Bidawid, Patriarch of the Chaldean church. The promulgation of this provision between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Church belongs to the competence of both particular Churches and their respective authorities (cf. CCEO, cann. 670, §1; 671, §4.5). Taking into consideration concrete circumstances and conditions, they will have to establish particular procedures and provide appropriate pastoral means to implement it. This provision for admission to Eucharist in situations of pastoral necessity is not to be equated with full Eucharistic communion between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East. Although closely related to one another in matters of faith and sacramental life, both particular Churches are not yet in full communion. They are still travelling with hope and courage, towards that blessed day when full and visible communion will be attained and when it will be possible to celebrate together in peace the Holy Eucharist of the Lord. As Pope John Paul II wrote in his Encyclical Letter *Ut Unum Sint*. "From this basic but partial unity it is now necessary to advance towards the visible unity which is required and sufficient and which is manifested in a real and concrete way, so that the Churches may truly become a sign of that full communion in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church which will be expressed in the common celebration of the Eucharist" (UUS, n. 718).



SYRO-MALABAR MALADIES OR ECUMENICAL SCANDAL?

Dr Koonammakkal Thomakathanar

An SOS gone unnoticed

More than a decade ago some Syro-Malabar Catholics living in Andaman - Nicobar Islands came in to contact with Very Revd Fr Kurian Valiyamangalam (then director general of the Missionary Society of St. Thomas) through one of the members of his priestly fraternity. "We would like to have some Syro-Malabar priests for doing pastoral work among us. Our community is ready to do anything to have Syro-Malabar priests whose presence is a must for our spiritual needs. The latin bishops of the place do not favour the presence of Syro-Malabar priests. At least during Christmas and Easter send us a few Syro - Malabar priests to celebrate our liturgy and teach catechism to our children. We are Mar Thoma nazranis. We do not want to become latins. Save us, our children and our faith by your intervention."

The above mentioned heart renting plea reached the ears of many Syro-Malabar Bishops including Mar Joseph Kundukulam. Indeed the Syro-Malabar Bishops wanted to do something. Mar Joseph Kundukulam contacted the latin Bishop of the place who was deadly against Syro-Malabar priests arriving at his territory ! The latin Bishop won and the Syro-Malabar church failed to show pity towards its own flock wandering without

shepherds. Is the territory more important than the flock? The Syro-Malabar Bishops are prevented whenever such appeals reach them. Why did the latin Bishop prevent the arrival of Oriental pastors for an oriental community deprived of their natural right? It was only because he would lose his hold over the oriental catholics and he will be left without flock at all ! Shepherds are prevented ! Wolves roam about and the sheepfold of Christ is desolate!

The last sentence of mine above might appear to be pessimistic, cruel, arbitrary, unchristian, unecumenical, extremist etc. In that case listen to another story about the miserable plight of Syro-Malabarians from the Islamic Middle East. There are one hundred thousand Syro-Malabar catholics. They do not have any single officially appointed priest from their Church. Why this tragedy in the post Vatican period? It is reported that the Congregation for the Oriental Churches has prevented the Major Archbishop from taking any positive step. Necessary steps should be taken by the Syro-Malabar hierarchy with or without the permission of Rome.

Ecumenical Scandal

Oriental churches not in communion with Rome can establish their parishes and dioceses wherever their faithful live and Middle East is no exception. Only oriental

catholics of India cannot live according to their liturgical spirituality! "This is the price you pay for your communion with Rome. You learn from us.!!" This was the comment of one of my non-catholic friends about the issue. Such deprecatory and derisive remarks explain the deplorably anti-ecumenical situation arising from the Syro - Malabar tragedy. In this context one is forced to question the following statement of Vat II : Eastern and Western "churches are of equal rank, so that none of them is superior to the others because of its rite. They have the same rights and obligations, even with regard to the preaching of the Gospel in the whole world... Provision must be made therefore everywhere in the world to protect and advance all these individual churches. For this purpose, each should organize its own parishes and hierarchy, where the spiritual good of the faithful requires it...each and every Catholic ...must retain each his own rite wherever he is, and follow it to the best of his ability..."¹

Any Rite Attitude

Some Syro-Malabarians might falsely think that any rite is right for them. Every rite - Occidental or Oriental - is "a living reality , incarnate and expressed in the everyday life of the people. The rites are infact a definite form of life, of practising

the Christian religion; they are as it were an incarnation of the gospel teaching... are nothing but a particular form of receiving the teaching of the Gospel, of living it and making of it a living spirit."² It goes without saying that an indifference to rite is an indifference to Christian life at large. Explaining this further Pujol continues: "Now, to deprive the faithful of the possibility to practise their own rite and in a way to force them to conform to another mode of life, would surely not be to provide for their spiritual good. And this applies to all Christians, whatever rite they might belong to. As it would be a direct contradiction of the principles above mentioned to oblige the faithful of the latin rite to practise an oriental rite, so too it would be wrong to deprive those of an oriental rite of the spiritual help of their own rite and constrain them to concur with the latin rite, or also with a different oriental rite"³ As far as I know no latin is forced to desert his rite inorder to adopt any oriental rite. But hundred thousands of Syro-Malabar Catholics are constrained to join latin rite ever since the notorious assembly of 1599 which is unfortunately known as "Diamper Synod". In order to reopen the old wounds of all Thomas Christians of India some latin dioceses of Kerala celebrated the fourth centenary of this in 1999. The Orientals of India were expecting

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1. A. Flannery, (ed.), *Vatican Council II, Orientalium Ecclesiarum* 3-4, p. 403.
 2. C. Pujol, "The Care and Organization of Particular Churches: Second Vatican Council, Decree 'Orientalium Ecclesiarum' n.4," *The Malabar Church: Symposium in honour of Rev. Placid J. Podipara C.M.I.*, ed. J. Vellian (OCA 186, Rome 1970), pp. 221-222.
 3. *Ibid.*, p. 222.

an apology from Rome and this is what they got in 1999! Even the non-catholics condemned this unecumenical event with great shock and contempt. "We hope that Syro-Malabarians got what they deserved," a friend of mine consoled me when I pointed this out.

Loss of Catholic Faith

In the Gulf countries many pentecostal pastors and retreat preachers prey as vultures and destroy the catholic faith of Syro-Malabarians having no pastoral care from their church. Some dubious foreign pastors land among them like locusts. A sheep without a shepherd and who is there to save the catholic faith of the community? Is there a faint glimmer of hope in the following words? "This holy, ecumenical synod.... has a special care for the Eastern Churches..... and wishes them to follow and to fulfil with new apostolic strength the task entrusted to them."⁴ Perhaps we need some concrete action to translate this into reality. But the question is who will act and when! Sooner the action, better the catholicity of Syro-Malabarians and the ecumenical dialogue of Rome with Orientals.

Roman statements are clear and emphatic. Here is another sample: "All members of the Eastern Churches should be firmly convinced that they can and ought always preserve their own legitimate liturgical rites and ways of life,

and that changes are to be introduced only to forward their own organic development. They themselves are to carry out all these prescriptions with the greater fidelity. They are to aim always at a more perfect knowledge and practice of their rites, and if they have fallen away due to circumstances of times or persons, they are to strive to return to their ancestral traditions... It is recommended strongly to religious orders and associations of the Latin rite, which are working in Eastern countries or among the Eastern faithful, that they should set up, so far as possible, houses or even provinces of the Eastern rite to make their apostolic work more effective."⁵

Above mentioned declaration is excellent if it is put into effect in India. When the present General of Jesuits - himself an Armenian - visited India soon after his election he asked Indian Jesuits to create a Syro-Malabar Province which they summarily rejected. From the eparchy of Palai alone there are some 121 Jesuits!⁶ Almost all latin religious congregations of India exploit the Syro-Malabar treasury of vocations to continue the latinization of India. If latinisation is Christianization God forbid the whole process.

Indian Church was an Oriental Church; India was an Oriental territory. Until 1599 this was the situation of Indian Christianity. "Metropolitan and door of all India" has jurisdiction all over India.⁷ We cannot but

4. A. Flannery, (ed.), *Vat. II*, OE 1, p. 402.

5. *Ibid.*, OE 6, p. 404.

6. *Directory: Diocese of Palai 2001*, pp. 190-193.

7. P. Chittilapilly, "The territorial extension of the Malabar Church," *The Malabar Church*, pp. 282-283.

recall the past under the Portuguese - Propaganda rule over the Indian Church: "All the misfortunes, divisions and schisms that took place in the Indian Church of the Thomas Christians and caused its decline under the Latin rule had their root cause in the violence done to its traditions and in the denial of the legitimate demands of the Thomas Christians for bishops of their own rite. We do not hide that the Thomas Christians too at times behaved themselves improperly and dishonestly. Often they were driven to despair".⁸ As a result of the latin rule the Thomas Christian community got split, weakened, disfigured and it is a decline caused directly by Western Church.⁹

Papal Intervention and Solution

In 1978 Pope John Paul I appointed Mar Antony Paidyara, Apostolic Visitor of the Syro-Malabar emigrants in the Latin dioceses of India outside Keralam. In 1980 Mar Padiyara submitted to Pope John Paul II a detailed report. Why no concrete step was taken¹⁰ for the spiritual needs of the emigrant Syro-Malabar faithful is a mystery which Rome alone can clarify. Perhaps some Roman Congregations sat upon the report of the future head of the Syro-Malabar Church? But why Mar Padiyara did not demand a solution is another

mystery. The establishment of the eparchy of Kalyan did not solve the whole issue in principle. No oriental theologian can understand why many Syro-Malabarians and Latins disliked the erection of Kalyan eparchy. Nor do their reactions agree with the principles of second Vatican council and the teachings of Popes. Anti-oriental pressure tactics won and principles of justice failed. Even papal interventions are favouring the anti-oriental arguments.

The glaring injustice suffering by the Syro-Malabar emigrants is clear from the following list. We give the important centres of Syro-Malabar emigrants in India itself. In brackets the appropriate number of Syro-Malabarians is a very conservative estimate and the real strength is far above that calculation.¹¹ New Delhi (52000), Bangalore (26000), Chennai (20000), Kolkotha (15000), Ahmedabad (12000), Baroda (6000), Surat (4000), Bhopal (3000) Hyderabad (2000), Indore (2000), Jabalpur (1500), Nagpur (1000), Raipur (1000), Jamshedpur (1000). In Bhilai, Durgapur, Ajmir, Patna, Lucknow, Allahabad, Jaipur, etc there are 500 each. It is surprising that many of the Latin dioceses of India have more orientals than Latins and the establishment of oriental eparchies will cut the Latins into size. So Rome has not dared to execute the principles taught by

8. P.J. Podipara, *The Rise and Decline of the Indian Church of the St. Thomas Christians* (Vadavathoor 1979), p. 37.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-37.

10. Bishop Gregory Karotemprel, "The Apostolic Origin and Development of Syro-Malabar Church", *Journal of St. Thomas Christians* Vol. 11, No. 1 (June 2000), p. 16.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

Orientalium Ecclesiarum n.4. How many Syro-Malabar Catholics live without the pastoral care of their church in Indian cities like Jhansi, Ambala, Secunderabad, Vijayawada, Mathura, Ranchi, Rourkela and many other places? The Syro-Malabar hierarchy has no means to know the exact numerical strength of its members in Latin diasporas. The Syro-Malabar Catholics of these areas and especially the Persian Gulf countries are compelled to go to Pentecostal and non-catholic churches and Rome will not care even if the Syro-Malabar Catholics lose their Catholic faith! What a tragedy for the Syro-Malabar Catholics of the diaspora. The Syro-Malabar hierarchy should act decisively without any further delay. Otherwise why should it exist at all? In Kuwait, Doha, Baharain, Abudhabi and similar countries the Syro-Malabar Catholics are not allowed to have Syro-Malabar pastors because the foreign Latin bishops there do not allow Syro-Malabar pastors there. Are these Latin hierarchs "catholics"? Have they heard about Vat II? Why Rome is inactive and silent? Justice delayed is justice denied.

We are convinced of an ecumenical scandal here. Wherever there are 5000 Syro-Malabar Catholics in the diaspora - in India and abroad - there should be Syro-Malabar eparchies. Any delay in this matter is a denial of justice, a contradiction of Vat II and papal teachings. In the Latin Archdiocese of New Delhi there are at least three Syro-Malabarians for every Latin catholic and still the majority community do not have an eparchy there. Many of the Latin dioceses of North India feed upon the Syro-Malabar Catholics and this is the only reason why Rome is not establishing Syro-Malabar

eparchies there. So it is time the Syro-Malabar hierarchy act directly. If Rome does not take steps where is the so-called Syro-Malabar Synod? If it is a Synod it can and it should establish eparchies after informing Rome. Perhaps this direct action alone will solve the issue. For that the Syro-Malabarians lack a Slipyj or Maximos! Nor do they have a Paremmakkal today! The gradual latinization of Syro-Malabar diaspora is the aim of Rome. So Rome condones the fact that many in the Syro-Malabar diaspora become Pentecostals and non-catholics and it is not a grave problem for Rome! Why can't the Syro-Malabar eparchs send a delegation to make an on the spot study?

Struggle Should go on

The struggle of Thomas Christians during the long period between 1599 and 1886 should not be forgotten. It should go on until Syro-Malabar eparchies are established wherever they have a sizable number of faithful. Why was the Syro-Malabar Church established as a separate Catholic Church by Rome in 1886? Why did Rome erect Oriental Catholic eparchies in India after a long process of Portuguese and Propaganda rule by the Latins? Is it not because Rome got convinced of the right of existence of St. Thomas Christian Catholics as an oriental catholic church distinct from the Latin Catholics in India? Is the same principle valid today? If so why Rome remain slow and inactive? Remember that Rome was very slow in the past especially in the case of Thomas Christians and hence today we have eight Thomas Christian denominations instead of one! Had Rome acted in the 16th century there would have been only one Thomas Christian Catholic

community. Divide and rule policy is anti-ecumenical and anti-christian.

Half a century ago the boundary of the Syro-Malabar church was extended beyond Pampa and Bharathapuzha after much struggle. But when it was done by establishing the eparchy of Tellicherry not only the Latins but also the majority of Syro-Malabarians of that area protested! What an ecclesial vision! But today out of that single eparchy the archieparchy of Tellicherry and eparchies of Mananthavady, Thamarassery and Belthangady developed. Who can think of a Syro-Malabar church without those Syro-Malabar eparchies today? A similar anti-catholic vision was clear in the context of the erection of the Kalyan eparchy. The same anti-oriental outlook prevails throughout Syro-Malabar diaspora. If that attitude was conquered by Rome in 1886 why not today? Latin Rome should not share the anti-ecumenical anti-oriental attitude of Latin India and Latin Middle East! Pope is the head of the Latin church; but he is also the head of the Catholic Church. His double role should function without any inner conflict or contradiction. Latin Rome is not the Catholic Rome!

Why was Latin rite introduced in India by the European missionaries in the 16th century? They could have become Orientals by following East Syrian rite. Instead they conquered the Orientals, destroyed the Thomas Christian community, splitting the one, apostolic Indian Church into fragments, latinizing some and ruling over the latinized, cunningly removing the all-India jurisdiction of Orientals in India. This resulted in the tragedy of an apostolic tradition and words

are insufficient to condemn this unchristian injustice unheard of in the whole history of Christianity elsewhere. Pope John Paul II apologized to the Jews, the Chinese and recently to the victims of the sexual abuse of the clergy. Well and good! How many centuries the Thomas Christians and their Indian Church will have to wait for such an apology from Pope, Propaganda Fide, Superior Generals of Jesuits and Carmelites? We are convinced that such a series of apologies is only a prelude to the re-establishment or return of the all-India jurisdiction of Thomas Christians. If it is not forth coming the synod of Syro-Malabar church should officially appeal to Rome. If such a petition goes unheard, let the synod take the matter directly and declare all-India jurisdiction and act accordingly.

Past is present here.

Continuation of the Portuguese and Propaganda policies of the past is the problem in India. "The Western missionaries who came here from that time (16th century) onwards did not try to adapt themselves to the circumstances but wanted to impose Latin rite in the land and they did. Today the Indian missions put on the garb of a conquered kingdom which is divided among the vassals. The Orientals are driven into a corner of their country, the whole of India is divided among the Latin hierarchy... It was the total disregard of the Church that existed and the domination of the Latin rite over it in an oriental region that took place in India... The underlying principle, if there is one, of changing the rite or adopting the Latin rite to undertake missionary activity in an oriental region is incomprehensible. It

is a different thing altogether to adopt or change the proper rite to help the people of another rite deprived of pastors... The work of conversion in one's own country cannot be an adequate reason for adoption of a new rite. But this is exactly what is happening in India as hundreds of young men and women every year are forced to forget their own rite and the particular Church in which they were born and brought up, in order to follow the divine call of Our Lord to the missions of India and abroad. They are thus deprived of their legitimate right to work in their rite."¹²

More than ten thousand Syro-Malabarians were working for the Latin rite in 1964. They were working in various Latin religious, congregations and forty Latin dioceses in India¹³ after being deprived of their oriental rite. Today 75% of the missionary personnel in Latin dioceses and Latin religious congregations in India come from the Syro-Malabar Catholic church. Why can't Rome abolish the Syro-Malabar Church and solve the whole oriental problem in India? This could be thought of in the dark middle ages of Europe! Are we living after the so called VatII, I wonder! Is there nothing the Roman Pontiff can do in this matter? Where is the hierarchy of the Syro-Malabar Church? Where is the Canon Law made by the Latins for (?) the Oriental Catholic Churches? What is the Congregation for(?) the Oriental Churches doing? Let all the Oriental Catholic bishops

worldwide speak out for the Indian Church of St. Thomas! All Christian Churches not in communion with Rome should bring up this issue in their ecumenical dialogue with Rome. Today we are being extinguished, but tomorrow it is your lot! Ecumenism should stop until we find a solution to the uncatholic latinization of Orientals in India and elsewhere. Let all Christians come as one body to listen to the Lord of the People of God: Let my People go! "There is immediate need for the acceptance of the principle that the Malabarians can work all over India in their rite."¹⁴ Three decades are over, but this "immediate need" remains as it had been then!

Emerging Church of India

Latin version of Christianity is relatively new in India and it is only a colonial import of Europe. The Oriental Christianity in India is an Indian religion and it reached India whose main religion was Buddhism. So most of the modern Hindus do not see Thomas Christians as a colonial vestige of the West. Naturally Thomas Christians belong to the soil by natural right. If the colonial shadows loom large over Indian Christians it is because of the latinization of India rather than the Christianization. The Thomas Christians should assert themselves as the Church of India and Rome should accept that with generosity. Of course the Latin Catholics of India should have their place in India. But Church of Hendo¹⁵ or Indian

12. P. Chittilapilly, *art.cit.*, p. 291.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 291-292.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 292.

15. Navajiva Parishad, *Hendo: Thirty Years After* (Ernakulam)

Church should be the Christianity in India. We are not "christians". We are "Nazranis." We are here in India before the establishment of modern Hinduism by Shankaracharya.

The Syro-Malabar mission of Chanda was established in 1962. It was to rectify the Latin domination over the orientals in the mission fields. In 1968 Chanda become an Apostolic Exarchate. Because he was accused of sending a memorandum to the VatII Fr John Bosco Thottakara CMI had to suffer a lot. He demanded the return of the Hendo or the Indian Church. Msgr James Robert Knox, the then Internuncio wrote on 12th October 1965 about Fr John Bosco: "...he is not a Christian..."¹⁶ The Prior General of CMI had already declared a punishment of three months solitary confinement. Years went by and a question was put to Fr Placid J. Podipara: "Who should become the bishop of Chanda?" Fr Placid was very frank: "You can appoint anybody as the bishop of Chanda. But there is one condition. A statue of Fr John Bosco should be set up at Chanda and the consecration should take place in front of his statue!" Thus Orientals have suffered living martyrdom for speaking up for the natural rights of an apostolic Church against Latin rule. The Indian Church got split up by the tactics of the western missionaries and the Propaganda Fide. "This unhappy division of the Syrian Church which remained undivided for over a thousand years until the 16th century was originally caused by the Portuguese who attempted to latinize the ancient Syrian rite

and to force the Roman customs on the Syrian Church."¹⁷

Syro-Malabar scholars had been pointing out these problems in the past. "...it is high time for justice to be done to the Indian Oriental Churches. This can be achieved only by giving back to the Malabar Church her lost jurisdiction throughout India... it would be unfair, if not unjust, if these Christians were to be deprived of the opportunity of practising their rite even in their own country. The problem takes on a still more unfair outlook when compared with the condition of their non-catholic christian brethren, who can practise their rite wherever they go in the country, and their hierarchs without any difficulty can look after them, whereas the oriental catholics are deprived of this legitimate spiritual comfort. This creates prejudice and contempt for the Catholic Church. The danger of perversion also is not lacking... the deprivation of the proper rite might cause indifference to religion ..."¹⁸ Doctrinal and liturgical indifference is a serious danger to Indian Christianity at large.

Declarations and Practicality

Catholic Orientals like Maronites, Syrians, Melkites, Armenians, Ruthenians, Ukrainians are all allowed to care pastorally for their emigrant members. "In India, the situation is surprising. The Orientals here have no opportunity nor are they given any provision, for practising their rite all over their own country... It is highly surprising

16. Ibid., P. 26. How consoling for him to know about the erection of a Syro-Malabar eparchy for the emigrants in USA and Canada!

17. B. Griffiths, "The Ecumenical situation in Kerala today", *The Malabar Church*, P. 307.

18. P. Chittilapilly, *art.cit.*, pp. 285-286.

that no priest is admitted among these people to administer to them in their own rite, despite all solemn declarations of the Popes and councils... In other Oriental Churches priests of the rite are given, even for smaller numbers, and that outside their own country, while in India the needs are totally ignored. It is also a fact that in some of the Latin dioceses of Northern India, the number of the faithful in certain towns is less than (that) of the Malabarians.¹⁹

Two declarations of VatII sound very hollow in the Indian context: "There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without interior conversion."²⁰ "The Church on earth is by its very nature missionary ..."²¹ About the teachings of Vat II scholars are unambiguous: "The Council, ... desirous of promoting the spiritual welfare of the faithful ... wants the safeguarding and prosperity of each particular Church, and this through the normal ecclesiastical organization or erection of parishes and dioceses,... through the constitution of a hierarchy of the respective rite...It is not a mere velleity of the Council, but a precept, expressed perhaps in a gentle style, but nonetheless binding."²² According to Pujol the supreme authority competent to execute this provision is none other than the Roman Pontiff. After him "this competence devolves upon the congregation for the Oriental Churches... also the bishops in whose dioceses Orientals live are charged

with the execution of this conciliar prescription, in a spirit of sincere collaboration and even of initiative, within the sphere of their competence."²³

The "sincere collaboration" and "initiative," of the Latin hierarchy of India in not executing the conciliar precept is a notorious fact of history, a blemish upon the Congregation for the Oriental Churches and the Roman Pontiff himself. One wonders about the Congregation for Oriental Churches, whether it is for Orientals or for Latins! If it is for Orientals it has to prove its credibility at least in India outside Keralam. "After Cardinal Tisserant the so-called Oriental Congregation has had no oriental prefects", Mar Sebastian Valloppilly declared in 1985 at Collegio Damasceno, Rome, in the presence of Cardinal Lourdasamy!

Malady and Medicine

It is the only a duty of charity from the part of Syro Malabar church to help the Latin Church in extra - ordinary cases by sending a handful of pastors and missionaries. "The present method of exportation of vocations cannot give a lasting impetus as it does not revitalize the Malabar Church. The vitality of a Church should not be exported like the product of a factory, but must be used to undertake more responsibility for the glory of God"²⁴ Even after three decades the suicidal flow of vocations for the

19. *Ibid.*, p. 289.

20. Vat. II, UR II: 7, *Ibid.*, p. 418 - 419

21. Vat. II, Ad Gentes I: 2, p. 731: cf. LG 1, pp. 323 f, Ad Gentes VI: 35, p. 762.

22. C. Pujol, *art.cit.*, pp. 222-223.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

24. P. Chittilapilly, *art.cit.*, p. 293.

missionary enterprises of Latin rite continues! Christianity in India is maligned some Hindus because of the “foreign” type of missionary work copied by Latins and Orientals alike. This anti-christian criticism heard in modern India will subside if only Thomas Christians regain their former all India jurisdiction and propagate their traditional missionary style throughout India. But a latinized and latinizing Syro-Malabar church is only a carbon copy of Latin Christianity and hence a radical change from within and without is an imperative. “The clergy, not excluding the Prelates, with a few exceptions are Latin in mind and outlook, and in general they cannot see anything except through the Latin glass which they are reluctant to put away. It goes without saying that this strikes at the very root of an Oriental Church which the Syro-Malabar Church ought to be if it should remain faithful to its past”²⁵.

In this context the vision of the hierarchy of this much latinized Oriental Church is crucial: “The Syro-Malabar Church is, and has always been, an Oriental Church”²⁶ We can hope against hope that there is some awareness of the whole problem among Syro-Malabarians: “..... three centuries of Latin rule over the Syro-Malabar Church had done almost irreparable damage to its ritual identity. The same can happen to the faithful of the Syro-Malabar rite living in

the..... Latin dioceses if they are not given the opportunity to practise their faith in their own rite.”²⁷ What can we do to change the present predicament when the Syro-Malabar hierarchs (with some exceptions?) cannot, but take the position? “We are officials of Rome. We have to take care of the interests of Rome”²⁸ Hence we conclude with the following proposals for the revival of the Indian Church of St Thomas, which will declare that we are not just slaves of modern day parankis”

1. Declaration of All India Jurisdiction
2. Election of Metropolitan and Gate of All India
3. Election of Archdeacon of All India
4. Restoration of the traditional Palliyogam in the triple level (local, national and international)
5. Establishment of Permanent Diaconate
6. Orientalization of Priestly life and Priestly formation
7. Restoration of the Oriental Liturgical Spirituality
8. Communion with all St Thomas Christians
9. Channelling of Syro-Malabar Vocations for the Syro-Malabar Church by the Syro-Malabar Church
10. Communion with all Apostolic Churches including Rome.

25. P.J. Podipara, *The Rise and Decline...*, p. 41.

26. V. Vithayathil, “The Syro-Malabar Hierarchy and the New Oriental Legislation”, *The Malabar Church*, p. 261.

27. V. J. Vithayathil, *The Origin and Progress of the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy* (Kottayam 1980), p. 111.

28. A sad report from the Syro-Malabarians in the Persian Gulf made a few months ago! This is not at all imaginary!

ECUMENISM AND CATHOLIC-JEWISH RELATIONSHIP

Dr Philip Chempakassery

The world of the twenty first century is divided between fundamentalism with its separatist ideology of exclusiveness on the one hand and a generous ideology of cooperation between cultures and peoples on the other. Both trends have grown extensively in these years. Yet over and above the spirit of division, humankind is becoming more and more conscious of the need for co-operation and dialogue between different groups and ideologies. Ecumenism which has achieved unthinkable progress in these years is a sure proof that the spirit of co-operation is much more powerful than the spirit of separation. The Churches have come together closer around the same table and found themselves closer to each other than was thought of in earlier years. The hope that all believers in Christ will be able, in the near future, to celebrate together the mysteries of their salvation is becoming more and more powerful. As ecumenism is making great strides, there is also a growing awareness that all human beings, all who believe in God as their creator and Eternal Father should strengthen their bond of brotherhood on the basis of their common faith in God. The second Vatican Council gives powerful expression to these two aspirations of the Church in the document on Ecumenism and Non-Christian religions. As Ecumenism is a very timely

movement and most relevant for the survival of the Christian Churches in the adverse situation of materialism and secularism, relationship between all the deferent groups of people who profess faith in God is relevant and most urgent in our time of non-belief. Among the non-Christian religions Judaism has a closer relation with Christianity than any other religion. Therefore strengthening Christian-Jewish relationship is an urgent need of the time. This article is an attempt to focus on this aspect of the Church's relationship with non-Christian religions. The document of Vatican II on Catholic Jewish relationship and the many other declarations made by local bishops' conferences and other authoritative Church bodies shed light on the approach of the Church

Relationship with the Jews and Ecumenism.

In the Council of Vatican II, the relationship with the Jews was originally given a place within the Document on Ecumenism. In fact the first draft for the decree on Ecumenism was a five-chapter draft. The first three chapters concentrated on the principles and practice of Ecumenism in which the relationship with the Protestants and the orthodox churches were specifically treated. After these three

chapters on Ecumenism, the draft had another chapter, the fourth one, which dealt with the relationship with the Jews. The fifth chapter was on religious freedom¹. This means in the original plan, there was no decree on non-Christians as such but only on the Jews.

The declaration on non-Christians is, in fact, a growth from an original draft about the Church's relationship with the Jews. Pope John XXIII who convoked the council had a clear idea in his mind that some thing should be done to improve the Church's relation with the Jews. To bring this desire into practice he appointed Cardinal Bea to prepare a declaration on the Church's position about the Jews and the ways in which she wants to improve this relationship. The draft prepared by Cardinal Bea was made part of the decree on Ecumenism and was placed as the fourth chapter. A few months before his death, Pope John saw this document and gave his approval. When it was presented at the council, many bishops gave the opinion that this particular subject needs a special document and it lies outside the scope of Ecumenism. Many bishops wanted it to be a separate document by itself. Only some Eastern Council Fathers questioned the expediency of such a declaration. It was not on dogmatic grounds that they voiced their doubt about it but on pastoral ground. They feared that such a declaration, whatever form it receives, will be

understood as a political move on the part of the Church to support the Jews against the Muslim brothers and that would affect adversely the minority Christians in the Arab world.

Cardinal Bea prepared the final draft and it contained statements about not only the Jews but also about non-Christians in general with special mention of the Jews. The final text approved by the Fathers contained a revolutionary statement rejecting the age-old qualification of the Jewish community as killer -of- God (deicide). It also acknowledges the indebtedness of the Church on the people of the Old Testament for the Scriptures, the Prophets etc. It also excludes all pretexts of discrimination. The declaration on the Jews is a very revolutionary step on the part of the Church². Yet it was not accepted with that enthusiasm by the public especially the Jewish communities because the very first draft, the one presented as part of Ecumenism was publicized and the final text was found to be weaker than the first one. This happens in almost all decrees and declarations. The openness and charismatic leadership of Jon XXIII was something exceptional. It is this charisma which prompted the first draft. Yet, in spite of the changes and weakening of the text it remains a milestone in the history of the Church and especially in its relationship with the Jews, a relationship that was one of animosity for many centuries.

- 1 Cf. W.M. Abbot, "Ecumenism", *The Documents of Vatican II with Notes and Commentaries by Catholic protestant and Orthodox Authorities*, New York, Guild Press, 337-38
- 2 Cf. R.A.Graham, "Non-Christians", *The Documents of Vatican II, With Notes and Comments by Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Authorities*, New York, Guild Press, 1966, 656-659

The Main Ideas of the Council on the Jews

The special status of the Jews in relation to the Church is given in article 4 of the declaration. The main ideas are the following

1. There is a spiritual bond linking the people of the New Covenant (i.e. the Church) with the people of the Old Covenant (i.e. the Jews). The Council used the phrase Abraham's stock for the Jews. This is a very important expression. It gives the basis for the special link between Jews and Christians. It is Abraham who functions as the link. The Jews are in special relationship with God through Abraham who was deemed righteous through his faith and who received the promise about his posterity. The Church also is linked with Abraham as his posterity through the same faith, which was deemed righteousness for Abraham. Thus through Abraham these two communities are linked together as brothers to each other.
2. The faith of the Church is not something that has come up from nothingness. It was prefigured and prepared in the OT heroes like Moses and the Prophets. The whole Church as the people of God was fore shadowed in the people of the old covenant.
3. The Church recognizes that still it receives sustenance from the treasure of the people of the Old Covenant. To quote from the council,

The Church therefore, cannot forget that she received the revelation of the Old Testament through the people with

whom God in his inexpressible mercy deigned to establish the Ancient Covenant. Nor can she forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that good olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild olive branches of the Gentiles (cf. Rom. 11:17-24). Indeed, the Church believes that by His cross Christ, our Peace, reconciled Jew and Gentile, making them both one in Himself (cf. Eph. 2:14-16).

4. It is because they, the Jews, form the roots of the tree of the people of God and the church is the wild olive branch grafted to it. Further the Council recognizes the value of Jesus' death on the cross not so much as a line of separation between the Old people and the New but as a power that unites these two people. It is the power of grafting the olive tree and the wild branch and not one of separation.
5. The council recognizes, for the first time, a very clear truth, a truth whose veracity is never questioned but whose significance was lost sight of, the truth that Jesus, the God incarnate of the Christians is a Jew, a son of a Jewish woman, the virgin Mary. The Council also recognizes that all the first members of the Church, the Apostles, were Jews.
6. Without denying the fact that the majority of Jews, especially the officials, rejected Jesus in His time and later opposed the spreading of the Gospel, the Council recognizes that the Jews still remain most dear to God because of their fore-fathers. After lamenting on the sad

fact that large numbers of Jews did not recognize the Savior, the council says,

Nevertheless, according to the Apostle, the Jews still remain most dear to God because of their fathers, for He does not repent of the gifts He makes nor of the calls He issues (cf. Rom. 11:28-29).

7. Therefore the Council expresses its hope that one day, in the future known to God alone the Church and Jews together will be able to address God in a single voice.

After giving these principles on which the new relationship between the Church and Jews should be fostered, the Council proceeds to give practical suggestion for this changed attitude and relationship with them.

The first suggestion for the improved relationship is to stop to consider the Jews as killers of God (deicide). It is not to deny that a section of the Jewish community of the time of Jesus incited the death of Jesus. But not all of them are to be blamed and not the Jews of the present time. More over the death of Jesus is not the doing of man; its value is not to be found in what men of any time did. Rather it is a free act of God by which God wanted all men to be saved.

Consequently it is not correct to present the Jews as a cursed people. The Council admits that there have been instances of presenting the Jews as a people cursed by God, but this presentation has no scriptural foundation. The Council also comes out strongly against the anti-Semitic feelings against the Jews.

The Post-Vatican II Documents

The document of Vatican II did not make the effect expected. Further it was for the local Churches to implement the principles enunciated in the Council. The most important step towards implementing the council declaration came from the French Church. It was in 1974, more than ten years after the council. The French Bishops' Committee for Relations with Jews published a statement giving guidance for healthy relations with the Jews. This document re-enforces the teachings of Vatican II on the Jews. The main points of this statement may be summarized as follows.

Statement of the French Bishops

The special position Jews have in relation to Christianity and their contribution to the world of the faith in One God is specially mentioned. The bishops say:

"We cannot consider the Jewish religion as we would any others now existing in the world. Through the people of Israel, faith in the One God was inscribed on the history of mankind and monotheism became -if even with certain differences- the common good of three great families which claim the heritage of Abraham, Judaism, Christianity and Islam"³

Further the statement says that God is still keeping His fidelity to this people. The proof is this, "the fidelity of the Jewish people to the Law and Covenant is a sign of the fidelity of God towards His people".⁴

3. Statement by the French Bishops' Committee for relations with Jews, Paris, 1973, 1

4. *ibid* 3

The bishops give the bold opinion in the name of the Church that "Far from envisaging the disappearance of the Jewish community, the Church is search of a living bond with it".⁵ This is a controversial point. This is to be read together with the declaration of the Council, which says:

"In company with the prophets and the same Apostle, the Church awaits that day, known to God alone, on which all peoples will address the Lord in a single voice and 'serve him with one accord'".⁶

The statement of the French bishops also says,

Israel and the Church are not complementary institutions; their permanent vis a vis is a sign that the divine plan is not complete. Christians and Jews are thus in a situation of mutual contest or, according to St. Paul, of "jealousy" with regard to unity.

The statement of the French bishops contains two important points. First of all there is the desire for unity between Christians and Jews. It is not the work of one side alone. Both sides are running together towards unity with a spirit of competition or "jealousy". Therefore it is wrong to think that only the Church is working for unity.

Secondly, the statement clearly distinguishes unity and absorption. The unity between Christianity and Judaism

should not result in the disappearance of the Jewish community. It is a difficult task. It is easy to absorb one community into another with the extermination of the former community. It is also easy to remain separate and opposed to each other without unity. But the task of every community, especially the communities that believe in One God is, according to the French bishops, to keep unity and diversity together.

Another Vatican Document

One year after the statement of the French bishops came another document from Vatican. It was given the title, *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration "Nostra Aetate"*. The Commission for Religious Relations with Jews issued this declaration on 1 December 1974. This document, which reinforces the teachings of *Nostra Aetate* laments the fact that nothing substantial as being done in Jewish Christian relationship after the Vatican Council. It clearly says, "To tell the truth, such relations as there have been between Jew and Christian have scarcely ever risen above the level of monologue" and so the document exhorts "From now on, real dialogue must be established".⁷

As a concluding remark the *Guidelines* says, "The problem of Jewish Christian relations concerns the Church as such, since it is when "pondering her own mystery" that

5. *ibid*

6. Declaration On the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, art. 4, the Documents of Vatican II, op. cit. 665

7. *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration "Nostra Aetate"*, 2

she encounters the mystery of Israel". It is not only a pastoral problem for the Church to have relationship with the Jews; rather it is something that touches the very nature of the Church as such. Therefore it is an urgent matter, which deserves implementation in all places and levels of the Christian faithful.

Yet Another Document

After the *Guidelines*, the same Commission brought out another document by name *Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church in 1985*. It was a reinforcement of the *Guidelines*. At the same time this new document wants to correct some of the attitudes exhibited by teachers of catechism and preachers in implementing the *Guidelines*. About some of the presentations of the *Guidelines* it says that they are "of poor quality and lacking in precision". It also wants to reiterate the fundamental faith of the Church, which sees Jesus as the final and ultimate revelation of God and the universal significance of this faith in Jesus. Therefore, the document says, "The Church and Judaism cannot be seen as two parallel ways of salvation and the Church must witness to Christ as the Redeemer for all, 'while maintaining the strictest respect for religious liberty in line with the teaching of the Second Vatican Council'. Further it declares,

Thus the definitive meaning of the election of Israel does not become clear except in the light of the complete fulfillment (Rom 9:11) and the election in Jesus Christ is still better understood with reference to the announcement and the promise (cf. Heb 4:1-11).

These two documents that came out after the conciliar declaration are complementary to each other. Both of them together give the correct position of the Church towards the Jews and this position is the only valid position. There are many other declarations and statements of local bishops' conferences and Episcopal commissions. All of them are attempts at correcting a long history of hatred and misunderstanding among Christians and Jews for the last two millennia. Of these documents special mention is to be made to certain bold steps taken by the present Pope.

On 13 April 1986, the Holy Father made historic visit to the Synagogue in Rome. In the speech he made there one can notice the long way the Church, at least through its supreme visible pastor, has travelled on the direction of better relationship with the Jews. The Pope used some of the well-cherished Hebrew phrases in his speech like *todda rabba* (many thanks). He also insisted on the common spiritual patrimony of the Christians and Jews and added, "First of all each our religions, in the full awareness of the many bonds which unite them to each other, and in the first place that 'bond' which the Council spoke of, wishes to be recognized and respected in its own identity, beyond any syncretism and any ambiguous appropriation." Almost the same voice was heard in the address of the chief Rabbi of the Synagogue as response to the Holy Father's address. The Chief Rabbi said, "...as our hearts open to the hope ...even while respecting our existing differences- might give us the possibility of a concordant activity...." Here also the stress is on respecting the differences and concordant activity.

In this connection the visit of the Holy Father to the Jewish community of Germany deserves special mention. The Pope visited the Jewish community at Mainz, West Germany on 17 November 1980. Both Catholics and Jews received the Pope's speech with much enthusiasm. In that address the Holy Father said:

If Christians must consider themselves brothers of all men and behave accordingly, this holy obligation is all the more binding when they find themselves before members of the Jewish people. In the "Declaration on the relationship of the Church with Judaism" in April of this year, the Bishops of the Federal Republic of Germany put this sentence at the beginning: "Whoever meets Jesus Christ, meets Judaism". I would like to make these words mine too. The faith of the Church in Jesus Christ, the son of David and the son of Abraham (Mt 1:1) actually contains what the bishops call in that declaration "the spiritual heritage of Israel for the Church" (par. 11), a living heritage, which must be understood and preserved in its depth and richness by us Catholic Christian.

In this speech the Pope also admits that the Old Covenant is not revoked, but remains valid in spite of the emergence of the New Covenant in Jesus Christ. About the dialogue between Christians and Jews, the Holy Father says:

The first dimension of this dialogue, that is, the meeting between the people of God of the Old Covenant, never revoked by God (cf. Rom 11:29), and that of the New Covenant, is at the same time a dialogue

within our Church, that is to say, between the first and the second part of the Bible.

The Canonization of Edith Stein

In the Catholic Jewish relationship, the canonization of Edith Stein, a Jewish convert to Catholicism and a religious nun is of great significance. Though there were discordant voices from Jewish side about the intention of the Church in canonizing her, this act is to be seen as a bold step in the attitude of the Church towards the Jews. Edith Stein was one of the victims of the Nazi Concentration camp. She was killed, as many thousands of her brothers and sisters in the Jewish communities, just because of the fact that she was a Jew. There was a possibility that she be spared because of her baptism into the Christian Church. But she did not want that privilege to be used. Rather she preferred to die with her fellow Jews. The Church understood it as a great service rendered by a Catholic nun for the Jewish brothers and sisters. The Church deemed her holy life coupled with this act of extraordinary courage as deserving recognition by the Church.

We Remember

In Catholic Jewish relationship, there are many advances in these years. Among them the 1998 declaration of the Commission for Religious Dialogue with the Jews is especially important. It was a reflection of the infamous *shoah*, or holocaust, which resulted in the cruel killing of millions of innocent Jews just because they were Jews. It is addressed to all Catholics anywhere in the world and not to just the Catholics of Europe where the *shoah* took place. This

reflection on *shoah* admits the indirect responsibility of the Christian in the *shoah*. It is not a question of whether the Christians cooperated with the Nazi government in perpetrating the crime against the Jews, but the centuries of mistrust and hatred the Christian had towards the Jews made them less sensitive towards the horror of the crime. The declaration states:

The fact that *the shoah* took place in Europe, that is, in countries of long-standing Christian civilization, raises the question of the relation between the Nazi persecution and the attitudes down the centuries of Christians towards the Jews.

As a summit to all these bold steps taken from the part of the Church came, in 2000, the historic request for forgiveness from the supreme pontiff of the Catholic Church. He in the name of all the Catholic faithful asked pardon for all the offences committed against the Jews down through the centuries. The Pope qualified the Jews as the people of the Covenant. As any action can have a negative and positive response, this request of forgiveness also was received with mixed reaction. But from the part of the Church, especially from the part of the bishop of Rome, this is a very important event and it is hoped that though not immediately it will have its positive results in the Catholic-Jewish relationship.

A response from the other side

The attempts from the part of the Catholic Church towards better relationship with the Jews did not go unheeded. It brought a very encouraging response from the part of the Jewish leaders. This is

something that has no parallel anywhere in the world in all the 2000 years of the Christian existence. It was a document signed by the leading intellectual of the Jewish world. Those who signed the document were professors of world-renowned Universities-Tikva Frymer of Chicago University, David Novak of Toronto University, Peter Ochs of Virginia University and Michael Signer of the University of Notre Dame.

The documents enlist eight points in which the signers agree with the Christian Church. The first is the doctrine about God. The Jewish scholars show the courage to say :

Jews and Christians worship the same God. Before the rise of Christianity, Jews were the only worshippers of the God of Israel. But Christians also worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; creator of heaven and earth. While Christian worship is not viable religious choice for Jews, as Jewish theologians we rejoice that, through Christianity, hundreds of millions of people have entered into relationship with the God of Israel."

About the Scriptures the document says, "Jews and Christians seek authority from the same book-the Bible (what Jews call 'Tenakh', and Christians call the Old Testament'). Turning to it for religious orientation, spiritual enrichment, and communal education, we each take away similar lessons: God created and sustains the universe; God established a covenant with the people of Israel; God's revealed word guides Israel to a life of righteousness; and God will ultimately redeem Israel and the whole world."

This response from the Jewish side has taken away the age-old misconception that Christian theology of the Trinity is polytheism. In very strong words the document says, "Jews and Christians worship the same God." Is it possible to say this, especially when we think of the main bone of contention between the Church and Jews that the Trinity which includes Jesus of Nazareth in it as the second person, is the God of the Christians? But the impossible has taken place. The Jewish scholars admitted that the God worshipped by the Christians is none other than the God worshipped by the Jews. It also admits the service Christianity has rendered to the belief in this God. The signers say, "... as Jewish theologians we rejoice that, through Christianity, hundreds of millions of people have entered into relationship with the God of Israel". All this means that the Trinity of Christianity can be accommodated with the strict monotheism of Judaism. If this is admitted, then the central difference between Judaism and Christianity will vanish. All others only minor differences in comparison to this central mystery of Christianity.

Certain Reflections

The foregoing study brings before our minds, certain important points which need reflection and further reaction. The main points to be considered are the following.

1. Catholic Jewish relationship has traveled a long way in a hopeful and positive direction. If these steps are carefully and sincerely followed, we can hope much more in the future.
2. The new phase of Catholic- Jewish relationship was born with Ecumenism
- and was even part of it in its origins at least. This is a valid reason to consider it together with Ecumenism. As the Churches progress in their mutual relationship, there is need also to progress in the relationship with the Jews. The faith of the Churches is based not on what the Churches themselves create but on what God has revealed. This revelation has its foundation in the Hebrew Bible, which is the common scripture for both the Jews and the Christians. It is not to deny that in Jesus God had made His decisive revelation. But Jesus or His revelation is not intelligible except against the background of the Hebrew Scriptures. Further, it is a common place today, that the NT is to be understood as a midrash on the OT. It is not a midrash created deliberately by any human imagination. But midrash, it is. It is a midrash on the OT Scriptures inspired by the Christ event. It is the new interpretation that was inevitable when the early Christians who were deeply formed in the lines of the Hebrew Scriptures had to face the reality of Jesus Christ. Yet, the fact remains that NT is a midrash on the Hebrew Bible. This means the foundations of Christianity is not to be sought in what happened in Jesus but in what was already received through the Hebrew Scriptures. OT is the foundation while Jesus is the center.
3. Ecumenism as well as inter-religious dialogue stands on the principle of mutual respect and recognition of the individuality and freedom of the other. Any attempt at closer union between two parties is doomed to failure if mutual

respect and recognition of the freedom of the other is not given due importance. The idea of absorption of one group into the other is an idea of the past. It has no more relevance and support. Yet it is not to remain closed within the four walls of one's structure. No individual or community can be understood as having achieved its goal at any given moment. Every body and every community is on its way towards betterment. Therefore, there is no justification for absorption. It will be like the blind leading the blind. Yet each and every community has a serious obligation to be on the path of constant and unending search. Searching presupposes looking into the other because searching is not a groping in the darkness. All that exist has in it a ray of the light. Every search is to be a search in the other, in those that exist. Therefore if one is on the way of searching, then one will automatically come into contact with the other. This will eventually lead to closer and closer cooperation and help among these different groups.

4. Closer relationship between religions is not a move against missionary responsibility of the Church. It is a God-given right and human value to share what one deems precious with those whom he/she loves. Religious values and knowledge of God are among those a religious person deems as supremely precious. Therefore it is his duty as a human being and a right as a person loved by God to share his knowledge of God with others. That is mission in its essentials. Sharing the knowledge of God with another is not forcing him/her to

accept what one believes to be true. It is freely shared and it must be received freely if at all it is received. A person cannot be blind to what another shares from his/ her experience of God. It would be tantamount to be closed within one's self-made prison. Religion is a growth towards and into God, the infinite and the absolute. This means that a person who is truly religious has to be constantly on the move. Religion is an unending pilgrimage. Therefore there is need to share with others what one has gained and there is also need to consider and contemplate on what another is ready to share.

5. In the Vatican documents and the declarations of the bishops of local Churches concerning Catholic-Jewish relationship, one thing is specially stressed. It is the fact that the Church does not want to see the extermination of the Jewish community. This is true also about other Churches. The Catholic Church enters into ecumenical or inter-religious dialogue with others, not to bring them into nonexistence, not to see that they remain no more, but to fulfill her Christ-given mandate. To bring the Good news is mandatory to the Church. To be one with others as Jesus is one with His Father is the main obligation of the Church. But this does not take away the freedom of other individuals or communities to exist. Any idea that the Church is sent into the world for the absorption of other communities into it is a sign of the lack of a good theology of history. Nothing happens in history accidentally. Everything is controlled and

guided by God. This basic view of history tells us that the long survival of the Churches is not without the knowledge of God and His permission. God has reasons to see that a particular group remains to fulfill some purpose that is known to God alone. Yet the survival is no sign that a group has attained the perfection God wants it to attain. Survival should be, on the other hand, inspiration to seek the absolute truth of God in the others. This unending search will bring many things that are hidden into the light of truth. "Grow and grow again and never give up hope" – this is the ideal that should guide the ecumenical movement as well as inter-religious dialogue. That will bring us to a unity of which no human had any idea any time and no one has at present.

Conclusion

In their origin Ecumenism and relationship with the Jews are inter-related. It was thought to be two aspects of one and the same responsibility of the Church. This is what we learn from the history of the second Vatican Council. The far-sighted pastoral vision of Pope John XXIII envisaged a new phase in the history of the Church as a phase, which takes into consideration the Jews and other Christians together. The united existence of the Church means also an improved relationship with the Jews. The roots of the Church, which is in the generous revelation of God to humankind, are intertwined with the Jewish religion. It is impossible to step forward except in company with this religion, which is inseparably connected with Christianity.

Ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue should progress side by side with each other. The closer cooperation of the Churches among themselves should also take into serious consideration how any move of cooperation among the Churches is to be viewed and evaluated by the Jews. As the many documents clearly state Judaism is not like any other religions in relation to the Church. Judaism has an affinity and common patrimony with the Church which other religions lack. The Hebrew Bible, which the Church believes to be the infallible Word of God, is the common treasure of both Catholics and Jews. The fountain of spiritual treasures is the same for both these religions, though the Christians have the ultimate revelation through Jesus Christ. When the Jews themselves admit that both these religions believe in the same God and that that God is the God of Abraham. The responsibility is much enhanced to take the Jews into confidence and to give proportionate importance to Jewish – Christian dialogue. Jesus the Jew should inspire us to a new relationship with the Jews. In other words, the new responsibility before the Church is to grow in two dimensions at the same time- in the dimension of its relationship with the Jews and in the dimension of its relationship with other Christians. When these two dimensions are kept in equilibrium and brought to more and more perfection, it will be a lesson for all religions to move closer to each other. Then the walls of separation will fall; all humanity united in faith and in search of higher values will worship the creator in one voice.

ECUMENISM, REUNION, MISSION AND THE MALANKARA CHURCH

Kurian Valuparampil

Introduction

Church is the undivided sacrament of unity.¹ But in reality Christianity remains divided. Christians have undone the unity of the Church. Christ, the groom and Lord of the Church, is working through the Holy Spirit to regain the unity of the Church. The vast majority of Christians are aware of the evil of division of the Church as well as of the work of the Lord for unity. And they desire, pray and work for regaining the Church's unity. It is, certainly, the task of every Christian to act his/her part for the realization of the Lord's prayer for the unity of all those who believe in him (Jn 17, 20-21). Until full unity of all Christians is realized, every Christian, who takes to heart the Lord's said prayer, must be at birth pangs. The Catholic Church believes that the present ecumenical interest of Christians is God's grace, and in accordance with God's eternal plan and will.² Therefore, for the Catholic Church ecumenism is not one of the activities of the Church, but *the activity*. Concern for the unity of all Christian believers is also

necessitated by and integrated with the Church's concern for mission, namely preaching the word of the Word become flesh and pitched his tent among mankind so that humanity believes in him: "...that they may all be one; ...so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (Jn 17, 21). Ecumenism must aim at genuine unity of all Christians so that the Church may be enabled to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ effectively, the gospel of the unity of the whole cosmos in Jesus Christ. *Ecumenism, unity, mission and Church are integrally bound together.*

So that the response of any Christian Church to God's eternal plan and will for unity be fructified, concern for effective mission must be placed at the top of all concerns and works of the Church. In fact, the Church is mission. So it is almost tautology to say that concern for mission must be given topmost priority among Church's interests. But now the Churches are at a stage at which ecumenism leading to unity itself is the mission of the Church. Ecumenism aiming at real and full unity

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1. Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion *Communio* Notio (May 28, 1992), 4. AAS 85 (1993) 840.
 2. Second Vatican Council, Decree on Ecumenism *Unitatis Redintegratio* (UR) nos. 1.4; Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* (LG) no. 14, John Paul II, *Ut Unum Sint* (Vatican, 1995) nos. 5-9

(reunion) of the Church for the sake of effective mission and ecumenism at large itself must be the strategy of the Churches engaged in the ecumenical movement if at all their ecumenical project turns successful. Only Churches burning with zeal for effective mission and reunion of the Church can engage in meaningful and aim oriented ecumenical dialogue.

Ecumenism - Unity - Mission - the Church: The Ecumenical Strength of the Malankara Church

The Malankara Syrian Catholic Church rejoices that the spirit of ecumenism-unity-mission-the Church wholly and thoroughly led the pioneers of the Reunion Movement of the Malankara Church, with special reference to the Malankara Church.³ In this regard the late Archbishop Mar Ivanios of Trivandrum was prophetic in his approach and methodology. One should admire his prophetic vision and courage to have executed this combination as early as the first quarter of this century, say, some thirty years before Vatican Council II. In his time neither the Malankara Syrian Jacobite (Orthodox) Church nor the main stream Syrian Church of Kerala in Catholic Communion had executed the said *ecumenism - unity - mission - the Church* combination in Kerala or elsewhere in India. Humanly speaking, it is his zeal for that combined approach that has enabled the Malankara Reunion Movement

to thrive as a local Church in the Catholic communion. Originally the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church is a Reunion Movement (the Reunion Movement of the Malankara Church), that is to say, the Malankara Reunion Movement grown into a local Church within the Catholic communion. And as a Movement she is moving steadily and progressively towards the fullness of Malankara catholic ecclesiality within Catholic Communion. As a Movement, the Malankara Reunion is not an end in itself. It is a process towards a task aiming at the communion particularly between the catholic Malankara Church and the Catholic Church, namely the communion of catholic Churches headed by the primate bishop of Rome. I think it only just to repeat that but for the missionary thrust Archbishop Mar Ivanios infused into the Malankara Reunion Movement rejuvenated by him the representative reunion of his and his four first co-reunites would have "rested in peace" as individual reunions with the Roman Church. Already while a priest in the Malankara Syrian Jacobite (Orthodox) Church he tried to train missionaries for proclaiming the gospel of Christ in and outside Kerala, and concentrated on organized missionary work.⁴ But his Church of that time was not interested in missionary enterprises, to his disappointment.⁵ His prophetic leadership of the resumed Malankara Reunion

3. More on this, K. VALUPARAMPIL, "Ut Unum Sint: A Response," *Christian Orient* XXI/4 (2000) 189-193, 190-192.
4. THOMAS INCHACKALODY, *archbishop mar ivanios* quoting from Bathany masika 1925 June lakkam. The whole biography *archbishop mar ivanios* by T. Inchackalody is reproduced in J. PELLISSEY, *malankara kattolikkasabha* (Kottayam, no year); in our present article page numbers referred to T. Inchackalody, *archbishop mar ivanios* are according to the Peliserry edition in 230.
5. T. INCHACKALODY, *archbishop mar ivanios*, 230.

Movement challenged his followers in reunion as well as his former Church to take ecumenism as missions to be realized, so that the Church grows by the growth of the word of God and the communion of Churches. The Malankara Catholic Church justly and humbly takes pride in that she administers mission as mission along with ecumenism aiming at real reunion of the Churches as mission for the sake of effective mission. Long before the Churches of the West and East opened their eyes to the relation between the unity of the believers in Jesus and effective mission as revealed in the prayer of the groom and Lord of the Church Mar Ivanios and the Malankara Reunion Movement "saw" that truth. Long before the Churches of the West and East discerned and proposed ecumenism - reunion for regaining the unity of the Church in catholic communion as *the work* of the mission of the Churches Mar Ivanios of the Oriental Malankara Church of Mar Thoma and the Malankara Reunion Movement could do so. In his address in the public meeting convened on the first Malankara Reunion anniversary at Tiruvalla in 1931 Mar Ivanios said: *punaraikyapeitta oro kattolikkanum stripurushavyatyasamenye tikshnatayeria oro misanariyayi itinakam rupantarappettu kazhinjirikkunnu. Appastolikakalatte pidan-acharitam ceriya totilenkilum njangalute itayil innum avartikkappetukayanu.* (English translation by the present author: Without distinction of male or female every reunited catholic has been transformed into a very

zealous missionary. The history of the persecution of the apostolic times is repeated at least in a small manner among us).⁶

Catholic Communion: Mar Ivanios' Vision

Here may I remind the readers that the Malankara Reunion Movement has inherited as her legacy from its very first successful pioneer the ancient patristic vision that "catholic communion of Churches" does not mean all non-Catholic Churches "going into" the Roman Catholic Church. Mar Ivanios had very clear idea about the catholic communion of Churches. Many times did he articulate it in clear terms. Here let us recall one of such occasions. His former colleague and leader Metropolitan Mar Divanyasios visited the former at Tiruvalla soon after his reunion with the catholic Church and bid farewell. Metropolitan Divanyasios asked Mar Ivanios whether he would take the people of the former to Rome and whether he was going to Rome. In response to the first question recalled here, Mar Ivanios corrected the questioner metropolitan that the people were not of the bishop, but of God. And to the second he answered thus: "*njan romayil pokan niccayiccittilla. Ennal marpappayum patriyarkkisum, tirumentum, nam ellavarumkute yojiccu karttavinte eksabbayayittiranam. i vazhakkum bhinnatakalum daivikamalla.*" (English translation by the present author: I have not decided to go to Rome. But pope, patriarch (of Antioch), you bishop, and all

6. Quoted in Pellissery publications, *malankara sabba*, 477.

7. Mar Ivanios' letter to Mr. E.J. John, which recalls his encounter with Metropolitan Divanyasios when the latter visited him at Tiruvalla soon after his reunion with the Catholic Church to bid farewell, quoted in T. INCHACKALODY, *archbishop mar ivanios*, 390.

of us should unite and become the one Church of the Lord. These quarrels and divisions are not divine).⁷ His vision of the independence of individual Churches within the communion of Churches is reflected in his institution of the Bethany Movement as a distinct and independent one within the then Church of his.⁸

Catholic Communion Fulfillment of Malankara Aspirations

Unless all Churches which make the Niceo-Constantinopolitan Profession of Faith in the Church that is also "catholic" intend ecumenism - reunion to be the way for fulfilling and realizing (actualizing) the essential catholicity which each of them enjoys the present ecumenical efforts will not succeed.⁹ Archbishop Mar Ivanios was thoroughly convinced of this ecclesial necessity prophesied by the wisdom of the Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils of Nicea and Constantinople. In fact, in this regard Archbishop Mar Ivanios was only remaining true to the basic foundations of his Church to which he then belonged. The basic foundation of the then Malankara Jacobite (Orthodox) Church included the apostolicity of Mar Thoma Sliha, The Antiochene Syrian liturgy, and the Antiochene Syrian ecclesial tradition. The

Malankara Church was given apostolicity through Mar Thomas Sliha whereby she was also blessed with catholic communion, namely communion with the whole apostolic group headed by St. Peter and the Churches founded through them. The Antiochene Syrian liturgy is originally the liturgy of a Church founded by St. Peter in Antioch. It was handed over by the Antiochene Syrian Church to a portion of the Malankara Church of St. Thomas. At that juncture of time in practice the Syrian Antiochene Church was "cut away" from the catholic communion of Churches headed by the bishop (patriarch) of Rome, who in that capacity is successor of St. Peter. And the prelates of the Antiochene Syrian Church in India made use of the Antiochene Syrian liturgy to make the said portion of the Malankara Church cut themselves away from communion with the bishop of Rome (the Successor of Peter.) But in spite of that, repeated attempts for regaining communion with the bishop of Rome were made by the Malankara people. In the Antiochene Syrian liturgy we recite the prayers said by our Lord's Brother St. James and his successors, and thereby the Malankara people continue and preserve the traditional original purity of our faith¹⁰ and communion with St. Peter and his brothers. The prayers of the

8. Mar Ivanios' presidential address at the convention of the donors to Bethany Movement held on 1105 *kumbham* 9 (Malayalam year) at Perunadu. The speech is quoted in T. INCHACKALODY, *archbishop mar ivanios*, 396-399, 399 paragraph 3; also the final decision no.2 of the same convention, quoted in T. INCHACKALODY, *archbishop mar ivanios*, 400.
9. More on this aspect, VALUPARAMPIL, K., "Communion of Churches: An Ecclesial Experience of the Syro-Malankara *Qurbana*," *Christian Orient* XX/2 (1999) 109-120, 109-11.
10. DOMINIC ZACHARIAS, "*malankara litarjiyute navikaranam*" (Renewal of the Malankara Liturgy), in *davasastra pathanangal* (eds) S. Kanjiramukalil - P.C. Abraham (Kottayam, 2001) 374-381, 375-376, originally published in *aikadipam*, Tiruvalla, November 1981.

Antiochene Syrian Church witness that even when she was kept away from the main stream of the Church in her prayers she maintained her spirit of catholic communion. The Antiochene Syrian ecclesial traditions witness that even when after Chalcedon the mainstream Church ostracized the former as Monophysites, bar Hebraya of this Church taught that there should be four patriarchs in the four corners of the world, and that among them the patriarch of Rome should be the first.¹¹ Communion with the successor of Peter (the patriarch of Rome) and thereby real catholic communion was a foundational aspect of and congenial to the Malankara Church through her apostolicity, the Antiochene Syrian liturgy and her Antiochene Syrian ecclesial traditions. In fact, Mar Ivanios' and his companions' reunion was an expose and realization of the accumulated traditional spirit, desire, efforts and prayer of the malankara Church for Catholic communion. It was not forced from outside either of the Malankara Church or of Mar Ivanios. The Malankara Reunion Movement resumed by Mar Ivanios sprouted from within the Malankara Church herself, and was enforced with added missionary zeal, zeal for ecumenism and reunion of Churches as mission.

Reunion His Mission

As a committed bishop of the then Malankara Jacobite (Orthodox) Church,

Mar Ivanios resumed the Malankara reunion attempts out of his firm conviction of a very specific mission of his call and mission in his own Church, namely to do that which is the best for his Church. Throughout his ministry in that Church he did his best for safeguarding and strengthening her interests. His assiduous and sincere search for the best for his Church confirmed in him the truth and content of the Lord's prayer for unity of the believers to be the best for his Church. Can there be any thing better for the Church than the realization of the prayer of the Church's groom for unity? An unprejudiced historian of mar Ivanios' communion with the Catholic Church is sure to discover that also from a personal aspect his reunion was only the final manifestation and fructification of a long divinely guided and predestined process. Mar Ivanios himself is reported to have confessed that in his early youth his own mother indirectly pointed out Catholic communion as fullness of ecclesial life.¹² While a deacon in the Malankara Jacobite (Orthodox) Church he was renowned for his dedication for promoting among the ordinary faithful a close sacramental life of communion in the sacraments of the Church, and for that matter he was famous among them as "*kudasa semmasan*" (the deacon of sacraments). His zeal for sacramental communion of the faithful strengthened in him the grace of communion of Churches.¹³ It is with a firm conviction of a specific

11. D. Zacharias, "*malankara liturjiyute navikaranam*," 376-377.

12. T. INCHACKALODY, *archbisop mar ivanios*, 139.

13. Chacko Narimattam, "*archbisop mar ivaniosinte sabbakyadarsanavum*", *Talent* (September 2001) 6-18, 7.

mission of prompting and leading the whole Malankara Church to reunion, first a reunion between the divisions of his own Malankara Jacobite (Orthodox) Church, and then that of the whole Malankara Church of Mar Thoma in Kerala, and of the whole Church, that he consented to and accepted his Church's electing him a bishop and received episcopal ordination. This is crystal clear in his post-consecration speech at Niranam:

Keralattilulla suniyanikristyanikalellavarum pazahayakalattu oru sabhayayira - unna prakararam vindum yathartha - maya punaraiyam prapiccu "oru sabhayn oru itayanum" enna visuddha vedoktiye keraliya suriyanikkara sambinhhicitattolamenkilum yatharthbikarikkan katholikkabavatirumeni sramikkendatanu. I vishayattil mahajanangale, ningalkku gauravayuktamaya cumatalayundu. Samuhyacarangal, ratriya cumatalakal, purva caritram, samsarabhasa, vaidikabhasa mutalaya vibayangale sambanthiccu keralasuariyanikkarellavarum tammil aikyamndu. Avar yatharthattil oru samudayamanu matasambhanthamaya vishayangalil matram bbinnatayum piri ccillum sambhaviccirikkunnu. matasambanthamaya vishayangalikkuteyum ella suriyanikristyanikaluyum tammil yojippundakuva takkavannam vandya tirumenikalum avarotu cernnu ningalum

*mana;purvamayi parisramikkendiyirikkunnu.*¹⁴

The main content of this extract is Mar Ivanios' call to his community for reunion to regain the unity as that of the ancient Syrian Christians in Kerala. That call is particularly extended to the catholicos (the head of his Church) so that he works to fulfill the scripture word "one Church and one shepherd." Unity-reunion is the sole soul of his whole speech of the occasion. In the same he requests the gathering to pray to God so that he himself becomes a model for them of unity-reunion for the great glory of God. And he exhorts the whole community to do all possible Christian attempts for unity, and that must be ready to forgive and suffer to any extent for the cause of unity and reunion, and repent for causing division. Later, in a letter to Metropolitan Divanyasios he attests his readiness to be cut into a thousand pieces provided they heal at least one small wound in the holy feet of the Lord.¹⁵ To the same metropolitan, who expressed his displeasure with Mar Ivanios' reunion attempts, the latter asked: "Should I fulfill God's order or man's will?"¹⁶ Mar Ivanios was reminding the metropolitan of the response of Apostles Peter and John to the Jewish council: "Whether it is right in God's sight to listen to you rather than to God you must judge; for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Act 4, 19

14. Quoted in T. INCHACKALODY, *archbishop mar ivanios*, 324.

15. Quoted in T. INCHACKALODY, *archbishop mar ivanios*, 389-390; the same idea repeated in his speech at the public meeting of the first anniversary of the Malankara reunion at Tirumulpuram, Tiruvalla, quoted in Pellissery publications, *malankara sabha*, 477.

16. Mar Ivanios letter to Mr. E.J. John, 390.

NRSV). In the Above mentioned speech he reminds the community also that gone is the age of division and separation in the Church, and that now it is the age of reunion and unity of the Church; and proclaims the greatest blessing (*paramabbhagyam*) of all bishops to be instruments of reunion and unity, and expresses his hope that the catholicos himself will work to strengthen the spirit of reunion with unequal strength in Kerala.¹⁷ He firmly believed that the loving God has made use of him and his sufragan Bishop mar Theophilus, who accompanied him in reunion, as instruments of reunion.¹⁸ He regretted the division of Christian Churches as a great sin.¹⁹ In his vefy first public address after his episcopal consecration he put forward a great ecumenical principle, namely, those engaged in unity efforts should be sorry for the faults of themselves, and not for those of others.²⁰ Unfortunately, this principle still remains unheard and perhaps even unacceptable to many partners of the present day ecumenical displays.

Ecumenism Not a Socio-Cultural Business Bargain

In the same post-consecration speech Mar Ivanios succinctly states that he calls for the

unity and reunion of the whole Syrian Community (including the Marthomma Church and the Catholics) not for socio-political gains, but for the realization of the Lord's prayer for unity (he quotes that prayer). And he deems unity regained as the greatest blessing of the Church.²¹ In a later letter (dated June 2, 1931) to Bishop Bernard of Jesus he repeats the same vision about reunion. And he tries to recollect the possible main cause for the failure of the former reunion efforts. He discerns it: reunion was proposed as a simple social movement. He confesses that though he is not nobler than the great souls who desired and prayed for reunion, God infused in him absolutely a spiritual vision, namely, the glory of God and the unity of all Christian Churches under the chief shepherd.²²

Ecumenism a Spiritual Exercise

For Mar Ivanios spirituality was not identified with pious exercises, but a life led by the Spirit of God and being obedient to God. For him ecumenism-reunion for regaining the unity of the Lord's Church aimed at effective mission was but co-operating with the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the unity of the Church. He confesses that his ecumenical reunion movement was

17. Quoted in T. INCHACKALODY, *archbishop mar ivanios*, 326.

18. Mar Ivanios' speech at the public meeting of the first anniversary of the reunion, 476.

19. Mar Ivanios' first reunion anniversary speech, 477.

20. Mar Ivaions, post-consecration speech of, quoted in T. INCHACKALODY, *archbishop mar ivanios*, 325.

21. Quoted in T. INCHACKALODY, *archbishop mar ivanios*, 325.

22. Letter of Mar Ivanios to Bishop Bernard of Jesus dated June 2, 1931, as reproduced in Malayalam translation in C. NARIMATTAM, "Mar ivaniosinte...", 12.

infused in him by God and he received it as God's gift with pure spiritual purpose.²³ His ecumenical aspirations strengthened by missionary thrust and purported for the spiritual welfare of the society and of its individual members were manifested already in the institution of the Bethany religious community (O.I.C., S.I.C.) in the malankara Syrian Jacobite (Orthodox) Church. It is well known that the rules and regulations and the very life-style of that religious community mar Ivanios instituted were cultured by the spirit of ecumenism extending beyond the boundaries of his Church and Christianity itself. He deemed ecumenism aimed at the catholic communion of Churches a thoroughly spiritual exercise, a life of response to the Holy Spirit. And it is on account this that the ecumenical movement rejuvenated by him and his colleagues found success.

Conclusion

The Ecumenical-reunion principles of Mar Ivanios are wholly and perennially valid, because they are drawn on and built upon the spirit of Christ the bridegroom and Lord of the Church for his Church, and totally inspired by and responding to the Holy Spirit, and well founded on the ancient ecumenical principles of the undivided catholic Church. In this article I have tried to shed light on some of his ecumenical-reunion principles. There remain yet many

more to be highlighted. Being faithful to the divine tradition given through the sacred scripture and the wisdom of the undivided catholic Church he received the knowledge of ecumenism-reunion and unity as God's eternal plan and will for the Church, fulfillment of the Lord's prayer for the unity of all Christ believers for effective mission. The Malankara Church faces a few fresh difficulties on the way of ecumenism and the full realization of the catholicity of the whole Malankara Church to be fulfilled in catholic communion. In that situation for unprejudiced ecumenists-reunionists Mar Ivanios' principles are inspiring. Who cannot but benefit from his unequal and genuine zeal for reunion-unity, his deep spirituality exercised in the readiness to forgive others, to offer self-sacrifice, regret one's own faults causing or sustaining division and separation rather than singing others faults in this regard? He sought unity of the Catholic Church for the great glory of God, and not the human glory of each Church and her officials. He could not view ecumenism as a mere socio-cultural programme. His attempts for reunion-unity were through and through inspired by the Holy Spirit. Ecumenism-reunion-unity for fruitful mission was the spiritual exercise of his very life in the Church. The Malankara Catholic Church has been blessed with this legacy of his ecumenical-reunion principles.

23. Letter of Mar Ivanios to Bishop Bernad of Jesus, See no. 21.

**SYNOD OF BISHOPS HELD IN ROME FROM SEPT. 30 TO OCT.
26, 2001 ON "THE BISHOP SERVANT OF THE GOSPEL OF
JESUS CHRIST FOR THE HOPE OF THE WORLD"**

Summary of Interventions

**1. H. Em. Card. VARKEY VITHAYATHIL, Archbishop Major of
Ernakulam - Angamaly of the Syro-Malabar Church**

Ever since Pope Leo XIII, in 1894, wrote on the like dignity and rank of Eastern and Western Churches, it became part of Catholic awareness that being exclusively western means being insufficiently Catholic. 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 this repeated exhortation, from Vatican II's *Christus Dominus*, on the pastoral office of Bishops, to John Paul II's *Ecclesia in Asia*, on the pastoral situation in Asia, the much needed swing in mentality has still to come.

The problem is not simply one of taking care of diaspora Catholic communities in a Catholic Church of a different rite, but a matter of how the Church understands herself. It is rather a question of the apostolicity of the Church. Christ did not choose just one apostle, Peter, leaving it up to him to select his own team, but rather left little to chance and chose his vicar as well as his fellow apostles. If the St Thomas Christians are so proud of the tradition of having been evangelized by St Thomas, this shows how keenly felt it is that the "way of Thomas" is thoroughly reconcilable with the "way of Peter", and indeed, that without the way of Thomas the Church would be incomplete.

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 of my relatively small proper territory and to find missionary fields for the numerous missionary vocations with which God has blessed our church. Strange world! In the West they constantly bemoan the lack of vocations adding that so much is jeopardized precisely because of this state of affairs; in the East the good of souls is in jeopardy because circumstances do not allow us to deploy our vast resources. If there is a sin against poverty in the Church, it is the unwillingness to pool resources; if there is a way of multiplication of the bread it is to address courageously a situation which calls for generosity and thinking big in the vineyard of the Lord. So I beg my fellow Bishops to make this sacrifice and help God's work.

But again, this amounts to pleading for a lost cause unless the Church's teaching on the Eastern Churches comes to be an integral part of the ongoing formation of bishops. Here we have long ways to go

since, as is well known, what the Church thinks about herself is a never finished treatise an unfinished symphony, if you like, since God's graces are greater than our *lacunae*. In this way, Bishops will be sensitized to think that, by the very fact of

being ordained bishops, they belong not only to a Latin or an Eastern Church, but to the Church universal. That will help us to be qualified agents of communion among all the Churches of the Catholic Church.

2. H.B. Patriarch emeritus Card. Ignace Moussa I DAOUD, Prefect of the Congregation for Oriental Churches

The Holy Father should be thanked for having chosen the episcopal ministry as the theme of this Synod. Holiness, zeal and the human qualities of the Bishop are reflected in fact in the local Church, which he sanctifies, teaches and leads in the name of Christ. The *Instrumentum Laboris*, remarkably well done, does not miss mentioning the Eastern Catholic Churches and their rich traditions on the matter. However, I would like to add a contribution on certain points.

1. Collegiality and synodality. Our "sui iuris" Patriarchal Churches (cf. IL 74) live the bishops' collegiality (*affectus collegialis*) not only by effective and affective communion with the Church of Rome and her bishop, and with their brother bishops in the same territory, but also synodally. The Synod of Bishops of the Eastern Patriarchates, with extended competencies, is understood as a way of practicing the collegiality of the bishops, sanctioned from the first ecumenical councils (Nicea I in 325, canons 6 and 7, for example), enriched by the long and multiform experiences of the Eastern Churches. Vatican Council II did not hesitate in stating that the Patriarchs of the East were born "by Divine Providence" (*Lumen Gentium*, 23).

2. The pastoral ministry of the Eastern faithful in the **Diaspora**. The Eastern

Catholic Churches, in particular those in the Near East, today face a tragedy: emigration of their faithful, and risk facing it more in the future. Certain Churches count more faithful in the Diaspora than in the traditional territories! This is a great loss for our Churches and for the Christian presence in this part of the world. **But this once again means that the Eastern Catholic Churches must be capable of effectively organizing a proper and apt pastoral ministry for their faithful living the situation of the Diaspora**, evidently in deep communion and real concentration with the local bishops of other "sui iuris" Churches.

3. The election of Bishops. The episcopal vocation comes into the divine choice and the bishop is created by the sacred rite of ordination, be it of the Eastern or the Western tradition. But who makes the Bishop, that is to say the man, who calls him, who elects him? Who prepares the episcopal lists, who organizes the preliminary consultations? Etc.... Two very different yet legitimate traditions answer these questions, which have existed together, side by side, throughout the lengthy history of the Church. The *Instrumentum Laboris* in mentioning "preliminary consultations" obviously alludes to the questions that emerged within

the Church of Latin Rite. The Eastern tradition, sanctioned by the ecumenical councils and the pontifical documents, gives the Synod of Bishops of the "sui iuris" Church competence over the election of Bishops, which raises electoral act to the rank of an ecclesial act of primary importance. The election of the bishop in the Eastern tradition is not the fact or the work of an organ that prepares, studies, proposes names, but the work of a solidary and responsible college which

elects, creates, makes the bishop.

From this we can draw that we should entrust the canonical research made by the Patriarch and the bishops of the Synod and to come back to the ancient and traditional practice on the matter, for the patriarchal as well as the non-patriarchal territories: in other words that the name of the bishop elected by the Synod may be published immediately and that the elected bishop then ask the Pope to accord ecclesial communion to him.

3. H.E. Most Rev. Joseph POWATHIL, Archbishop of Changanacherry of the Syro-Malabar Church (India)

1. Eucharist and the Defence of the Faith

The Eastern Churches look at the bishop as an Eucharistic person. As teacher he has to ensure that the community's knowledge and faith proclamation agrees with its Eucharistic celebration. The bishop preaches the Word to gather a Christian people around the Eucharist where the Faith of our Fathers is celebrated and proclaimed. The Church has been always tempted to dilute the Apostolic Tradition to suit the convenience of the people under one pretext or another. While the teachers and preachers of the modern media confuse the ordinary faithful, the bishop has the duty to raise his voice for the Church of Christ. He has also the obligation to verify and co-ordinate the exercise of charisms in the light of Apostolic Tradition. It also makes sure to lay down one's life in defence of the true faith.

II. A Collegial Ministry

The bishop has to teach and act in communion with the college of bishops under the leadership of the Bishop of Rome.

It is called 'Synodality' in the East, a moving together of the whole church with the bishops who are closely united according to the model of the Triune God. In the Synodal process, the bishops used to verify their faith with each other. Petrine ministry in the Church is that of helping the individual Churches to be faithful to their own faith traditions. The Petrine office will have to encourage valid local initiatives and strengthen necessary local structures. There need be no opposition between the two.

III. The Ecumenical Task

The Bishop has the obligation to promote ecumenism through prayer, collaboration, faithfulness to tradition and theological dialogue. Eastern Catholic Churches have a special role in promoting ecumenism. They do this by being faithful to their own traditions of liturgy, theology and spirituality. They should have the courage to own up the whole Oriental heritage and to live by it. The Western Church should fully recognise this role of the Orientals and their right to give pastoral care to their migrants.

Book Review

Geevarghese Chediath, *PATRISTIC QUIZ*, Kottayam, 2001, p.60, Rs.20 (OIRSI-248):

There are at present several biblical Quizzes in Malayalam. But this book is the first of its kind in the Indian languages. It is an easy guide to those who cannot go through the whole patristic manuals. It is a door to the Fathers.

Idem., *Mar Aprem, Parudeesa Geethangal* (St. Ephrem, Hymns on Paradise), Kottayam, 2001, p.120, Rs 40(OIRSI-249); *Mar Aprem, Kanyatva Geethangal* (St. Ephrem, Hymns on Virginity), Kottayam, 2001, p. 220, Rs. 70 (OIRSI-250); *Mar Aprem, Manushyavathara Geethangal* (St. Ephrem, Hymns on Nativity), Kottayam, 2001, p. 168, Rs.55 (OIRSI-251); *Mar Aprem, Ulpathibhashyam* (St. Ephrem, Commentary on Genesis, Sermon on Our Lord, Letter to Publius, and Hymns against Julian-all in one volume), Kottayam, 2001, p.286, Rs.90(OIRSI-257): These four volumes contain some of St. Ephrem's important writings in Malayalam translation for the first time. Chediath has succeeded in translating them into beautiful prose. They are conveying the sense of St. Ephrem. Chediath is faithful to the original Syriac text and at the same time he presents to them in a way intelligible to the modern man. Hope he will render into Malayalam the remaining works of St. Ephrem, the great Father of the Church. These volumes contain the **Forewords** of Dr. Geevarghese Panicker (SEERI), Dr. Thomas Koonammackal and Dr. Joseph Naduvilezhham (Paurastya Vidya Peedhom, Vadavathoor, Kottayam) -all the three are experts in the Ephremian literature.

Idem, *Mar Babai the Great, Some Useful Counsels on the Ascetical Life*, Kottayam, 2001, p.71, Rs 50(Mora Etho No-15, Seeri, Baker Hills, Kottayam, 686001). It is the first English translation of one of the ascetical works of Mar Babai the Great (628) of the Persian Church. Mar Babai is known for his Christology. His Christology is the Christology of the so-called *Nestorian Church*. Last year Fr. Chediath translated into Malayalam the **Book of Union** of Mar Babai into Malayalam (SEERI-Nuhro Series-4). See **Christian Orient**, 21/4(2000) p.199.

These are available at: OIRSI Publications, P.B.No.10.Vadavathoor, and Kottayam Kerala. 686010, India; Seeri, Baker Hills, Kottayam, 696001.

Thomas Mannooranparampil.

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THE SYRIAC ORIENT AND THE ST THOMAS CHRISTIAN TRADITION.**

THIS QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

- ❖ Scientific studies on ecumenical ventures
- ❖ Different dimensions of the oriental ethos
- ❖ Current developments in the liturgical theology
- ❖ Perspectives of eastern ecclesiological traditions
- ❖ Investigations into the various aspects of the Canon Law
- ❖ Insights into the inspiring lives of the Fathers, the Saints and the Martyrs of the East

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