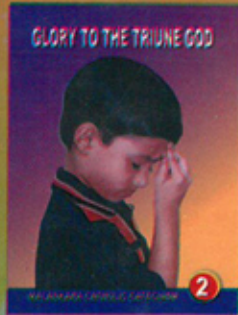




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# CATECHISM OF THE MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH



# THE PROCLAIMING COMMUNITY



# INTRODUCTION

The Command of Jesus Christ to "Go into all the world and proclaim the Good News to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15) is the foundation for Catechesis or faith formation. This faith formation has been continuing in the Church from the days of the early Church in different ways. Catechesis is based on the theological positions of each epoch. A serious awareness on the liturgical, spiritual, theological and disciplinary patrimony of the Malankara Catholic Church led to the promulgation of a unique catechism for the Malankara Catholic Church. The entire Church rejoices at the fulfilment of this desire.

Catechism should never become an intellectual pursuit. True Catechesis should lead the pupil to a life of worship and witness. Catechesis should attempt to lead, nurture and confirm the pupil in the life of faith of the Church to which he or she belongs. Thus the catechumen will be able to know and experience Christ in and through the Church and participate in the mystery of salvation and be in communion with the Holy Trinity. Jesus Christ continues his Salvific Mission in and through the Church. Therefore we have concentrated on an ecclesial centred catechesis. This catechesis is founded on the spiritual heritage of the Malankara Catholic Church.

The topics dealt with in the classes one to seven were the mysteries of God's revelation. In classes eight to ten we deal with man's response to this revelation. Man's fundamental attitude is to adore God who created, preserved and redeemed him. The textbooks eight, nine and ten successively portray society as worshipping, practicing and proclaiming.

Class ten is concerned with the proclaiming community. The basic responsibility of the Church is to proclaim till the end of time (the world) all the mysteries of revelation, which constitute the Good News. In the initial four lessons we learn the fundamental scriptural truths of the proclamation of the Good News. In lessons five to eight we meet with the Eucharistic Liturgy, which is the celebration of the Gospel. In lessons up to twenty, which follow, we learn how to live the proclaimed Gospel. Lessons nine to fourteen expose historically how this was done in the past. The final five lessons teach how adolescents should live according to the principles of the Gospel.

Divine truths intellectually perceived become through the liturgy a divine experience. This understanding and experience lead to witnessing in practice.

Based on the principle that "the rule of prayer is the rule of faith", this textbook will help our children understand better the prayers and songs that we recite in our services

and thus allow them to truly experience our Liturgy. The prayers, hymns and practical suggestions given at the end of each lesson give more meaning and spiritual nourishment to the child.

We are profoundly grateful to His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, Catholicos, Major Archbishop of Trivandrum and the other bishops of the Malankara Catholic Church for their constant prayers, support and suggestions. My special thanks are due to our beloved Aboon Jacob Mar Barnabas, the Apostolic Visitor in ETR, India and Aboon Joseph Mar Thomas, the Apostolic Visitor to America and Europe for his continued support and guidance.

To the many priests, religious and lay faithful who have sincerely collaborated in this endeavour we offer our gratitude. I would like to thank Rev. Fr. Samuel Thykootathil for his effort to translate the Malayalam Text into English. I acknowledge Rev. Fr. Abraham Kalakkudi for his valuable remarks and correction. We would like to thank the Professors of St. Mary's Malankara Major Seminary, Trivandrum, and especially Rev. Dr. Thomas Kanjiramukalil, Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Chediath and Rev. Dr. John Padipurackal. I would like to extend our sincere thanks to the diocesan directors of catechism Rev. Fr. Joseph Poovathumtharayil, Rev. Dr. Antony Chethipuzha, Rev. Fr. Robinson Kunnackad, Rev. Fr. Alexander Valiyaveetil, Rev. Fr. Thomas Pullukalayil and Rev. Fr. Jose Venmalott. Our thanks are also due to the Text book committee - Prof. Mary Mathew, Shri. N.G. Philip and Shri. M.V. Thomas. So also to Mr. Mathews Orathel for designing the text book and pictures. I would like to extend our sincere thanks to Rev. Fr. Joseph Kalariparampil for his assistance. Our indebtedness to Rev. Dr. Antony Kakkanatt who is the master brain behind this work is also sincerely acknowledged.

I pray that through this catechism text each child may be brought to and nourished in and confirmed in the faith of the Malankara Catholic Church and thus be able to know and experience Christ's love more profoundly.

+ **Thomas Mar Koorilos**  
Chairman, M.C.E.S. Commission for Catechesis



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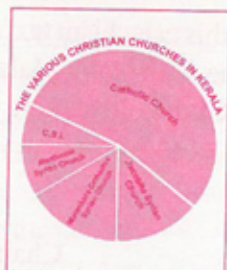
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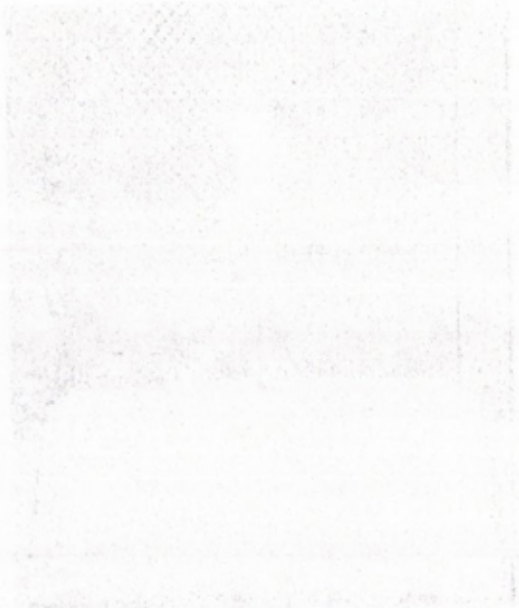


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## PART - I



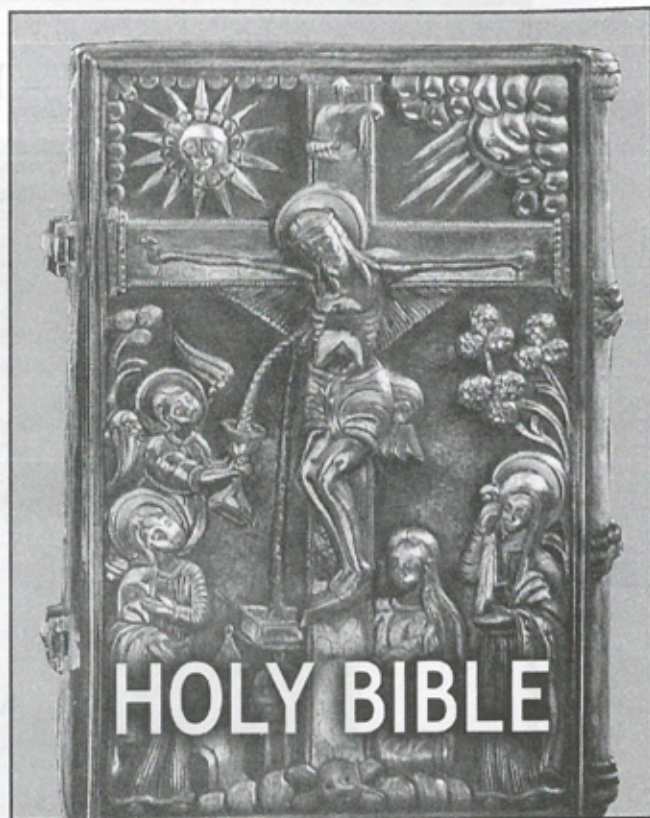
# HOLY BIBLE

# THE HOLY BIBLE



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Christian faith and Holy Bible are inseparably related. Hence to understand Christian faith fully and to enter into its experience, a clear understanding of the Bible is necessary. In this lesson the following subjects are treated: what is the content of the Bible; who wrote the Bible; for whom is the Bible written; what the aim of the writer of the Bible was; how the knowledge of the Bible will match with modern scientific knowledge, etc.



## 1. The Holy Bible and Revelation

The search of man for God is as old as human history itself. What we see in the natural and ancient religions are the concepts of the divine, which man has discovered through his search for God. But in the Christian Religion, it is not man who searches and finds out God; but God comes in search of man and reveals himself to man. Hence, the Christian perception of God is not formed by man in his thought and imagination; on the other hand, in Christianity, we see God revealing himself and coming towards man. The theme of the Bible is the self-revelation of God and man's response to it.

The self-revelation of God begins with the creation of the universe (Genesis 1:1-19). After the creation of the universe, God created the living beings. God continued his revelation through man, whom he created in his

own image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-27). When the first parents sinned and lost paradise, God determined to redeem them.

Abraham lived around 1800 B.C. God intervened in the history and revealed himself to Abraham. God had continued his revelation through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and through the history of Israel, the progeny of Jacob. He shared his love and mercy with them. When the people of Israel were under the slavery of Egypt for a period of 430 years, they were in great suffering and grief. They cried and entreated God for their deliverance. God delivered the Israelites through Moses and he made them reach the land of Canaan after their sojourn in the wilderness for 40 years. The Israelites who reached the land of Canaan, entered into more intimate relationship with God, who loved them. Their experience of God who delivered them from Egypt, who made them cross the Red Sea, who gave them manna and quails, who gave them water from the rock, became strong in them. The people of Israel imparted this God-experience orally to their children.

## The Composition of the Old Testament Books

The God-experience of the people of Israel who reached the land of Canaan, which was first imparted orally was later on written down. Thus the history of the divine revelation, which the Israelites experienced and the history of their response to it, they wrote in the background of their God-experience, is the Old Testament. The creation of the universe, the creation of man, the call of Abraham, the constitution of Israel and all the incidents of the people of Israel until they reached the land of Canaan from Egypt, are described in the first five books of the Bible.

The self-revelation and love of God continued through the people of Israel who reached the land of Canaan. God had continued his revelation through the Judges, Priests, Kings and Prophets.

The people of Israel reached Canaan about B.C. 1300. God made revelations to them prior to the coming of Christ. The books from Joshua to Malachi give an account of this and of Israel's response to it. The Old Testament is the collection of the 46 Books written by many individuals under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit between 1300 and 50 B.C.

## **The Revelation of God in the New Testament**

God, who revealed himself invisibly in the Old Testament, desired to reveal himself fully through his Son in the New Testament. Thus, in the fullness of time, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, gave new meaning to revelation by being born as man. "Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son" (Hebrews 1:1-2). Thus, God the Father revealed himself fully through Jesus Christ. Jesus, through his salvific events, beginning from his birth, activities and instructions of his public life, passion, crucifixion, resurrection, ascension and the descend of the Holy Spirit, has revealed the love and mercy of God the Father to humankind. Jesus, through his instructions: "He who sees me sees the Father; I and the Father are one; I am the way, the truth and the life", taught that he is the fullness of all revelation. Thus God's revelation, which began with the creation of the universe, continued through the creation of man, progressed through the history of Abraham, passed down through the history of Israel, has reached its fullness in Jesus Christ. The risen Jesus ordered his Apostles to proclaim the history of this revelation or the history of salvation till the end of the world: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). Thus, the Church is obliged to proclaim the history of this revelation or the history of salvation till the end of the world.

## **The Composition of the Books of the New Testament**

The small community that believed in Jesus after his resurrection was strengthened by the Holy Spirit. Many things which Jesus did and taught remained within the Christian community orally. Then the early Christian community by about 50 A.D. put in writing their faith. Thus the four gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the 14 epistles in the name of Paul, the Catholic epistles of the apostles Peter, John, James and Jude, and the Book of Revelation of the apostle John, were written by 100 A.D. These books, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit were approved by the Church later on as canonical. Thus the Church taught that there are 27 Books in the New Testament.

The Constitution on Divine Revelation of the Second Vatican Council teaches thus: "Thus the invisible God revealed his immense love through his

revelation. Abiding with his people, God spoke to them. He invited and led them to be in communion with him. The Bible is the sum total of the self-revelation of God in the Old and New Testaments' (D.V. 2). The Bible describes how God revealed himself to his people through his word and deed. God did not merely reveal some truths about him; but we see in the Bible God, who shares his love with man through self-revelation. Since we know God fully through the words of the Bible, Bible is the first means of the revelation of God to us.

## **2. The Bible and the Church**

### **God first formed his own People**

There is the thought in several people whether the Bible or the Church first came into being. There are yet some others, who think that the Bible, which is the word of God, was handed down by God as a complete book.

Years before the Old Testament Books were written; God revealed himself and formed Israel as his people and he guided their history. God did not reveal himself through any written book; but through the life and experience of a community, which he had chosen. It was the community of Israel that was formed first. It is their God-experience that was later on, written down as the Old Testament.

It was many years after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that the books of the New Testament were written. Jesus formed the Church, the community of the faithful, by sending the Holy Spirit. Years before the word of Jesus was written down, the Church had been growing and maturing through the preaching of the Apostles and their instructions, the liturgy, the breaking of the bread and the Christian life. God revealed his new covenant, not through a book, but through the life and experience of the Church, the body of Jesus Christ, the community of the faithful. Hence, it is not the books of the New Testament, but the Christian community that believed in Jesus or the Church that first came into being. This knowledge about the Holy Scripture does not affect either the importance of the Scripture or its holiness. But this knowledge helps to understand the Bible deeply and fully.



## **It is the people of God who wrote the Bible**

It is the people of God who wrote the Bible and codified the same, inspired by the Holy Spirit. It is the community of Israel that wrote the Old Testament. In the same way, it is the early Christian community or the early Church that wrote the New Testament. The people of Israel and the early Christian community wrote the Holy Scripture and codified it through the God-experience of the events of their history. The Holy Bible is written as belonging to the people of God, by the people of God and for the people of God. The Bible is the book of the believing community. It is the Holy Scripture of the people of God. Hence, we ought to become part of the community of the faithful in order to know and understand the Bible fully. There is an inseparable relationship between the Holy Scripture and the Church. It is within the community of the Church, which is led by the Spirit, that we listen to the word of God, experience and live the same. The purity of the Holy Scripture is protected when we read and study the Holy Bible, being in communion with the Church.

## **The Bible, in the life of the Church**

We have understood that we cannot separate each other the Church and the Bible. It is by standing close to Jesus and the Church, his body, that we read and explain the Bible. An explanation of the Bible, standing apart from the Church, makes the meaning of the Bible defective. We ought to interpret the Bible with the help of the Holy Spirit. Hence, the Church never accepts a private interpretation of the Bible apart from the Church. The Church instructs that we should be very alert against such private interpretation of the Bible.

We have understood that the Bible is the book of the Church. The life and the heart of the Church are the words of the Holy Scripture. The proclamation of the Holy Scripture is the fundamental part of the Holy Qurbono. The prayers and symbols of the Holy Qurbono are based on the Holy Scripture. The ancient Church codified the New Testament and proclaimed the whole Holy Scripture on the basis of faith. The theology of the Church, the creed, the truths of faith, the letters are all formed basing on the Holy Scripture. The Christian arts and artistic forms have been made for centuries basing on the Bible. These kinds of visible arts were very helpful for those who could not

read the Bible. Through the liturgy of the past centuries, the Holy Bible in its fullness is being experienced by the faithful. Great honour and respect is specially given to the Holy Bible during the time of worship. The Second Vatican Council teaches that when the Gospel is read during the celebration of the Holy Qurbono, it is Jesus Christ himself speaking to us.

The Holy Scripture regularises the very life-pattern of the Church. On the basis of the word of God, the Church examines herself. The Second Vatican Council teaches that the proclamation of the Church and the Christian life should be nourished and led by the Holy Scripture. Hence, the Church instructs that circumstances should be provided for all to own the Holy Bible and that the Holy Bible should be the foundation and the heart of the instructions, liturgy and life of the Church.

## **3. The Bible and Science**

Those who have written the books of the Bible are those who were chosen by God and have received the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Church teaches that since the spiritual book, the Bible, is divinely inspired, the spiritual matters that are said in it are fully true and that there is no error in it. We are able to understand from the Bible that the universe and all things movable and immovable in it are the creation of God and that the noblest creature is man. The Bible chiefly treats on the relationship that exists among God, man and the universe.

Science is the effort of man, who is created in the image and likeness of God, making use of God-given intellect and power of observation, in order to discover the secrets of the universe and to understand the creatures. This search for truth will ultimately lead one to God himself, who is the supreme truth. But the journey of humankind in search after the internal secrets of the things created by God has to tread yet a long distance. Science is in the path of the search for truth. What science says as truth today may be proved false on the following day. Francis Bacon (1561-1626), the famous English philosopher had said thus: "A little scientific knowledge may alienate men from God. But when scientific knowledge increases, that will bring them back to God". Science helps man to understand the phenomenon of the universe created by God, removing all ignorance and superstitions. At the same time, what religion does is to help him love God and man, his



noblest creature and the other creatures, movable and immovable, destroying all selfishness and fear.

Religion and science, both searching the ultimate truth, are God-oriented. Both have their ultimate end, the good of humanity. If spiritual truths are the revelation of God, scientific principles are the discoveries of science. Hence, they should complement each other and help each other. The world-famous scientist Albert Einstein says: "Though the boundaries of religion and science are clearly demarked, there exists between them strong mutual relationship and dependence... Science without religion is lame and religion without science is blind".

The authors of the Bible have explained earthly things and scientific inferences remaining within the limitations of their contemporary and personal knowledge. Hence we can see in the writing of the authors of the Bible the linguistic, cultural and scientific knowledge of their time. But among certain allusions and scientific conclusions of the Bible and some of the current scientific knowledge, discrepancies may be found. Hence, there are at least some, who argue that there are some mistakes in the Bible and that the Bible, in no way agrees with Science. But the Church teaches that there is no contradiction between the spiritual knowledge of the Bible and the scientific knowledge about the material world and that these two are complementing each other. It is an important theme of theology to show how science, which is founded on the love of the universe and religion, which is founded on the love of God, agree with each other. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a French priest of the Society of Jesus and a famous scientist, has rendered valuable contribution in this field.

### **The Origin of the Universe, Origin of Life and Origin of Man**

The chief subjects in which there is disagreement at first sight in the descriptions of the Bible and in the inferences of science, are the origin of the universe, the origin of life and the origin of man. It is in the Book of Genesis, chapters one to eleven that these topics are described. Bible says that the universe is created through the word of God "Let it be". Bible teaches that God formed man from the earth and gave him life-breath. Through this description, the Bible makes it clear that it is God, who created the

universe, that life originated from God and that it is God, who created man. Bible has depicted these truths in the form of a story and in symbolic language. Bible does not enter into the scientific clarifications of the creation of the universe and man. The aim of the author of the Bible was not to explain them. These details are to be given by science. But, as yet, science could not produce satisfactory answers to these subjects on the basis of convincing proofs. Under these circumstances, certain scientists have suggested some inferences only. Among them the important ones are the theory of Explosion (The Big Bang Theory) and the theory of Evolution.

### **The Origin of the Universe**

What is known by the name of the universe is the totality of the innumerable galaxies, comprising of groups of stars, gas and dust. We can see with our naked eyes only three galaxies including the Milky Way, in which the solar system is included. "The Big Bang Theory" is the inference proposed jointly by three scientists of physics: George Gama, an Ukrenian; Ralph Alfer, an American and Hans Bethe, a French in the year 1948. They argue that in the beginning the 'matter of the universe', which gathered together in great density, exploded on account of their immense pressure, as a result of which the universe was formed. The basis of this theory, which is yet not fully proved scientifically, is that there existed the 'matter of the universe' even before the universe came into existence. The Church understands that it is God who created this primordial matter and the one who worked behind this big explosion.

### **The Origin of Life and Man**

Charles Darwin established the theory of Evolution in 1859. The 'theory of Evolution' taught that the first mode of life was formed from inanimate substance and from the unicellular being, various living beings were formed through evolution and through the same process, finally, man was formed. This theory is not indubitably established through scientific proofs. This is only a scientific inference about the origin of man. This theory contradicts the scientific principle (Bio genesis) that 'Life could originate only from life'. As per principle that the spring of life is life itself, the Church understands that life rose on earth first from God, who is the eternal life.





Sir William Dason, the president of the University of Walkgill in Canada and a renowned scholar of Geography, says thus: "I know nothing about the origin of man except what the Bible says to me – that man is created – I have no more knowledge than that; I have never heard about anyone, who has the knowledge".

### **Genesis: Chapters 1-11**

The books from Genesis to Malachi were not written in chronological order, in the Old Testament. Similarly, all chapters of a book were not written in order at a time. The Old Testament, which we see today, is the codification of the history of the revelation for about 1300 years, till the coming of Christ, written by different individuals.

Genesis is the first book of the Bible which includes the creation of the universe and the creation of man. The very first chapter of Genesis begins with introducing the creation of the universe and the creation of man. But the chapters from one to eleven of Genesis were not those written first. They wrote what spread among the Israelites orally from the history of the ancient father Abraham, the history of the slavery in Egypt and the experiences of the journey through the desert. In short, from what is described in chapter twelve of Genesis, namely, the call of Abraham and the historical events connected with it, were first written in the Bible.

Chapters one to eleven of Genesis were written later and inserted. The first eleven chapters of Genesis which include the description of the creation of the universe and the creation of man, which took place crores of years before, are called the history beyond history or the history before the beginning of history. The people of Israel who reached the land of Canaan began to think backward in the fullness of God-experience. They understood that it is the God who delivered them from Egypt, the God who made them cross the Red Sea, the God who gave them manna and quails in the desert, the God who gave them water from the rock; that it is the same God who created the universe and man. Thus, they wrote in the book of Genesis, Chapters one to eleven about the crores of years' old creation of the universe, about the creation of man, about the sin of man and about the mercy of God. These eleven Chapters are understood as an introduction to the history of the call of Abraham in the Bible.



It is by remaining in the background of the scientific knowledge and other experiences of the Israelites after 1300 B.C. that they wrote this history, which took place crores of years earlier. Hence, it is not proper to understand and interpret these eleven Chapters like the other historical events of the Bible. Here the aim of the author, who wrote the first eleven Chapters of Genesis, was to make the Israelites understand that it is God who created the universe and man and it is God who saved man, who sinned. The author described that God is the one who made the creation of the universe and man in a language understandable to the men of the time. It was not the aim of the author of the Bible to describe how the universe and man were created. It is science that has to answer it. Even though the theories of Big Bang and Evolution are generally accepted today, they are not yet fully substantiated. The Church does not oppose both these theories on the basis of the Bible. For, the Church understands that it is God who acts behind the big explosion of the atom and behind the initial formation of the first mode of life. Hence the Bible and the Church can accept any truth, which science could introduce.

### **Bible and Science are Complementary to Each Other**

What is written in the Bible is about the self-revealing God and the response man gives to this revelation. It was written between 1300 B.C. and 100 A.D. Different authors, who received special inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote the 73 books of the Bible during this period. Since it was written through divine inspiration, the message of the Bible is fully true or free of error. But this message is written with the cooperation of the author. The language of the author, his literary style and knowledge and the scientific knowledge of that age have influenced the writing of each book. Perhaps there might be defects in the understanding and literary style of the author, but by no means it will affect the infallibility (the divine and moral inerrancy). The fundamental message which the Bible gives is beyond error.

What the Bible does is to introduce the history of salvation and propose the way for salvation with the help of the concepts of the universe and forms of writing, which existed at the time of the composition of the Bible. In the light of the new knowledge furnished by science at each period, there may take place doubts about the relevance of certain allusions and descriptions of the Bible. The aim of the Bible is not to teach the worldly

history and the scientific truths, which are subject to observation and experimentation. Bible is not a scientific book. The authors of the Bible have no intention of teaching science. Their aim is to impart the message about the salvation of humankind, which is based on the revelation of God. The aim of science however, is to impart the scientific truths proved through observations and experiments for the progress of humankind. In short, Bible and science, both desire the good and progress of humanity. Bible and science introduce two different approaches necessary for human life; both work for the same end. Both unite in the one aim – the good of man. The Church understands that man has not only a temporal phase but also a spiritual phase and the mutual cooperation of Bible and science is necessary for the integral growth of man. Hence, the Church never looks with suspicion at the growth of science. Science cannot answer all the problems of man. Religion and religious books are necessary for his mental and spiritual realms. Hence, it is necessary that Bible and science work in harmony.

### Worship

O! Word God, you revealed your immense mercy, your immutable fidelity and unchanging love through the Holy Scripture. We fully believe in your word which gives eternal life. Strengthen us that we may deeply understand the truths of the Holy Scripture and to live accordingly.

### Life Witness

1. Lead the reading of the Bible in families and family conferences.
2. Memorise the names of the books of the Bible.

### Memorise

“Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path”  
(Psalm 119:105).

### Questions

1. Bible is the history of the revelation of God and the response man gave to it. Describe.
2. Describe the relationship between the Church and Bible.
3. Why is it said that the Bible and science are complementary?
4. How are Chapters one to eleven of the Book of Genesis to be understood?



# THE HOLY TRINITY

All services of our Liturgy begin with the praise to the Holy Trinity: “Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and forever. Amen”. Almost all the prayers conclude with offering praise and thanksgiving to each Person of the Holy Trinity: “We will offer praise and thanksgiving to you and to your Son and to the Holy Spirit now and forever”.



The three divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit remain one in their divine nature and essence. That is why the Church teaches that there is only one God and three Persons in God. God, who is thus one in three Persons is called the Triune God or the Trinity. This truth is not discovered by man with his intellect. God revealed it himself to man through Jesus Christ. The God, who creates, saves and protects man, is the Triune God or the Trinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Belief in the Holy Trinity is the central point of Christian belief. In this lesson we learn about the Holy Trinity and about each Person of the Trinity.

## The Holy Trinity and Revelation

God, the reality, is above the thought and intellect of man. Man is neither able to directly understand nor interpret the invisible God. Hence, we will be able to know God accordingly as he reveals himself to us. We know God as much as God reveals to us. God reveals himself gradually. The revelation which began with the creation of the universe continued through the creation of man, through the call of Abraham and through the history of Israel. Thus, in the Old Testament, God revealed himself invisibly. But in the New Testament, God revealed himself fully through his Son, Jesus. It is Jesus, who revealed to humankind about God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

Jesus taught: “No one has ever seen God” (John 1:18) and “No one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Matthew 11:27). Besides, Jesus says that it is he who reveals God to the world: “It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known” (John 1:18; Hebrews 1:2).

Revelation is not the unveiling of certain knowledge about him, but God revealing his own personality. God exists from all eternity in the state as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. He reveals himself in the same state.

## Holy Trinity in the Holy Scripture

### In the Old Testament

In the Old Testament God reveals himself as the only one God: The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the God of Israel is one. The first of the Ten Commandments given through Moses says thus: “I am the Lord your God... You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:2-3). The only God of Israel is known under various names: *El* (God), *El Shadhai* (God of the mountains), *El Elion* (The Supreme God), *El Bethel* (God of the house of God), *El Olam* (The Eternal God), *Yahweh* (God of the Covenant), *Adonai* (The Lord, Master). Similarly, in order to qualify God, several names such as: the Rock (Deuteronomy 32:4), the Holy One (2 Kings 19:22) and the King (Exodus 15:18), were used in the Old Testament. In course of time, other names were combined to the name Yahweh or *Yahowa* and the name Yahweh came into more common use.



In the Old Testament, the one God was not clearly revealed as three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. But in the New Testament, it is Jesus who revealed the one God, as Triune. When we interpret the Old Testament under the background of the New Testament, we can find some allusions about the three persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. There was the tradition in the Old Testament to see God as Father (2 Samuel 7:14; Psalms 2:7, 89:27; Exodus 4:2; Isaiah 1:2). The Church understands the usages and the prophecies about the Messiah introduced in the Old Testament such as: the Wisdom of God, the Son of God and the Son of Man are about the Son. So also, the Church teaches that the terms: the Spirit of God, the Vigour of God and the special Strength of God, signify the Holy Spirit.

### In the New Testament

The only God of the Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament as three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The incarnate Son, Jesus clearly revealed about God, his Father, about his Sonship and about the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father.

### God the Father

Jesus called God *Abba* or ‘Father’ (Mark 14:36). In the Jewish culture, the term *Abba* was the word used by the children to call their father affectionately. Jesus revealed through the use of the word ‘Abba’, that he is the Son of God the Father. There are several references that Jesus gives about the Father, such as: ‘God is Jesus’ own Father’ (John 5:18), ‘Jesus is the only Son of the Father’. Jesus clearly taught that it was God the Father who sent him, that it was his duty to fulfil the will of his Father and to reveal the Father and that his service was to give to the human race the love, mercy and the goodness of the Father.

### God the Son

It is part of the history that Jesus, the Nazarene, born of the Virgin Mary of Nazareth by the Holy Spirit, grew up in Nazareth, led his public life in Palestine, died on the cross and resurrected. This Jesus is the only Son, born of the Father from all eternity. Whenever Jesus introduces himself, he says the fact clearly that he is the Son. The personality of Jesus is the personality of the Son. Through his instruction that ‘He and the Father are

one', 'One who sees him, sees the Father' (John 14: 5-14), Jesus made it clear that he shares the same divine nature of God the Father and that just as the Father is God, the Son also is God.

### **God the Holy Spirit**

Jesus clearly teaches about the Holy Spirit. It is Jesus who sends the Holy Spirit, the helper from the Father. "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf" (John 15:26). Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to his Apostles during his public life. "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever" (John 14:16). Thus, Jesus revealed the divine personality, the Holy Spirit, different from the Father and the Son. In short, Jesus clearly revealed about God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father.

The usage of the word Holy Trinity is not in the Holy Scripture. But there are several references about the three persons of the Trinity. We see the three persons of the Trinity together at the time of the baptism of Jesus in Jordan. When Jesus received baptism in Jordan, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending upon him. A voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, the beloved; with you I am well pleased" (Mark 1:9-11). Thus, the Father with his voice, the Son with his presence and the Holy Spirit in the form of dove were present at the time of the baptism of Jesus. This event gives a clear sign about the Holy Trinity. Jesus, when he gave the apostolic message to his disciples said thus: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

### **The Nicene Creed and Belief in the Trinity**

In the early period of the Christian religion, the Church received as Christians those who confessed belief in the Trinity. When one received baptism and became a member of the Church, the one who received baptism or the god-parent (god-father/mother) had to confess faith in the Trinity. In the early period, the Creed of the Apostles and by about the 4<sup>th</sup> century, the Creed of Nicea were approved as Creeds of the Universal Church.



There are no three topics for the Christian faith; but only one, that is the Triune God. When the Christian believes that there is only one God, he admits that the one God reveals himself through three persons and is understood as such. We mean by belief in the Triune God, not only the unity in the divine nature, but also the three persons become one. The unity of the three persons in one essence is meant here. The thoughts of the Nicene Creed in the Holy Trinity are referred here (The Catechism of the Catholic Church 232-267).

### **We Believe**

The meaning of **we** is we who receive the divine revelation, that is the Church, the Church to which I belong, that is; I, we, who are the Church through baptism. **Believe**:- 'No one has ever seen God' (John 1:18); hence if God had revealed, I should accept the same. That is what is said to be 'belief'. Hence, this means that 'there is God' and that 'we believe in the revelation, which God has made'.

### **We believe in one God**

To confess belief in one God is the first principle of Christian faith and the foundation of the other truths of Christian belief. Christianity entered into a world where there were different concepts of God. The essence of proclaiming and confessing one God is to announce clearly that there is a being, who is capable of revealing the meaning of every other being, who is above all, is omnipotent and supreme.

### **We believe in God the Father**

The word 'God' brings to our mind the superseding nature of God, the supremacy over the world and certain experiences about the supreme and unattainable God. But when we call God, Father, we have a personal relationship, love and nearness with God. When we say that God is Father, we ought to understand that the Father gives life, continues to love his creature, protects it and intervenes in the affairs of his creature. The Holy Scripture says that God is love (1 John 4:9). By calling God, Father, we enter into a loving relationship with God and show forth our filial dependence, love and obedience to him.

When we address God, Father, it doesn't mean that God is man or woman or neuter. God is above all these. God's paternity has no limitation. Man's paternity has bodily limitations. Hence, the paternity of man is realized through the help of the maternity of woman. The qualities, which are contained in the paternity of God, reflect partially in man and woman. God, the Father is the one who begets, the Son is the one begotten. Hence the Son has the eternal substance of the Father. The Son is the eternally begotten of the eternal Father. The Father is omnipotent. He is the creator of everything. The Son is the image and substance of the Father (Hebrews 1:3).

### **We believe in Jesus Christ, the One Lord**

The name 'Jesus' is very common in Palestine. But 'Messiah' is a title. The meaning of the word Messiah is 'one who is anointed'. The prophets had prophesied about this Anointed, the Messiah, who was to come. The Old Testament introduces the Messiah to come, as the one who has the authority of God, whom God has filled with the Holy Spirit, who saves the people, etc. The people of Israel expected that the personality of the Messiah to come would be more glorious than the personalities of the anointed priests, prophets and kings of the Old Testament. The person, Jesus of Nazareth, is this Messiah.

Jesus, the Messiah is Lord. A leader having authority and power is called 'Lord'; the Greek equivalent is *Kirios*. When we say that Jesus Christ is Lord, we understand that he has all the authority, power and lordship of God. The Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is equal in substance to God the Father; he is perfect God like the Father.

### **The Incarnate Son of God**

The Son of God descended from heaven for the salvation of humankind and was born man from the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is a miracle which God alone could do. Hence, it can be understood only with faith. "The Word became flesh and lived among us" (John 1:14). Jesus, born from the Virgin Mary, is the Son of God. He is the Messiah whom the people of Israel expected. He had the human nature in everything except sin. Jesus lived as man for the salvation of man, suffered, died on the cross, was buried, resurrected on the third day and is seated at the right hand of God the Father.



The passion, death and resurrection are the most important events in the life of Jesus in this world. It is the resurrection of the Messiah that gives meaning to his passion and death (1 Corinthians 15). The resurrection of the one crucified is the proof that he is the Son of God and God himself. The Church understands the passion, death on the cross and resurrection as a mystery. This is called the paschal mystery. Through death, Jesus delivered us from sin and through resurrection, he has opened to us the way for a new life.

The Church believes that the risen Jesus sits gloriously at the right hand side of the Father and that he would come again to judge the living and the dead.

### **We believe in the One Holy and Living Spirit**

Just as the Son was born from the Father from eternity, the Holy Spirit also proceeded from the Father. Just as the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit too is God in substance. Hence, the Holy Spirit also is glorified along with the Father and the Son. It is Jesus, who promised to us the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father. It was through Jesus that we got the Holy Spirit. It was this Holy Spirit whom Jesus promised, who descended upon the Apostles on Pentecost, who vivified the Church and who still continues to operate in the Church.

The Holy Spirit can be considered as the loving gift of the Father. It is through receiving the Holy Spirit that we become sharers in the divine life and we enter into the experience of salvation. That is why it is said that the Holy Spirit gives life. The Church is the community of those who thus received the Holy Spirit through baptism. Through the Holy Spirit we come into the fellowship with the Father and the Son of the Trinity. We believe, hope and expect that this Trinity, after our death, will resurrect us and will give new life to us.

### **The Holy Trinity and the Church**

The aim of the life of a Christian is to be in the fellowship of the Triune God, to continue to exist in that fellowship and to enjoy that fellowship. Thus, by becoming the children of God through the fellowship of the Triune God and through sharing in the holiness of God, our Christian life

becomes meaningful (1 John 3:1-3). A Christian is one, who becomes a saint through the fellowship of the Holy Trinity. This is the experience of salvation. We enter into the fellowship of the Holy Trinity through Jesus Christ. It is through our obtaining eternal life through Jesus Christ that we become saints and come to the path of salvation. Jesus is the sacrament of salvation or the sign. Jesus gives his life today through the Church. The Church is the continuation, body and sign of Jesus. The three persons of the Trinity give salvation to human beings by dwelling and acting in the Church. It is through the Church that we know the Holy Trinity, experience and are in the fellowship with the Trinity and through that come into the experience of salvation. The sacraments are the visible actions, which continuously make us sharers in the fellowship of the Holy Trinity. Through the sacrament of baptism we become the children of the Father for the first time, brothers of the Messiah and the temples of the Holy Spirit. Thus, we become sharers in the holiness of God, of the splendour of perfection of the Trinity and in the fellowship of the Triune God. That is why the Fathers of the Church had proclaimed that the Holy Church is born from the Holy Trinity. Through each sacrament we share in the life and holiness of the Holy Trinity. It is through the celebration of the Holy Qurbano of the Church that we enter into perfect fellowship with the Holy Trinity.

### **Holy Qurbano, the Greatest Worship we offer to the Triune God**

The Holy Qurbano is the greatest worship the Church offers to the Triune God. The Holy Qurbano is the heart-beat and life-breath of the Church. The Holy Qurbano creates the Church and manifests it. Hence, the Church and the Holy Qurbano are intrinsically united. It is when the Holy Qurbano is offered, the Church manifests her own identity, being united to the fellowship with the eternal Trinity. The liturgy of the Church is Trinitarian by its very nature. The Church exists in the image of the Holy Trinity. The Church was formed when the presence of Jesus Christ, the only Son of the Father was received through the Holy Spirit. For this reason, the Church is the place for fellowship with the Holy Trinity. This fellowship reaches its sublimity through the Holy Qurbano. Through receiving the Holy Qurbano, we come to the



love of the Father through the Messiah and the Holy Spirit. The Father is the end of the worship of the Church; it is the same Father, who is the beginning of salvation and worship. The Son and the Holy Spirit are the incomparable and inevitable intercessors of the celebration of the liturgy. Each Holy Qurbano becomes a Pentecost. Hence, the celebration of the Holy Qurbano is the most important means for receiving the Holy Spirit. The priest bids good bye to the faithful at the end of the Holy Qurbano after having entrusted them to the grace and blessings of the Holy Trinity.

### **The Holy Trinity, a Mystery**

The word 'mystery' is used in the Holy Scripture in relation to revelation. The word used for this in Syriac is '*Roso*' and in Greek '*Mysterion*'. In the New Testament, especially in the epistles of St. Paul, the word mystery is used to mean God's plan for our salvation. Hence the word mystery ultimately does not mean either a divine truth beyond our understanding or a divine action which is above our intellect and thought, but this mystery is above all God, who gives himself to us as a gift in the plan of salvation. According to the epistle of St. Paul, mystery means the salvation through Jesus Christ. The central mystery of our faith is the Messiah. Hence, the central point of salvation revealed through the Messiah is the Holy Trinity itself. Hence, the Church considers the Trinity as a mystery. Ultimately there is only one mystery; that is God himself; that is the Holy Trinity. The mystery of the incarnation, the mystery of salvation, the mystery of the Church, the mystery of the Holy Qurbano, are all various realities of the mystery of the Trinity; in other words all these give to men the mystery of the Trinity in various manners.

The unity of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity is not against their identity or personality. On the other hand, their identity only intensifies their unity (John 17:11). Through the inner life among the three persons of the Trinity, there results only one existence, one essence, one will, one action and one power. The Greek Fathers of the Church call this the '*perikoresis*'. The fact that man shares this inner life of the Trinity is what is meant by eternal life or salvation. This is the mystery of salvation, the mystery of the Holy Trinity. We sing thus in the Malankara Liturgy:

(Ara-am Divasamathil..)

“Trinity’s mystery;  
Grace of the Father,  
Mercy - of the Son  
And Spirit’s indwelling;  
Let them at all times  
Remain in our midst  
Halleluiah o Halleluiah  
Now and forever”.

The desire as well as the hope of each Christian is to live thus forever in communion with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

### The Holy Trinity in the Malankara Liturgy

We begin all the services and prayers of the Malankara liturgy, by making the sign of the cross, while reciting the prayer of praise to the Trinity. Similarly, we conclude most of the prayers offering glory to the Trinity. There are many hymns and prayers in the liturgy, which glorify the Trinity using the very word ‘Trinity’. We, sing thus in the prayer of Soutoro:

(Karthave krupa cheyyaname..)

“Three in one and one in three  
Who remains as Trinity,  
Father, Son and Holy Ghost  
Praise to you, O one true Lord”.

Again, we sing in the Evening Prayer of Friday:

(Ella vamsangalil ninum edukkapettavalam..)

“Glorious Trinity, praise to the Father  
Honour to the Son  
Thanksgiving to the Holy Ghost;  
Three are the Persons, known by three names  
And let there be,  
Glory to God forever”.

In the Night Prayer, we pray thus: “Glory to the Trinity, glory to the Trinity; we glorify the Trinity, which is deserving of praise; self-existing and eternal. Praise is due to you O God, at all times”. During the celebration of the Holy Qurbano, at the time of the blessing of the thurible, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are specially glorified. At the end of the celebration of the Holy Qurbano, the celebrant blesses the faithful and dismisses them and sends them back, entrusting them to the grace and blessings of the Trinity. Thus, there are many hymns and prayers in relation to the Trinity.

The presence of the Trinity is prayed for in the celebration of all the sacraments. It is in the name of the Trinity that water is blessed in Baptism, that Baptism is conferred, and that the candidate is anointed with *myron* while conferring the sacrament of Confirmation. Again, it is in the name of the Trinity that the priest absolves the sins in the sacrament of Reconciliation and in the Anointing of the sick, when he anoints with the holy oil. It is in the name of the Trinity that in the service of Marriage, the rings and the cross (*minnu*) are blessed and also the candidates are ordained in the sacrament of the Sacred Orders. In short, the Malankara Liturgy gives great importance to the Holy Trinity.

The centre of Christian faith is the Trinity itself. In the same way, the centre of the Christian life also is the Trinity.



## Worship

O God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, we adore you. We believe that the omnipotent God is one in nature and essence and that there are three Persons in God. O Holy Trinity, the centre of our faith and life, we confess you. Do strengthen us, O! Father, who created us, Son, who redeemed us and Holy Spirit, who protects us.

## Life Witness

Find out the prayers and hymns in the Malankara Liturgy, which are related to the Holy Trinity.

### Memorise

“If you love me, you will keep my Commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever”  
(John 14:15-16).



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## Questions

1. What are the references about the Holy Trinity in the Old Testament?
2. What is meant by saying, ‘We believe in God the Father’?
3. Why is it said that the Holy Qurbano is the greatest worship offered to the Triune God?

# JESUS CHRIST

The Christian religion originated not basing on any system of philosophical principles or on any creed; it is based on the person of Jesus Christ. The usage of the terms - Christian and Christian Religion, took form in relation with Jesus Christ. Hence, in order to understand the Christian religion and the Christian beliefs, we ought to understand Christ himself. Various thoughts about Jesus Christ are introduced in this lesson.



## 1. The Concept of the Messiah and Jesus of Nazareth

The meaning of the word Messiah is ‘the anointed one’. The installation ceremony of the prophets, kings and priests of the Old Testament was conducted through anointing the head with oil. The anointing with oil was a special ceremony by which a person is set apart and consecrated for an important service. Hence, the Messiah means one who is deputed by God for the accomplishment of a special service, one who is anointed by God. In the concept of ‘Messiah’ of the Old Testament, the Jewish people understood that the Messiah to come would be prophet, priest and king.

The origin of the idea of the Messiah, according to experts, is in the book of Samuel (2 Samuel 7:12-14). The afore-mentioned citation is the scriptural



text of Yahweh spoken through the prophet Nathan that there would be a Royal Rule belonging to the clan of King David and that it would last forever. Here, the thought that the Messiah would be king is very strong.

The combined thoughts of the concepts, 'Messiah' and 'the reign of Yahweh' originated by 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C. Prophet Amos taught that the day would come when Yahweh would establish his reign and then all injustice and exploitation would come to an end. Thus, 'the day of Yahweh' was later on accepted as an explanation of the reign of the Messiah. Thus the Jews hoped that the period of the Messiah would arrive, that a reestablishment of Israel would come, that a beautiful, ideal life would take place on this earth and that there would be deliverance from every kind of hegemony.

The hope that the Messiah would come for their deliverance became very strong during the period of the exile (B.C. 6<sup>th</sup> Century). They considered that the Messiah would be born of the clan of David in order to save them from the slavery of Babylon and to deliver Israel. The Old Testament had meant by the word 'Messiah', the king who would be sent by God in the fullness of time.

### The References Concerning the Messiah

The Jewish people considered the Messiah as a super human person, who is able to deliver them politically. But the prophets introduced the Messiah as one who would give salvation to all people.

Prophet Micah said clearly that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. "But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrata, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days" (Micah 5:2).

Isaiah and Jeremiah indicated that the Messiah to come, would be from the clan of David. "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots" (Isaiah 11:1). Jeremiah prophesied about the Messiah thus: "The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall exercise justice and righteousness in the land" (Jeremiah 23:5).

Isaiah gave the indication that the Messiah would be born from a virgin: "Look, the young woman is with child and she shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). The prophecy of Zechariah indicated that the arrival of the Messiah was imminent: "Rejoice greatly, O Daughter Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zechariah 9:9).

We can see indications about the Messiah not only in the prophetic books, but in other books of the Old Testament also. On the occasion when Jacob blessed his sons, he blessed Judah as follows: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, or the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and the obedience of the peoples is his" (Genesis 49:10). Similarly, Psalm 89, verses 20-38 indicate that the Messiah is the anointed one from the house of David.

So also, the suffering servant of the prophecy of Isaiah (Isaiah 40-50) and the usage of the term Zerubbabel of the prophecy of Haggai and Zechariah (Haggai 2:23; Zechariah 4:6-10), the thought of the son of man in the prophecy of Daniel (Daniel 8:15-27), indicate the Messiah.

The expectation of the Israelites about the Messiah was realised in Jesus, the Nazarene, who was born in Bethlehem from Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit, who grew up in Nazareth and spent his public life in Palestine. All prophecies of the prophets about the Messiah were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. Thus, Jesus of Nazareth began to be called the Messiah. The person Jesus began to be known also as Jesus, the Messiah. To the question of Jesus: "Who am I?" Peter answered: "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16). Many confessed Jesus as the Messiah during his public life itself. It is evident in the Gospel that Jesus accepted the fact that he was the Messiah.

The word 'Messiah' originated from the Hebrew word 'Messiah'. *Christos* is the word used in Greek. The word 'Christ' was formed from 'Christos'. Hence, the words 'Messiah' and 'Christ' are used in the same meaning. Hence, the usage, Jesus the Messiah and Jesus Christ has the same meaning.



## 2. Christ, the Historical Person

Jesus Christ is neither an imagination nor a mental creation of anyone. But he is the human person, who entered into history 2000 years ago. The chief source for knowing about the life history of Jesus Christ is the New Testament; especially the Gospels, the Epistles of Sts. Peter and Paul and the Acts of the Apostles. Besides, there are descriptions about Jesus Christ in the Apocryphal books also. Similarly, there are allusions about Jesus Christ in the letters of some of the non-Christian historians.

### In the New Testament

It is in this way that the Gospels introduce the history of Jesus. Augustus Caesar, the Roman emperor ordered the enumeration of all citizens of his empire. Accordingly, when Quirinius was governor in Syria this first registration took place. Since Joseph belonged to the family and clan of David, he went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem together with Mary, his wife, who was expecting a baby. While they were there, she gave birth to her first born child. They gave him the name 'Jesus' (Luke 2:1-7). Matthew, the Evangelist writes thus: "In the time of king Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem" (Matthew 2:1).

All places, which the Gospels introduce, where the Christ-events took place exist even today under the same name. Bethlehem, where Jesus was born, Nazareth, where Jesus grew up, river Jordan, wherein, Jesus received baptism, Galilee and Capernaum, where Jesus spent his public life, Jerusalem and Gethsemane, where Jesus spent the last part of his service, Calvary, where Jesus was crucified, Bethany, from where Jesus ascended into heaven, etc., all these places remain even today as part of history. So also, Augustus Caesar, the Roman emperor, Herod, the king of Judea and Pontius Pilate, who was the Roman governor, belong to history. Hence, there is no doubt that Jesus Christ is a historical person.

### Non-Christian Witnesses

Some of the ancient historians have written about Christ. Cornelius Tacitus, in his Annual Chronicle, written in A.D. 116, says about Christ and Christians

thus: "The origin of Christians is from Christ; Christ, however, received the capital punishment from Pontius Pilate, our procurator, during the reign of Tiberius. With that, that group (Christians) subsided for a certain period. But now, they have raised their head again in Judea and even in the city of Rome" (Annals, Book 15, Ch. 44).

Swetonius Tranqualus, a historian who lived around 120 A.D. writes as follows: "Emperor Claudius had banished a group of people, who created riot in the city in the name of Christ".

In a letter written by Plinius Minor, the Roman governor of Bithynia (111-113 A.D.) addressed to Trojan, the emperor, complains about Christ and the Christians.

Joseph Flavius, a Jewish priest, born in Jerusalem in 37 A.D. and died in 97 had written about Jesus. He mentions about Christ in his books: 'The Revolt of the Jews', which he wrote in 77 A.D. and in 'The Antiquity of the Jews', written in 93. "Around this period there appeared a wise man, by name Christ. He was a man having many wonderful charisms. The eminent persons of our nation judged him guilty. Pilate sentenced him for death on the cross. Just as the prophet had prophesied, he resurrected on the third day and appeared to them. This group known as Christians are seen even today" (*Antiquitates Judaearum* 18:3). Besides, there are allusions about Jesus in many Jewish books. One thing is evident from these witnesses of the non-Christians; they proclaim Jesus indubitably as a historical person.

### Christ and Christian Year

The calculation of the year basing on the birth of Jesus Christ is now universally accepted. The birth of Jesus has divided history into two: before Christ and after Christ. In order to indicate the period after Christ, A.D. is used in English and in other Western languages. A.D. is the short form of the two Latin words *Anno Domini*, which means 'the Lord's Year'. The period before Christ is written as B.C. (Before Christ) in English and A.C. (*Ante Christum*) in Latin. It was Dionysius Minor, who was born and brought up in Scythia, near the Red Sea in the 6<sup>th</sup> Century and later on settled down



of the world: "For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples" (Luke 2:30-31). Thus, Jesus of Nazareth was known as the Messiah to come and the Saviour.

### Salvation, in the Old Testament

In Hebrew, the word *Yash* is used to mean 'salvation'. The freedom and safety one derives from being freed from all kinds of prohibition and bondage, is what is meant by *Yash*. The word salvation is used in the Holy Scripture to signify deliverance from wars, attacks and dominion (Psalm 91; Jeremiah 42:11; 1 Samuel 9:16). The following usages: "Yahweh is the Saviour of the people", "Yahweh saves" are often used in the Old Testament; The salvation of Israel is in the hands of Yahweh (Hosea 13:4; Jeremiah 3:23), God is the Saviour (Psalm 18:47). Like this, God is depicted in various ways, related to salvation.

Israel had understood the fact that God had delivered them from Egypt as the greatest act of salvation (Exodus 14:2-4). In short, the Old Testament means by the word salvation; deliverance from all kinds of slavery: from enemies, poverty and diseases (Psalms 3:7, 6:4, 12:6, 59:2).

The people began to wait for the Saviour, who is to deliver Israel, after the exile of Babylon (Psalms 14:7, 69:35). During that period, the prophets introduced salvation, centred on the Messiah, the Messiah to come or King, as the Saviour (Jeremiah 23:5, 33:15; Zechariah 9:9). Isaiah prophesied that salvation, which the Messiah would give is eternal (Isaiah 51:6) and he also taught that the new Israel and the new Zion are the salvation. In short, what the Old Testament means by salvation is, deliverance from all evils and bonds, and the safety, joy and peace, which the humankind thus gets.

### Salvation, in the New Testament

The words: to save, Salvation and Saviour are profusely used in the New Testament. The influence of the Old Testament is quite evident in their usage. The words: Saviour and Salvation have originated from the Greek words: *Soter* and *Soteria*. In the broad sense, the words: Saviour and Deliverer mean the same.

The people of Israel considered that the Messiah to come, would be the Saviour and that he would deliver them from every bond. Thus, they waited for the Messiah, the Saviour. In the fullness of time, Jesus was born from the Virgin Mary at Bethlehem, grew up in Nazareth, led public life in Palestine and surrounding places and saved many people from sin, disease, death, Satan, hunger and from social slavery.

In short, the salvation envisaged by Jesus included the total human person. What Jesus meant by salvation was the total deliverance of humankind. Jesus became man in order to set humankind free from all sorts of bondage, bodily, physical, mental, political, communal and spiritual. Jesus states thus at the synagogue: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has appointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour" (Luke 4:18-19).

Jesus saved humankind perfectly at the end of the public life, through his passion, death on the cross and resurrection. Jesus, perfect God and perfect man, came in order to do reparation for all the faults and sins committed by humankind. By becoming the Lamb of God, carrying all the sins of the world, he offered himself as the sacrifice of expiation. Thus, Jesus saved humankind by doing reparation through his death on the cross. Through his resurrection, he won victory over death and destroyed the bondage of death. Jesus proclaimed through his resurrection that he who believes in Jesus and is associated with him will be resurrected like Jesus and will achieve victory over death.

One partakes of the salvation donated by Jesus through faith in Jesus and through the conversion, which ensues from it. The visible act for that, is to become a member of the Church through baptism. One ought to grow in this salvation through his continuous fellowship with Jesus, through virtuous deeds and through works according to the faith. One gets the full experience of this salvation only at the consummation of the world. Thus, one owns the salvation wrought by Jesus through the Church and through the sacraments of the Church and grows in the experience of salvation.



Jesus is the Saviour of the whole humankind. The salvation, which Jesus wrought, belongs to all human beings. Hence the members of the other religions, when they live according to the precepts of their religions and in accordance with their own conscience, they too indirectly partake of the salvation brought about by Jesus. Jesus is known as the Saviour of the world, because all human beings are saved through him.

## 5. Jesus Christ, in my Life

Peter answered to the enquiry of Jesus "Who am I?": "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:13-17). Each one should answer this question 'who Jesus is?' One does not become a true Christian by merely accepting that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, a historical person, the Saviour of the world and true God and true man. But on the other hand, an individual grows in Christ-experience, only when he accepts fully the person of Jesus as Lord, God and Saviour and confesses as such and grows in personal relationship with Jesus. It is this Christ-experience, which renders the experience of salvation to each individual. The vocation of a Christian is thus to identify himself fully with Jesus. Then we will be able to say like Paul: "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). The words of St. Paul indicate the true Christ-experience. The one, who thus grows in Christ-experience, will receive the self-confidence to face all circumstances in daily life, especially distress, sorrow, ruin and disease.



## Worship

Jesus, Saviour, we believe that you have come into this world in order to save us. We know that you are the Messiah, the Son of the living God. O Messiah, who emptied yourself and took the form of a servant, grant us the grace to know you fully and love you, to constantly sustain relationship with you and to experience you in life and thus to identify ourselves with you.

## Life Witness

1. Share an incident in the class, in which you experienced the love of Jesus.
2. Discuss in the class, the witnesses of the non-Christians about Jesus.

## Memorise

"You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David"  
(Luke 1:31-32).

## Questions

1. Which are the Old Testament allusions about Jesus?
2. Prove that Jesus is a historical person.
3. Prove that Jesus Christ is true God and true man.
4. Why is Jesus said to be the Saviour of the world?

# THE HOLY VIRGIN MARY



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God sent his only begotten Son to the world due to his love for humankind (John 3:16). He is born of a woman (Galatians 4:4). Though he was in the form of God (Philippians 2:6), God needed the help of a woman in order to become a man like us. At the time of the annunciation, the Holy Virgin Mary offered herself fully saying: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord", in order to become the Mother of God.



## Mary in the Gospels

There are nine occasions where Mary is mentioned in the Gospels: the annunciation, the visit to Elizabeth, the birth of Jesus, the dedication of Jesus in the temple, the finding of Jesus in the temple, the marriage feast at Cana, on Calvary, the two occasions during the public service of Jesus (Luke 11:27-28; Mark 3:31-36). In the Acts of the Apostles (1:4), in the epistle of St. Paul (Galatians 4:4) and in the book of Revelation (Revelation 12:1-6) references are made about Mary either directly or indirectly.

## The Annunciation (Luke 1:26-36)

We see here a sincere virgin, who was prepared to undertake a mission and offered her for fulfilling the same. Mary is a young lady, who takes the decision freely and responsibly. Mary knew the consequences a lady has to

face with, if she is seen pregnant before she entered into the married life. Yet after having cleared her doubt from the messenger, angel Gabriel, and having known that it was the plan of the great God, Mary took courage to confront with all challenges and said: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word".

## Mary, who Visits Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-55)

The fact that the barren Elizabeth is pregnant is a sign that the angel gives to Mary. In order to see that miracle for herself and to share the great deeds God had done to her, Mary set out with haste from Nazareth and went to Elizabeth. Both were in the inexplicable rapture of womanhood; the joy of both about to become mothers. It is Elizabeth, who calls Mary for the first time: 'the Mother of the Lord'. From this, we understand how human beings become blessed in life. Mary became blessed, because she believed the things, which were told to her by the Lord. When Mary, filled with the Holy Spirit, visited Elizabeth, she too, became filled with the Holy Spirit. It is in this background that Mary sings her song of praise, 'the Magnificat' (Luke 1:46-55).

## The Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-20; Matthew 2:13-14)

When Joseph, who belonged to the family of David, reached Bethlehem for registration together with Mary, she gave birth to Jesus. She could accept with faith the bodily troubles, fatigue of journey and the unavailability of a proper place to give birth to the child. She treasured in her heart the visits of the shepherds and the wise men.

## The Dedication of Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:25-35)

The parents of Jesus, who was incarnated man, dedicated him in the temple. His father and mother were happy on hearing what Simeon said about Jesus. Through the prophecy: 'a sword will pierce through your heart', Simeon indicated about the cross, Mary would carry in future.

## The Finding of Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:41-49)

Mary and Joseph came to understand too late that Jesus, who went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover, was not with them in the return

journey. After three days when they returned to Jerusalem, they were happy to see Jesus, who was engaged in discussion with the teachers of the temple. Jesus made them grow in faith saying: "Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

### **The Marriage at Cana (John 2:1-11)**

We see a good mother in Mary, who intervenes to help the hosts in their worry when the wine ran short at the marriage banquet. Jesus did there the first sign, which revealed his glory. Mary is one who shares the sorrows and difficulties of others. We can see a good mother in Holy Mary, who tries to understand the needs of others and find out solution for the same.

### **Mary, Standing at the Foot of the Cross (John 19:25-27)**

Mary accompanied Jesus from the start of his journey, carrying the cross till the foot of the cross. The prophecy of Simeon: 'a sword will pierce through your heart', was fulfilled. Jesus entrusted Mary as mother to all those who believe in him by saying to his mother: "Woman, here is your son" and to the disciple whom he loved: "Here is your mother".

### **In the Public Service of Jesus**

When Jesus was informed that his mother and brothers were waiting outside, he makes it clear that the one who does the will of God is his brother, sister and his mother. Over and above the blood relation, it is the relationship in faith that makes one belong to Jesus (Mark 3:31-33). Jesus bears witness about his mother that along with her good fortune to have given birth to Jesus and brought him up, she is all the more lucky to have heard the word of God and fulfilled the same.

### **Mary, Mother of God**

The belief that the Mother of Jesus, the Saviour of the world is the Mother of God, was very strong in the Antiochene Church from the early period. The Greek word *Theotokos* is translated into Syriac as *Yoldas Aloho* and as 'Mother of God' in English. The words *Deivajenany* and *Deivamathavu* are the equivalent terms used in Malayalam. The belief that Mary is the Mother of God is reflected in the Bible in the words of Elizabeth: "Why has

this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me" (Luke 1:43).

Just as the study about Jesus Christ, true God and true man progressed, the study about Mary too, advanced in the Church from the early times. This was proclaimed in the Creed of the Apostles and in the Nicene Creed as well. When we say about the incarnation, we proclaim: 'born of the Holy Spirit and from Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God'. This indicates that the consciousness of Mary as Mother of God was acknowledged and confessed at least from the 4<sup>th</sup> century. By this, it is not intended a definition of the origin of the self-existent and eternal God, but the belief that the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, assumed perfect humanity from Mary, the human daughter, when he incarnated for the sake of human salvation. This is what we confess through addressing Mary as 'Mother of God'. That is, when God, who is without beginning and end, when he willed to become a human baby, Mary carried him in her womb for nine months, gave birth to him according to the flesh and brought him up as her own son. This is what the Christians mean when they call Mary 'Mother of God'. This was defined and proclaimed in the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D.

It is evident from the Gospels that Mary conceived Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit and not with any carnal relationship with man (Matthew 1:8-25). From the early period, the Christians believed that Mary, who was chosen by God and who became the Mother of God, gave birth to the miraculous baby in her virginity and she, who has been the cause for such great nobility, continued to remain ever virgin. Thus, the belief in Mary's perpetual virginity grew in the Church. The Church Fathers, who were thinking about the choice of Mary to be the Mother of God, believed that Mary was destined by God from all eternity to be the Mother of God and since God was to come and dwell in her and since she was to give human body to God, God had protected her from every taint of sin and even from original sin. This was proclaimed as an article of faith by Pope Pius IX on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1854 through the Apostolic Exhortation *Ineffabilis Deus*. *Grat. ineffabile*

It is the Christian belief that Mary, the Holy, Pure, Mother of God, has been assumed into heaven after her life in this world. The fact that Mary, who was fortunate to become the temple for the Son of God to dwell in, and on account of her having heard the word of God and lived accordingly, was assumed into heaven with body and soul, was proclaimed as an article

of faith by Pope Pius XII on November 1, 1950 through the Apostolic Exhortation *Munificentissimus Deus*. The Malankara Church used to celebrate this article of faith from the beginning of the Church as the Feast of *Soonoyo* (Assumption).

### The View-Point of the Malankara Church about Mary

The Blessed Virgin Mary is one, who had been very attentively studied and meditated upon from the beginning of the Christian religion until now. The reality of our belief about Mary is being expressed through the term 'Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God'. Holy Mary is the mother of anyone, who holds Jesus as Saviour in the heart and confesses with his/her lips. At the time of the death on the cross, the divine Saviour had given Mary, his mother to the disciple. The Malankara Church expresses her love towards Holy Mary through the liturgy and affectionate devotion. When the prayer "Mary, full of grace" is said as introduction to any holy service, the Malankara Church expresses her devotion to Mary and her belief in the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. What is involved in the prayer of 'Mary, full of grace' is the belief that Mary, whom we see in the Holy Scripture, is one, filled with grace, with whom the Lord is present, who is blessed, who gave birth to the Saviour of the world, who was a blessing to humankind and that she always intercedes for us, sinners.

We meditate in the Holy Qurbano, the Sacrament of the Sacraments, remembering the share she carried out in the plan of salvation. There wouldn't be another order of liturgy, which remembers mother Mary to the same extent from the offertory up to the prayer of thanksgiving after the celebration of the Qurbano. The public service of the Qurbano begins with the following proclamation: "Mary, who brought you forth... will intercede for us". We remember the mother again before receiving Holy Communion and seek her intercession through the *Kukkilion*: "Praising stood the King's daughter...".

Together with commemorating the works of salvation in the Prayers of the Hours, we remember Mother Mary in a special way. The prayers of Wednesday could be seen as a meditation on Mother Mary. The theme of the first *Kaumo* of the Night Prayer of each day is the commemoration of Mary. The belief that mother Mary intercedes for us is very strong in our

prayers. As it is believed that Mary received the message about the incarnation of the divine Saviour from angel Gabriel on a Wednesday, Mary is specially remembered on Wednesday according to the Eastern tradition.

In the order of the Annual Liturgy itself, feasts, fasts and days of commemoration in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary are arranged. Thus, we celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation to Mary on March 25, the Nativity of Mary on September 8, and the Feast of the Assumption on August 15. Besides, we honour Mary by observing the Feasts of the Entrance of Mary in the temple on November 21, the Exaltation of Mary on December 26, Mary, Mother of seeds on January 15, and Mary, Mother of Harvest on May 15. The Church meditates on the sublimity of the mother, observing 8 days' fast in honour of the feast of her Nativity and 15 days' fast in honour of her Assumption. The dedication, Mary made at the time of the Annunciation saying: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord" and thereafter, her accompanying her divine Son up to Calvary, are examples of Mary's growing in faith. Even though the divine maternity is incomparable, the Holy Mother is most blessed, because she listened to the word of God and lived accordingly.

### The Mode of Narration about the Mother

The Church had ever observed with awe the choice of Mary becoming the Mother of the Son of God, thereafter her approach towards the Word of God and her intercession for the sake of humankind. How wonderful is the state of Mary, who carried the lofty One in her womb, at the sight of whom even the angels tremble! It is still more wonderful that Mary conceived the baby in her womb without any physical intimacy with man. It is a matter creating wonder that having conceived and become mother, that she preserved her virginity in tact. These things which took place in the incarnation of the Son of God are difficult for logically understanding with human intellect and for explaining them. But the Fathers of the Eastern Church have tried to clarify these mysteries through symbols, having observed the prophecies and certain events of the Old Testament as fore-shadows of these.

Thinking about the divine maternity of Mary, the following symbols are used: the ark of the covenant, the second heaven, the heavenly chariot, the luminous palace, the pure temple, the new spring and the cloud of Mount



Sinai. Through these symbols, it is meant, the Lord Son, who was invisible in the Old Testament truly descended and dwelt in Holy Mary. Just as King David, seeing the presence of God, which filled the Ark of the Covenant, danced before the Lord (2 Samuel 6:1-23). When Mary, who carried Jesus, the Son of God in her womb visited Elizabeth, the child leaped in her womb joyfully (Luke 1:41). Although Mary is compared with the afore-mentioned symbols, the mystery in which Mary is involved is beyond these kinds of comparisons. Hence, the Oriental Church Fathers have qualified Mary saying: "You are nobler than the mysteries of the Ark".

When the perpetual virginity of Mary also is dealt with, our Church uses many symbols: the closed door, the sealed letter, the unploughed field, the vine unpruned, the thirsty earth, the wool and dew, which Gideon saw and the thorny bush on fire, but not burnt to ashes, etc., are some of them. These symbols have been formed under the background of certain things which happened in an unnatural way. God appeared to Moses in the thorny bush in the form of fire. The bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed (Exodus 3:2-6). Even when the baby was carried in the womb and given birth to, in order to explain the belief that Holy Mary preserved her virginity, we accept that the mysteriousness we see in the thorny bush on flame, but not burnt into ashes. Ordinarily, conception takes place through the physical union of man and woman. After this conception, one cannot remain a virgin. What we see in relation to the mystery of the incarnation are things contrary to these ordinary principles. The basis of this belief is that this was possible because this is the revelation of God and that nothing is impossible with God.

Sin and the consequent expulsion from paradise resulted due to the disobedience of man. But through Mary's obedience and fulfilment of the will of God, humankind again inherited life and paradise. Hence, Mary is called: 'the New Eve' and the 'Second Eve'. Eve, who was called to be the mother of everyone living (Genesis 3:20), caused infamy to humankind succumbing to the temptation of the serpent. But the Blessed Virgin Mary co-operated with the message received through the angel Gabriel and by obeying God, humankind obtained the Saviour and that Saviour granted us hope, peace and unity. Thus, by carrying out a decisive share in the incarnation of God, Mary became a co-operator in the new creation of humankind.

Hence, our Church-Fathers have called her 'the Ship that carries the wealth of the Father', 'the New Pot of Elisha', etc.

### **The Devotion towards Holy Mary in our Life**

We firmly believe that Mary, who perfectly cooperated with the Son of God, and was the Mother of God assumed into heaven, would pray to God for us always. In the *Boutho* (petition), which we sing at the end of the *Kukkilion* in honour of Mary, this belief is quite evident. 'Jesus, Lord, by the blessing of your cross and through the prayers of your mother, remove from us all punishments of sin and the wrath of God'. We can believe that Mary has become the Mother of all, who believed in Jesus, because Jesus offered her standing at the foot of the cross on Calvary, to his disciple as mother. Just as the intercession of the mother has become a blessing for that family at the marriage-banquet at Cana, we believe that even today she will intercede for us to her divine Son in our needs.

The plenitude of all divine virtues was in Mary, the fullness of goodness. She has reached the most sublime state an individual could attain. She, who is the Mother of God, had to travel through the path of suffering. She had fulfilled the oath: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord, let it be with me according to your word" in that manner. In fulfilment of her words: "All generations shall call me blessed", the faithful remember her and take refuge in her intercession, who was assumed into heaven. Holy Mary, who lived in accordance with the word of God and who glorified him, is our model and our inspiration to grow in faith.





## Worship

Jesus, who gave his own mother as mother to the whole world, do bless us to grow in love and devotion to that holy mother. Just as the Blessed Mother was perfectly submissive to the will of God, bless us to understand the will of God and to live accordingly in our life. Pray for us O Mother at every moment of our life.

## Life Witness

Devoutly observe all the Feasts and Fasts in honour of the Mother Mary.


### Memorise

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed"  
(Luke 1:46-48).

## Questions

1. What is the position of Mary in the Gospels?
2. Substantiate that Mary is the Mother of God.
3. What is the teaching of the Malankara Catholic Church about Holy Mary?

**PART - II**



**LITURGY**



# HOLY QURBONO – THE PREPARATORY SERVICE

There are 23 Individual Churches in the Catholic Church. Each Church has its own liturgy. The Malankara Catholic Church uses the Antiochene liturgy. The Fathers of the Church teach that the Apostle St. James, the first bishop of Jerusalem and the cousin of our Lord had codified the Order of the Holy Qurbono in the first century itself. The *Thaksa* (Order) of St. James, which took form in Jerusalem was later on, adopted by Antioch and modified as its own liturgy. There are over 70 different *Anaphorae* (Order of the Holy Qurbono) based on the liturgy of St. James in the Syrian Antiochene tradition. We describe in this lesson the Holy Qurbono of the Syrian Antiochene Liturgy, which is used by the Malankara Catholic Church.



## The Construction of the Holy Qurbono

The Holy Qurbono is inseparably related to the divine history of salvation. The entire Holy Qurbono is the commemoration and celebration of the mysteries of revelation or the history of salvation. All the salvific events, from the creation of the universe up to the second coming of Christ are commemorated in the Holy Qurbono of the Malankara Church. The Old Testament events, the birth of the Saviour, his baptism, public life, trial,

passion, death on the cross, resurrection, ascension and second coming are all celebrated in the Holy Qurbono. This idea is made clear in the hymn sung in the beginning of the Holy Qurbono:

“Lord! Your birth, baptism, passion, crucifixion,  
Death, resurrection and ascension; all these events  
Also our first parents,  
We recall in this Sacrifice”.

The Syrian Fathers have divided the Holy Qurbono into four parts: the Service of Preparation, the Service of the Word, the Service of Sacrifice and the Service of Communion. We discuss in this lesson the Service of Preparation.

## The Service of Preparation

The first part of the Malankara Holy Qurbono, the Service of Preparation is known in Syriac as *Thuyobo*. This preparatory service includes the part from the beginning of the Holy Qurbono up to the beginning of the public service.

The Holy Qurbono begins in the Malankara Church with the prayers of the Hours. Before the beginning of the Morning Prayers, the server enters the sanctuary and lights the candle, placed in front of the cross in the middle of the *thronos*. Through this the creation of the universe by God saying: ‘Let there be light’ (Genesis 1:3), is remembered. Then the veil is pulled aside. There is great significance in covering the holy sanctuary with the veil. Sanctuary is the symbol of heaven and *hykala* (the nave), that of the earth. The veil is the symbol which signifies the relationship between heaven and earth. The pulling aside of the veil, after having lighted the candle at the beginning of the Morning Prayers, signifies the self-revelation of God through the creation of the universe as well as the opening of heaven. Thus, the faithful converse with God, remembering the work of God’s creation and his protection that follows.

At the time of the Morning Prayers, the celebrant wears the black outer garment. Through this, it is signified that the human state of sin points towards repentance. The black outer garment is the official dress, which the celebrant uses for the service.



After the Morning Prayers, the celebrant enters the sanctuary and requests the help of prayers from the assembly of the faithful. Then the veil is drawn across. This entrance into the sanctuary signifies the ascending of Moses on Mount Sinai, which was filled with the presence of the glorious Yahweh, in order to receive for the children of Israel the Laws of Justification. It also signifies the entrance of the priest Zechariah into the Holy of Holies.

The pulling of the veil across the sanctuary when the celebrant goes into it, signifies the sin of the first parents and the subsequent period of the Old Testament. The relationship between heaven and earth is lost through the sin of the first man. Similarly, the relationship between God and man and between the angels and man is also lost. The pulling across of the veil signifies all these thoughts. Through the private service of the preparation, the Old Testament period, which was spent in expectation of the Saviour Jesus, is specially signified. Along with that, it also signifies the Son, who remained invisibly with the Father from all eternity.

The celebrant after having entered the sanctuary and entreated help of prayer, bows in front of the *thronos* and kisses its corners. After that he steps upon the *darga* (pedestal) and performs the Service of Melchizedek and that of Aaron.

### The Service of Melchizedek

The service of arranging the bread and wine on the *thronos* is the Service of Melchizedek. Through this, the incident of Melchizedek, the king of Salem and priest of the Most High God going to receive Abraham carrying bread and wine, is commemorated (Genesis 14:18). Jesus is qualified as Priest according to the order of Melchizedek in the Epistle to the Hebrews (Hebrews 6:20). Salem is the old name of Jerusalem. The name Melchizedek in the first place means 'the king of justice' and in the second place 'the king of peace' (Hebrews 7:2). Melchizedek is the priest who stood before God as the representative of all Gentiles even before priesthood was established among the Jews. Christ, the eternal priest according to the order of Melchizedek, was not only the priest of his own race, the Israelites, but also the priest of all races. The order of Melchizedek signifies that the perfection of all priesthood is in Jesus.



The celebrant arranges the big host and the particles in the paten with the prescribed prayers and actions. Then he pours wine in the chalice and mixes it with water. This mixing signifies that in Jesus, the Lord Son, divinity and humanity were united.

The celebrant arranges the bread and wine in the Holy Qurbono, wearing only the black outer garment. After having arranged the bread and wine, the celebrant recites the *proemion* and *sedra* of repentance.

### The Service of Aaron

The celebrant performs this service wearing his official priestly vestments. The priests of God had put on official priestly dress, both in the Old and New Testament times for the glory of God and as a sign of the holiness they have received from God in order to perform the priestly service. Aaron, the priest is another image of Jesus in the Old Testament. The Service of Aaron is to commemorate his priestly service and incensing. The priest of the New Testament wears his official dress and incenses the things offered, in order to recall the official dress, the High Priest Aaron and the other priests of the tribe of Levi had worn and the incensing they had performed.

In the Service of Aaron, the celebrant, holding the paten and the chalice cross-wise, recalls the salvific events of God, remembers all the important persons from Adam and Eve up to the present, recalls to mind all the departed and prays for the particular intention of the Holy Qurbono.

Then the celebrant covers the chalice and paten with the *Susopo*, the big veil, saying: 'the sky covers the splendour of the glorious one'. Here, the *Susopo* represents the adornment of the sky, which covers heaven. Afterwards, incensing above the *Susopo*, the entire Church is remembered. The Church is not only the community of the living, but of the dead as well. All of them take part in the Holy Qurbono spiritually. This incensing is compared with the incensing of Aaron. The incense, which Aaron offered in the Holy of Holies is depicted as the symbol of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary.

Through this private service behind the veil, the history of salvation of the Old Testament from the first parents up to Abraham, from Abraham up to Aaron and from Aaron up to Jesus Christ, is specially remembered.

## Worship

O Lord, we spiritually join the perfect sacrifice you offered on Calvary. Lord, who accepted the offering and sacrifice of Abel and Noah, receive the offering of our sacrifice also. Prepare our hearts too, just as the bread and wine are prepared in order to offer sacrifice before you.

## Life Witness

Discuss how to prepare to take part actively in each Holy Qurbano.

### Memorise

“What shall I return to the Lord for all his bounty to me?  
I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord, I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all the people”  
(Psalm 116: 12-14).



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## Questions

1. Give a description of the Service of Preparation of the Holy Qurbano.
2. Jesus is the eternal priest according to the order of Melchizedek. Prove.

# HOLY QURBONO – THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

The second part of the Holy Qurbano; the Service of the Word is treated in this lesson. We describe in this lesson the parts from the beginning of the public service up to the creed.

When the Holy Qurbano begins publicly, the veil covering the sanctuary is pulled aside and the celebrant puts incense

in the thurible and incensing the *Thronos*, he kisses its corners and makes a procession around it. At that time, the celebrant recites aloud: “Mary, who gave you birth and John, who baptized you, shall be intercessors on our behalf. Lord, have mercy on us” and the faithful respond saying: “I will praise you, my Lord and my King” or singing: “The prayers of your mother and saints, intercede for us Lord”.

Since the door of the sanctuary is opened by pulling aside the veil, it is made clear that heaven, which was closed through the sin of humankind, is opened and the invisible God presents himself to the worshipping community. Here, the pulling aside of the veil signifies the reinstatement of the relationship between God and man and between heaven and earth, lost through the first sin. Besides, the closing of the Old Testament, the beginning of the New Testament and the birth of our Lord also are specially commemorated and celebrated in the public service.

The chief server, who leads the procession around the *thronos* carrying the candle, represents John the Baptist. The sanctuary is considered as the manger,



the *thronos*, the lap of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the bread and wine as child Jesus, the *Susopo*, which covers them as the swaddling cloth with which baby Jesus was covered. The singing of the hymn indicates the hymn of the heavenly angels. The celebrant incensing and kissing the corners of the *thronos* signifies the adoration and honouring of the shepherds and the wise men. It also signifies the celebrant kissing baby Jesus and receiving divine blessings.

The public service begins with entreating the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, who is intrinsically related with the incarnation and that of John the Baptist, who was the fore-runner of the public life of Jesus.

### The Hymn of the 'Thrice Holy'

The hymn of the 'Thrice Holy', which begins; 'Holy are you, God' is the prayer, which expresses reverence and worship to Jesus incarnate. In the order of the Malankara liturgy, this prayer is Christological. For, this prayer is the proclamation of faith in the divinity of Jesus Christ, who was born man. Here, the faithful respond: "Who is crucified for us, have mercy on us" to the hymn of the angels: "Holy, holy, holy", taken from the vision of Isaiah (Isaiah 6:3).

According to the tradition, when the array of angels sang this hymn of praise at the time of the burial of Jesus; Joseph, Nicodemus and those who were with them, hearing the same, responded: 'who was crucified for us, have mercy on us'.

### Readings from the Holy Scripture – the Service of the Word

What takes place through the reading from the Holy Bible and its explanation is the interpretation to the worshipping community of the mysteries of salvation, which are being realized in the Holy Qurbono. This part is didactic. The Service of the Word of the Holy Qurbono indicates the instructions and miraculous works of the public life of our Lord.

There are altogether seven readings from the passages of the Holy Bible in the Holy Qurbono: four from the Old Testament and three from the New Testament. The passages from the Old Testament are read after the canonical prayers, during the Preparatory Service. The readings from the Old Testament

are included in the worship considering the fact that the prophetic nature of the Old Testament becomes clearer in the light of the New Testament.

It is quite proper that the readings from the Old Testament are conducted when the celebrant commemorates the mysteries of the Old Testament behind the veil. Just as the Old Testament people are prepared to receive Christ, the Saviour, the meaning of these readings is to prepare in a special way the people of God to receive Jesus, the Messiah into their hearts. The Old Testament passages are read standing in the *hykala*; the Epistles from one step below the sanctuary and the reading of the Gospel from the sanctuary. This order shows the importance of these readings.

The readings from the New Testament begin after the hymn of the 'Thrice Holy' and the singing of the *Kurieleison*. The first reading is taken from either the Acts of the Apostles or from among the Catholic Epistles or from the Book of Revelation, suitable to the occasion. Before this reading, the hymn "Chosen apostles..." based on Mark 16:15 is sung. The second reading is from any of the Epistles of St. Paul. Before the reading the congregation sings the hymn: "Preaching of Paul..." This hymn is the rhythmic form of the epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians 1:8. The hymn before the reading of the Gospel is known as *Hoololo*. The word *hoololo* is formed from the 'Halleluiah' that is used in this hymn. Then the celebrant reads from the Holy Gospel of our Lord. After the reading, when the congregation sings the prescribed hymn according to the season of the Liturgical Year, the celebrant recites a private prayer in thanksgiving for the life-giving word of God. Then the celebrant preaches the homily basing on the word of God read. When the Gospel is read during the Holy Qurbono, it is Jesus Christ himself who speaks. This teaching of the Second Vatican Council is indeed meaningful.

The priest, who offers sacrifice in the Malankara Liturgy, acts as a representative of both God and the people. When the priest stands facing the East, the direction in which the people stand, he stands there as their representative. As the representative of the people, he is offering in the presence of God their joys, sorrows, anxieties and petitions for their sake. But when the priest turns facing towards the people, he stands as the representative of God. The priest turns towards the people during the Holy Qurbono just for two things only: whenever God has something to speak to



the people and God has something to give to them. When the priest turns towards the people for reading from the Scripture, homily, etc. and for giving peace, blessing, Holy Communion, etc. he acts in the name of God.

### The Prayers for the Atonement of Sins

It is not possible to approach the Holy Mysteries without obtaining forgiveness of sins. Hence, before entering into the important parts of the sacrifice, the celebrant recites the *husoyo* (atonement of sins) prayers in order: *Proemion* (introduction), *husoyo* and *sedra*. At the end of the prayers of the *sedra*, reciting the prayer of forgiveness for sins, he imparts general absolution to the people: "May we receive from God pardon of offences and forgiveness of sins in both worlds forever". Being thus sanctified, the faithful enter into the chief part of the Holy Qurbano. This is in continuation of the practice of the early Church, which granted general absolution to the worshipping community before the commencement of the sacrifice.

### The Blessing of the Thurible

The confession of the sanctity of the Triune God and our belief in that God is what takes place in the blessing of the thurible. At the same time, the baptism of Jesus Christ too, is remembered here. For, the biggest revelation of the Holy Trinity takes place at the time of the baptism of Jesus. At the time when the Lord Son received baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon him in the form of a dove and the voice of God the Father (This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased) was heard. Since the thurible is the symbol of the Church and of the world, the service of the blessing of the thurible is the blessing of the worshipping community, the Church. Similarly, this signifies the purification of the Church and the world. As a response of having obtained the absolution of sins, the celebrant begins the blessing of the thurible eulogizing and worshipping the Holy Trinity.

The blessing of the thurible is a symbolic action. The fire of the thurible represents the Lord Son, the fire, who abided in the Mother of God. The 72 rings of the chain of the thurible represent 72 announcers and the 12 bells of the chain point out the 12 apostles. When the celebrant blesses the thurible, he proclaims holding the first chain 'Holy is the Holy Father', holding the next two chains together, he proclaims 'Holy is the Holy Son', holding the

fourth chain, he proclaims 'Holy is the Holy Spirit'. The first chain signifies the Father, the second and third together signify the divine and human natures of Jesus and the fourth indicates the Holy Spirit. When the thurible is blessed, the faithful offer to the Triune God adoration and glory and respond: 'Amen'. After the blessing of the thurible, the celebrant incenses the people. Then the server continues to incense the inner side of the sanctuary and up to the western part of the *hykala* (nave). The server incenses the whole church in order to signify God's concern and mercy for all. So also, the entire congregation is sanctified through the smoke and led to the chief part of the Qurbano. In the early Church, this was considered to be an indication for those who have not received baptism to go out of the church. The catechumens, who did not receive baptism, had only the right to participate up to the Service of the Word, in the early Church.

### The Creed

By reciting the creed, the faithful proclaim loudly the things, which God had spoken to his children through the Service of the Word and their belief in his revelations. All the truths of faith are contained in the creed. It is the Nicene Creed that is used in the Holy Qurbano. During the recitation of the creed, the celebrant washes his hands and says a private prayer in order to show spiritual preparation. Then the celebrant prostrates before the *thronos* and entreats divine blessings silently, makes the intercessory prayer and renews the intention of the Holy Qurbano.

In order to prepare the faithful to enter into the important part of the Holy Qurbano, the server says *staumenkalos* (let us stand befittingly) and the faithful respond *kurieeleison*, which means 'Lord, have mercy on us'.



## Worship

O Word God, your words are the way, truth and life to our hearts. Lord, help us to listen to your words with perfect humility and with full love and to follow them. Grant us the blessing to faithfully receive the word of God, to share the same with others and to make it active in life.



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## Life Witness

Discuss and take notes on the passage of the Gospel, heard each Sunday in the Holy Qurbono.

### Memorise

“How are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!””  
(Romans 10:14-15).

## Questions

1. What does the hymn “Thrice Holy” in the Holy Qurbono, mean?
2. The priest, who offers sacrifice in the Holy Qurbono, is the representative of God and man. Substantiate.
3. Describe the meaning of the blessing of the thurible.

# HOLY QURBONO – THE SERVICE OF THE SACRIFICE

The part from the prayer for peace up to the bidding good bye in the Holy Qurbono is generally known as the anaphora. The Greek word ‘anaphora’ means offering of sacrifice. The meaning of the Syriac word ‘Qurbono’ also is the same. The content of the anaphora is the thanksgiving prayer which our Lord said at the time of the Last Supper and the actions he did there.

There are 66 prayers, secret and public, in the anaphora of the Holy Qurbono. 33 of these are unchangeable. They signify the divinity of Jesus. The remaining 33 prayers which are changeable signify the humanity of Jesus. The 33 secret and public prayers are arranged basing on the 33 years of the earthly life of Jesus. The part from the prayer for peace, which marks the beginning of the anaphora up to the intercessory prayers, is said to be the service of the sacrifice. This lesson describes the offering of sacrifice.

## Prayer for Peace

The priest ascends the *darga* (step in front of the *thronos*) and begins the prayer for peace. The stepping upon the *darga* commemorates Christ’s entering into the house of Mark, the mansion of Zion, to observe the Passover after having fulfilled his program of preaching the Gospel. Here, the



arrangement of the offering of sacrifice after the Service of the Word also is quite meaningful. The stepping upon the *darga* also signifies that Jesus has risen above all things earthly and that his thought is only about things heavenly. The prayer for peace and the kiss of peace are conducted in accordance with the command of the Lord (Matthew 5:23, 6:12) that before offering sacrifice, one should be reconciled with God and with one's brethren. Those who foster enmity among them should get reconciled here and should receive heavenly peace. The following thoughts are remembered here: one should not take part in this sacrifice without reconciling with others and those, who are unwilling to forgive their debtors, have no share in the mystery that is to take place.

Peace is communicated to the people from the seat of our Lord, the *thronos*, by the priest, through the server (deacon). The people exchange peace among themselves. The giving of external peace, gives spiritual peace and harmony to each individual.

### The Prayer of Benediction

This is the prayer for the faithful who stand with their heads bowed, after the service of the exchange of peace. This has the name: prayer upon the people and prayer of the imposition of hands. To stand with heads bowed, is the sign of adoration and perfect dedication. Without bowing head before the Lord, one cannot either pray or obtain blessing. Throughout this prayer, the faithful stand with their heads bowed and receive the blessing and respond, 'Amen'. Then they stand erect and making the sign of the cross, receive the benediction.

### The Prayer of Dedication and the Celebration of the *Susopo*

The *Susopo* is the silk scarf (linen) with which the chalice and paten, which contain the holy mysteries, are covered. *Susopo* has the following meanings: veil, lid, kerchief, etc. *Susopo*, having the symbol of a star is used during the season of *Yaldo* (Christmas), the symbol of the dove, during the seasons of *Denaho* (Baptism) and Pentecost (the descend of the Holy Spirit) and that of the cross, during the season of *Sleebo*. After the prayer over the *susopo*, the priest raises it three times, flutters and celebrates. At that time, the server reminds the people about the importance of this service.

The raising up in celebration of the *susopo* signifies the opening up of heaven and the revelation of the heavenly mysteries on earth through the Holy Qurbano. Here, heaven and earth come together. We are lifted up to the heavenly Jerusalem and the heavenly beings descend towards us. It is for this reason that the *susopo* is raised up and down. Hence, the *susopo* is compared to the ladder, which Jacob saw at Bethel (Genesis 28:12). It is through this ladder that the angels descended to the earth and ascended to heaven.

Through the secret prayer which the priest says at the time of the solemn raising of the *susopo*, it is compared to the rock from which water flowed for the Israelites (Numbers 20:2-13). Just as much water flowed out from the rock, from Christ, the spiritual rock, divine grace, the living water (Jeremiah 2:13) flows out in abundance to the Church. Again the *Susopo* is compared to the rock with which the entrance of the tomb of the Lord was closed. The fluttering of the *Susopo* signifies the earth-quake at the time of the resurrection. The resurrection of our Lord became a reality when the rock that covered the entrance of the tomb was removed. When the *Susopo* is removed, the worshipping community sees the risen Jesus.

The prayer, which the people say as response is very meaningful: "This Qurbano is blessing, peace, sacrifice and thanksgiving".

### The Apostolic Blessing

The priest gives the apostolic blessing to the faithful assembled in the church and entrusts them to the Trinity:

"The love of God the Father + the grace of the only Son + and the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit + be with you all".

This blessing is based on the salutation of St. Paul to the Corinthians. That is why it is called the apostolic blessing (2 Corinthians 13:14). This blessing in the name of the Trinity signifies that the offering of the sacrifice is centred on the Trinity.

"Let us lift up our minds and hearts to Christ, who is at the right hand of God the Father"; so saying the attention of the congregation is specially invited to heaven, which is opened. Standing in the experience of the open heaven, the priest instructs the faithful saying: "In fear and reverence, let us





give thanks to the Lord". The faithful too, experiencing the open heaven, confess that thanksgiving was the basic element of sacrifice and that it is just and right to give thanks to God.

### **The Praise of Angels**

On this occasion when heaven is symbolically opened, the heavenly and earthly beings, the angels and men and the whole universe praise God in unison singing: "Holy, holy, holy".

Through this singing of the angels, the Church on the earth and the triumphant Church of heaven together praise God. When we raise our hearts towards God and praise him along with the angels, we rise spiritually towards heaven and there occurs in us the heavenly experience. Through this singing together with the angels, the Church is preparing us to praise God eternally in the heavenly Jerusalem.

"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty; heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who came and is to come in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest".

This is a hymn made, combining the vision of Isaiah (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8) and the singing of the Hosanna at the time of the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem (Matthew 21:9; Luke 19:38; Psalm 118:26). According to the thinking of the Syrian Fathers, it is the Lord Son, whom, Isaiah saw on the heavenly throne. The heavenly nature of the Holy Qurbono is signified through this hymn. This service means that the human being stands together with the angels near the heavenly throne and shares in the heavenly experience. The fact that 'holy' is said three times and 'Lord God' said once, shows that the one God is celebrated as three. The priest's fluttering of hands upon the bread and wine during this praise indicates the descending of the Holy Spirit in the form of dove upon the divine mysteries and dwelling in them. In the secret prayer, which the priest recites, he specially praises each Person of the Trinity and commemorates the salvific events of Jesus.

### **Words of Institution**

At this time, it is remembered and described that as continuation of his works of salvation, Jesus, at the last supper in the mansion of Zion, took

bread and wine and having blessed, changed them into his body and blood and gave them to his apostles. The celebrant, standing as the representative of Christ, remembering and doing the works of salvation, which Christ did in history, makes them again present.

The priest takes the bread in his hands and says thus: "When he, the sinless one, willingly prepared himself to accept death for our salvation, took bread in his holy hands and gave thanks, looking at you Father. He blessed + +, sanctified+, broke and gave to his apostles saying: 'take and eat it; this is my body', broken for you and for many for the remission of sins and for life eternal".

In this commemoration, all the mysteries of the incarnation are contained. The following are the significances: "took bread" signifies Jesus taking flesh from the Virgin; "gave thanks looking at heaven" signifies asking permission from the Father; "blessed and sanctified" signify that he sacrificed his body for the earthly beings; "broke" signifies his passion and death on the cross and that his body was sliced into pieces for the world; and "gave to the disciples" signifies entrusted the faithful. The usages of the terms: "took, blessed, broke and gave" signify that the Holy Qurbono is no mere commemoration, but it is simultaneously a performance and a religious observance.

The priest takes the wine and says: "In the same way, he took the cup and gave you thanks; blessed + +, sanctified + and gave it to his apostles saying: 'take, drink all of you from this'. This is my blood. It is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins and for life eternal".

Here, the term "for you" signifies that Jesus shed his blood for all, for the entire human race. "For many" means that many people, until the end of the world, will take fruit from that. Through the words "is shed" signifying the blood of the animal, sacrificed on the altar, the priest remembers the shedding of Jesus' blood on Calvary and his death on the cross.

This description shows that the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Jesus, firstly for the remission of sins and secondly for eternal life.

### **Memorial Observance**

After the last supper Jesus commanded his apostles: "Do this in memory of me". The priest remembers this in a special way and reiterates this command



after the words of the Institution of the Holy Qurbano. Through this invitation: "Do this in memory of me", he makes clear that the Holy Qurbano is the memorial of all the saving events of Jesus. What Jesus commanded was to remember his birth, public life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension and second coming.

The salvific events of Jesus are not only remembered in the Holy Qurbano, but also, they are commemorated (anamnesis), observed and celebrated. When the saving actions of Jesus are commemorated and practised in the background of worship through signs and rituals, they become realities of the present and fruitful. Thus, through commemoration of the saving history, we become sharers in the saving events of Jesus and obtain their fruits.

When the prayer of the anamnesis is recited, the priest takes the spoon from the left side and having touched the edge of the chalice, paten, tablet and his own fore-head and through raising up and moving the same towards the right side, he commemorates the saving events of Jesus. Through touching with the spoon the edge of the paten and chalice, wherein the Body and Blood are kept separately, the death of Jesus is signified; through touching the tablet, his burial is indicated; through touching the fore-head, his resurrection is signified and through raising the golden spoon from the left to the right side and lowering the same rapidly, the second coming of Jesus is signified. Here, the spoon signifies Jesus, the cushion on which it is placed, the throne and the replacing of both to the right side, indicates the sitting of Christ at the right side of the Father at the last judgment.

### **The Prayer for Inviting the Holy Spirit**

As per Eastern vision, all sacraments are perfected with the coming of the Holy Spirit. The imposing of the hands of the celebrating priest upon the holy mysteries signifies the majestic coming down of the Holy Spirit. The priest flutters his hands just as a dove, the symbol of the Holy Spirit, flies in the air. This signifies the descending and dwelling of the Holy Spirit upon the mysteries. Inviting the Spirit is the prayer that invites the Holy Spirit to perfect the bread and wine as the body and blood of Jesus. When the server makes the announcement about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the priest flutters his hands and prays silently so that God the Father may send the Holy Spirit upon the offerings of the sacrifice and upon the

community of worshippers. At this time, the bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Jesus through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. In the same way, the prayer of the Church is that there may be conversion in the hearts of the faithful on account of the presence of the Spirit.

After the invitation of the server, the priest flutters his hands above the bread and wine in a special manner and perfects them into the body and blood of Jesus. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit on the offerings of the sacrifice indicates that God is pleased with the sacrifice and that he has accepted it (Acts of the Apostles 2:1; 2 Deuteronomy 7:1; 1 Kings 18:38). Just as the Holy Spirit descended into the womb of the Virgin and having dwelt in it, gave body to the Son of God, the Holy Spirit descends upon the bread and wine, placed on the *thronos* and through his indwelling changes them into the body and blood of Jesus.

### **The Prayer of the Intercession**

The prayer of the intercession is called *Tubden* in Syriac and its literal meaning is "but again". These prayers are the continuation of the invitation of the Spirit. They entreat that the Holy Spirit should work not only in the offerings but also in the needs of the faithful. The usage 'again' means that the intercessory prayers held in the presence of the holy body and blood of Christ have special fruitfulness. That is why the intercessory prayer is arranged after the prayer of the invitation of the Spirit.

Besides the six prayers, which the server recites loudly, there are the twelve prayers, which the priest says silently and loudly. Thus, there are 18 intercessory prayers. The first three of the intercessory prayers are for the living and the remaining three are meant for the departed.

The leaders of the Church, the faithful, especially the sick, the suffering, the orphans, the grief-stricken, the political rulers, the holy Mother of God, the Doctors of the Church, who taught true faith in the Church and the souls departed are remembered and prayed for at this time. The personal petitions of each one could be offered before God at this time.

This part is concluded in the Holy Qurbano with the blessing of the Holy Trinity. After a greeting of peace, the celebrant blesses the people in the name of Jesus Christ, the great God and our Saviour.



## Worship

O Lord, who in your immense love became a sacrifice for our sake, grant us the grace to understand that the bread and wine are changed into your body and blood through the offering of the sacrifice in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Bless us to change our lives as an offering of sacrifice through the strength of your Spirit.

## Life Witness

Share the experience of sacrifice of the daily life in the class.

### Memorise

“My vows to you I must perform, O God; I will render thank offerings to you”  
(Psalm 56:12).



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## Questions

1. What is the meaning of the ceremony of the *susopo* in the Holy Qurbono?
2. What does the ‘praise of the angels’ mean?
3. For whom all do we pray in the intercessory prayers?

## Lesson 8

# HOLY QURBONO – SACRIFICIAL BANQUET

The part from the Service of the Fraction upto the concluding blessing in the Holy Qurbono is called the sacrificial banquet. This is considered to be the second part of the anaphora. We make the sacrificial banquet, the last part, the subject for our study in this lesson.

## The Service of the Fraction

At this time the celebrant performs the most important service; i.e., breaking the holy body, placing the same arranged in the paten and

mixing the sacred body and blood. This is called the Service of the Breaking of the Bread or the Service of the Fraction. At this time, one of the following hymns is sung: “O Gracious Lord, at your door”, “Seeing the Seraphs, Isaiah” or “Behold! O Father most Just”.

The celebrant, through taking the Sacred Body in his hands, raising up and breaking it into two parts, signifies that the Word, God truly suffered torture in his body, was sacrificed on the cross and that his body was bruised. The breaking of the bread means the slaughtering of the Lamb of God, who carries the sins of the world (John 1:29). The arranging of the cut-body in the paten is compared to the arrangement of the slaughtered animal on the altar for the sacrifice of the burnt-offering in the Old Testament. Through dipping a part of the broken bread in the sacred blood and touching



on the edge of the broken parts of the bread, it is meant that the cut-body was wet with his blood and that he died shedding his blood. At the end, through smearing the sacred blood on the sacred body three times and joining them, signifies the resurrection of Jesus. The reason is that the blood is the soul (Leviticus 17:11). The life of the flesh is in the blood. When Christ resurrected from the dead, the soul joined with the body. From that time onwards, the body of the Lord is the glorified body of the resurrected Lord. In short, through the Service of the Fraction, the celebrant commemorates symbolically the mysteries of salvation: the passion of Jesus, his death on the cross and resurrection.

The priest celebrates through symbols the most important events of the life of Christ in a mysterious way. It is to signify this mysteriousness that the veil is drawn across. At the time of the crucifixion of Christ, darkness spread throughout the earth from the sixth to the ninth hour. The pulling across of the veil signifies that even nature remained hidden without directly seeing the death of Jesus on the cross.

### **The Lord's Prayer**

At the end of the Service of the Fraction, the veil having been pulled aside, the celebrant, makes the invitation to the people for the Lord's Prayer. Here, the drawing aside of the veil signifies the tearing of the curtain of the temple of Jerusalem into two parts, from top to bottom (Luke 23:45). The pulling aside of the veil signifies the gaining of entrance for humankind into paradise and into the presence of the heavenly Father by the death on the cross and resurrection of Jesus, to which entrance was lost through sin. The drawing aside of the curtain, after having commemorated the death on the cross and resurrection behind the veil, indicates the opening of heaven and the risen Christ appearing to his apostles.

We, who have become the children of God through the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord, pray courageously addressing God "Heavenly Father". St. Cyril of Jerusalem had qualified the Lord's Prayer as the family prayer of the Christian Church. The Lord's Prayer is the great right of the Christians, who received baptism. For, it is through the grace of the Holy Spirit, received through baptism that we call God, "Father". It is the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ that made us worthy. It is through his

grace that we remain children of God. The arrangement of the Lord's Prayer in the Malankara Qurbono after having remembered the death and resurrection of Jesus is quite meaningful.

### **The Prayer of Benediction**

Through the prayer that follows the Lord's Prayer, the celebrant repeats the petition of the Lord's Prayer. Thereafter, he specially prays for the faithful standing with their heads bowed. To stand with bowed heads is the chief aspect of obedience. Through bowing the heads here, it is signified that we are not worthy to receive the Holy Qurbono, that the Holy Qurbono is a great gift, which God gives us, unworthy as we are, and that we ought to receive the same under obligation and obedience to God (1 Corinthians 11:28).

The several greetings of peace, which the priest gives after pulling aside the curtain, mean that our Lord appeared to his apostles several times after his resurrection and wished them peace. Through the third blessing, it is signified that Jesus took his apostles to the Mount of Olives at the time of his ascension and raising his hands, blessed them.

### **The Celebration of the Sacred Body and Blood (Elevation)**

This is the service of raising up and celebrating the holy mysteries saying: "The Holy things are given to the holy ones". The sacred body and blood are thus raised and celebrated in order to signify the ascension of the Lord. At the time of the ascension two angels were seen on either side (Acts of the Apostles 1:10). In order to commemorate this, there is the tradition of holding up two lighted candles on either side of the celebrant during the service of elevation. This invitation of the priest means that the Holy Qurbono is an invitation towards holiness. That means that the banquet is prepared for those who are holy. But the faithful confess their weakness by saying: 'There is none holy except the Holy Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'. This confession makes the faithful worthy to participate in the Holy Qurbono.

Through the ascension, even though the historical and direct presence of Christ is lost, through the Holy Spirit, we got a new presence, more real. The most sublime state of this new presence is the presence of the Lord in the Holy Qurbono. Where there is the presence of the Son of God, there



the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are present (John 14:23). It is because of this, the priest, holding the sacred vessels in his hands cross-wise says: 'The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are with us'. Thus, the celebrant confesses and praises the living presence of the Holy Trinity in the Holy Qurbono.

This prayer could be understood as an invitation that we might become worthy to participate in the Trinitarian mystery.

### Communion with the Saints

On the occasion when the presence of the Holy Trinity is perfectly made present in the Holy Qurbono, what is done through *kukkilion*, the prayer of the incense, is to specially remember and request the intercession of those who reside close to the Triune God. The meaning of the word *kukkilion* is 'circle'. The word *kukkilion* is used to mean to recite the prayer in a circle. *Kukkilion* has the mode of adding Halleluiah in between the Psalms and singing the same. There are five *kukkilions*: *Kukkilion* of the Holy Mother of God, of the Saints, of the Priests departed, of the Faithful departed and of the Holy Cross.

|   |       |           |
|---|-------|-----------|
| Praising stood the King's daughter.....             | Psalm | 45:9-11   |
| The Just shall flourish like oil palms.....         | „     | 92:12-14  |
| Let your priests be clothed with righteousness..... | „     | 132:9-12  |
| Just as the father pities his children.....         | „     | 103:13-15 |
| Through you do we defeat our foes.....              | „     | 45:5-7    |

The faithful, living and departed are together offering the Holy Qurbono. Hence, the Mother of God, the Saints and souls departed are all praying in the Holy Qurbono. Our prayers together with theirs are rising towards the presence of God along with the sweet smelling smoke. In order to show this in a symbolic manner, the *kukkilion* is sung along with incensing. Every worship is concluded with the singing of the *kukkilion* along with incensing in order to show that there is the communion of the living and the dead in every worship.

The curtain is drawn across the sanctuary after the singing of the *kukkilion* so as to signify that the Lord became invisible after the ascension and also to indicate the awaiting for the second coming of Jesus Christ.

### The Procession of the Holy Qurbono

The celebrant prostrates before the *thronos* and after praying behind the veil, receives the Holy Qurbono. Then the curtain is pulled aside and the celebrant carrying the sacred body and blood in his hands, solemnly turns towards the faithful and blesses the people of God. This benediction of the Holy Qurbono is a speciality of the Malankara Qurbono. This signifies the opening of heaven and the glorious second coming of our Lord. When the celebrant solemnly comes towards the western side of the church, bells are sounded, which remind the blowing of the horns at the second coming of the Lord. The servers, who stand on either side with lighted candles, indicate the accompanying of the angels at the second coming of the Lord. The white dress of the servers signifies the glorious garment of the saints.

### The Reception of the Holy Qurbono

The Holy Qurbono is not only a sacrament and a sacrifice, but also a sacrificial banquet. The priest, having turned towards the people carrying the paten and chalice in his hands, invites them signifying the invitation of humankind for the great banquet, which the Lord prepares in the heavenly Jerusalem through his second coming. All those who are prepared will enter the bridal chamber and will enjoy the banquet. Each Holy Communion is a fore-taste of the eternal banquet together with him at his second coming. The Holy Communion could also be understood as the banquet, which the father has prepared for the prodigal son and the marriage banquet, which the heavenly bridegroom has prepared with his own body and blood for his bride, the Church.

The giving of the live coal of the sacred body and blood to the faithful for the remission of sins and life eternal, is like one of the seraphs taking the live coal from the altar with a pair of tongs and touching the lips of Isaiah with it for removing his impurities and for forgiving his sins (Isaiah 6:6-7).

After the reception of the Holy Qurbono, again the celebrant turns towards the people, moves his hands holding the paten and chalice to the left and right sides as if to indicate the judgment. This signifies that at the last judgment, the evil doers will be separated to the left side and the virtuous people will be gathered to the right side. The return of the celebrant to the *thronos* with the holy mysteries signifies the Lord taking along with

him the chosen ones to the Father's house (John 14:3). Then, all the faithful together sing the hymn of praise "The whole world, behold worships you".

### Prayers of Thanksgiving

These are the prayers, which the celebrant says to express thanks for the mercy that enabled the faithful to receive the holy body and blood. The first of these is the thanksgiving prayer to God the Father, who arranged for the works of salvation. The second one is the expression of gratitude to the Son, who fulfilled the work of salvation. The people of God, who are pleased with the divine banquet, glorify the grace of God.

### The Concluding Blessing

The hymn that is sung before the concluding blessing is the *Huthomo*. The meaning of this Syriac word is 'sealing' or 'fixing up'. We are entering into a covenant with God through the Holy Qurbono. Through the act of sealing, we confess that we, in our daily life, shall live in a manner pleasing to God.

At the end, the celebrant dismisses the faithful, giving them the final blessing, making them worthy of the grace and blessings of the Holy Trinity and giving them the Holy Qurbono, the food for their pilgrimage. Lastly, the celebrant requests the community of worshippers to pray for him always, weak as he is. The covering of the sanctuary with the veil after the last blessing signifies that the time of this world is over and that a new world has begun.

The celebrant kneels down before the *thronos* and says the secret prayer after giving the farewell blessing and after pulling the curtain across the sanctuary. Thereafter, he consumes the sacred body and blood, left in the paten and chalice and cleanses the vessels. Then, he bids good bye to the *thronos*, kissing it three times saying: "Remain in peace, holy and propitiatory altar" and brings the Holy Qurbono to an end. During this time, the faithful sing the hymn: "Blot out all my debts O Lord". At the end, the faithful leave the place having kissed the hands of the priest or the *Sleebo*.



### Worship

Lord, our God, make us worthy that our bodies become holy through your sacred body and that our souls may be sanctified through you propitiatory blood. Grant us the grace O Lord, to receive you in holiness and to live a life of sacrifice for others. Let your sacred body and blood strengthen us.

### Life Witness

Prepare a report of the First Holy Communion of each one of you and present it.

### Memorise

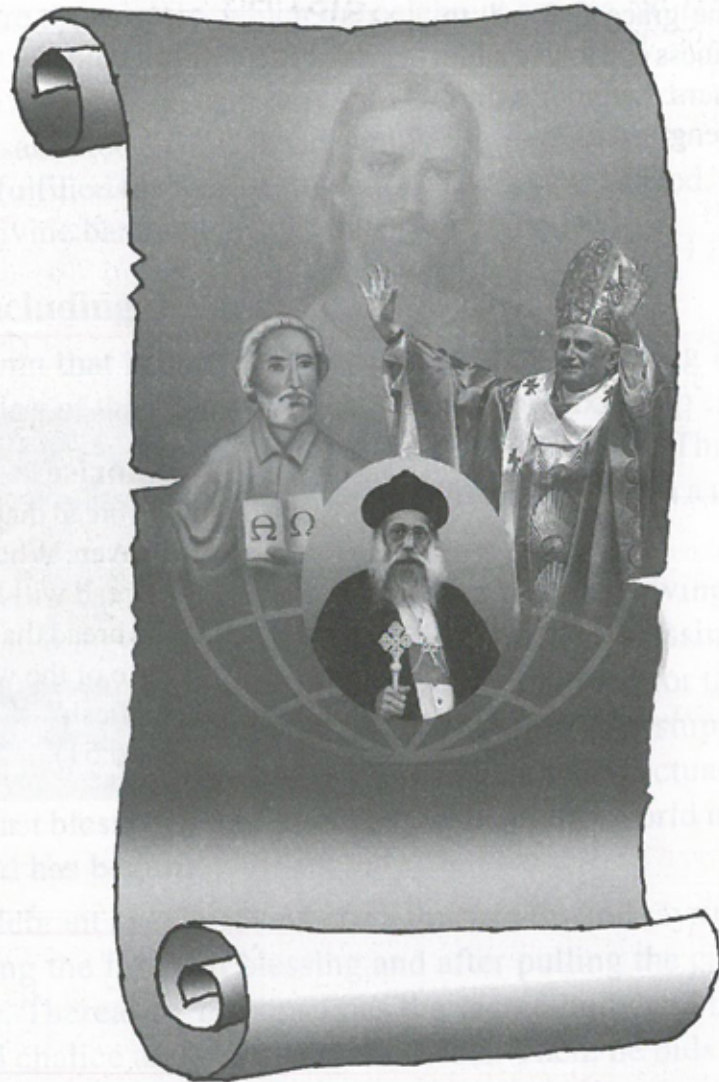
"I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh"  
(John 6:51).

### Questions

1. What does the Service of the Breaking of the Bread signify? Describe.
2. What does the Elevation of the Sacred Body and Blood mean?
3. What does the Holy Communion mean?

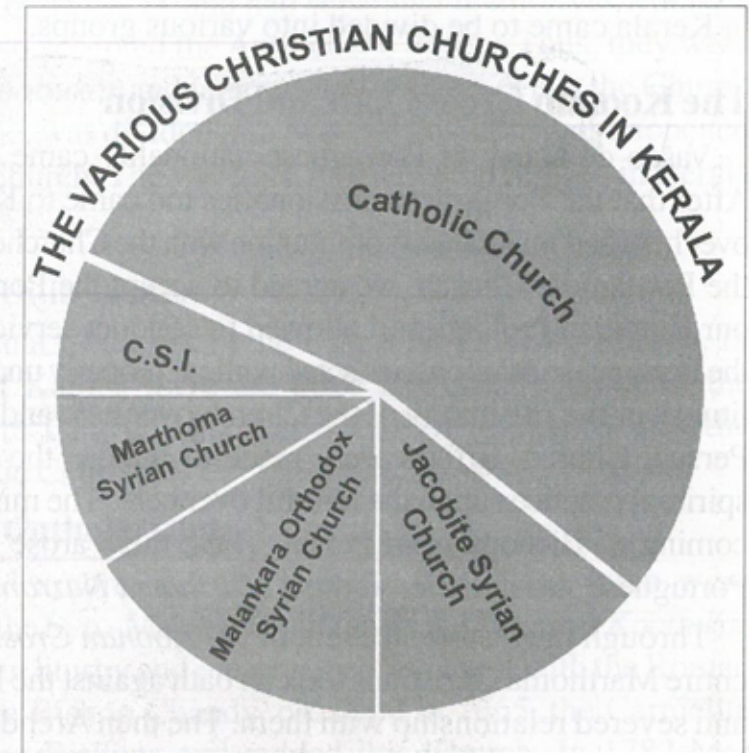
## THE VARIOUS CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN KERALA

### PART - III



## CHURCH HISTORY

Thomas apostle, the disciple of Christ, came to Kerala in 52 A.D. and preached the Gospel here. The Christian Religion of this locality, which was one till 1653 A.D., was divided into several groups. Hence, the Kerala Christian community today is known under various divisions. We discuss about the various Christian divisions in Kerala in this lesson.



### Christian Religion in Kerala

Apostle Thomas preached the Gospel in Kerala, established Christian communities in seven places and built churches there. Those who received faith from the apostle Thomas were known by the name '*Marthoma Nazranikal*'. From the beginning, the Church of this place was in communion with the Persian Church. Thus the Chaldean Liturgy, used in the Persian Church was used here also. In course of time Chaldean Bishops came here and gave spiritual leadership. The temporal and the administrative leadership of the Church of this place was carried out by a priest known as Archdeacon (*Archadiacon*).

The Christian Church in Kerala held direct relationship with the Persian Church. Thus, the Church of this place was in communion with the Persian Church and through that with the other Christian communities, especially



the Church of Rome and with the Pope, the successor of Peter. Thus, in the Church over here, which was in communion with the universal Catholic Church in liturgy and faith, there started division with the coming of the Portuguese missionaries in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, the united Christian Church in Kerala came to be divided into various groups.

### **The Koonan Cross Oath and Division**

Vasco de Gama of Portuguese nationality came to Kerala in 1498 A.D. After that the Portuguese missionaries too came to Kerala. Since the Church over here had maintained communion with the Churches of other places through the Portuguese Church, we agreed to accept the Portuguese missionaries as our Christian brothers and allowed to conduct services in our churches. But the Portuguese missionaries acted without properly understanding the Chaldean liturgy or the patrimony of the Church over here and its relationship with the Persian Church. Efforts were made to impose the Latin liturgy and Latin spiritual practices upon the faithful over here. The missionaries prohibited the coming of Bishops from Persia. Thus, there arose a cleavage between the Portuguese missionaries and the *Marthoma Nazranikal*.

Through the historical event of the *Koonan Cross Oath* of 1653 A.D. the entire Marthoma Christians took an oath against the Portuguese missionaries and severed relationship with them. The then Archdeacon, Parambil Thoma Kathanar was made bishop after the name of Mar Thoma I, by 12 priests imposing hands together upon him. Four consulters also were appointed. But all of them understood that the Episcopal ordination conferred to the Archdeacon was not valid. The Apostolic Vicariate of Malabar was established by Rome in 1665 for the Syrians and Joseph Sebestiani became the first Bishop. He ordained a native Bishop, Parambil Chandy Kathanar, one of the consulters of Mar Thoma I. Thus, he made an effort to pacify those who were revolting. Since they got a native Bishop, 64 out of the 110 churches fully and 20 partially accepted Bishop Chandy. The remaining 26 churches sided with Mar Thoma I. Thus, those who accepted Bishop Chandy continued to use the Chaldean Syrian Liturgy, which they were using till then and preserved relationship with the Roman Church and the Pope. Hence, this group was known as *Pazhaya Koottukar* (old group). They are now known as the Syro-Malabar Catholics.

Those who sided with Mar Thoma, who left the Chaldean Syrian liturgy and were severed from relationship with the Roman Church and the Pope, were known as the *Puthen Koottukar* (new group). Later on, they established relationship with the Jacobite Church of Antioch, which had not approved the Chalcedon Council of 451 A.D. and had separated themselves from the Catholic Church and also accepted the Antiochene liturgy. Thus, they were known as the *Puthen Koottukar* and later on, as Jacobites. Thus the Church of Kerala, which was one, was divided into two. Several divisions happened after that in the Kerala Church. The various Christian communities in Kerala now originated after 1653.

### **1. The Catholic Church in Kerala**

There are 23 Individual Churches in the Universal Catholic Church. In the Catholic Church of Kerala, there are three individual Churches: the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, the Latin Catholic Church and the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church.

#### **i) The Syro-Malabar Catholic Church**

When split occurred among the St. Thomas Christians, who were remained one till 1653, the Syro-Malabar Catholics or the *Pazhaya Koottukar* kept the ancient Chaldean liturgy and preserved communion with the Roman Church. After the native Bishop Chandy, ordained in 1665, the Carmelite foreigners again became Bishops and guided this Church. In 1782 Mar Joseph Kariyattil, a native, became Bishop and tried for the reunion of both the Churches. In the year 1887 two Vicariates, Kottayam and Thrissur were established by Rome for the Syrians and made the Syrians independent from the Latins. In 1896, these two Vicariates were made three dioceses: Thrissur, Ernakulam and Changanacherry and native Bishops were entrusted with their administration. The diocese of Kottayam was established in 1911. In 1923 Rome proclaimed Ernakulam as Archdiocese and the dioceses of Thrissur, Changanacherry and Kottayam as its suffragan dioceses. Various other dioceses were established after that. In 1992, the Syro-Malabar Catholic Church was raised by Rome as a Major Archiepiscopal Church; with the Synodal form of administration and Mar Varkey Vithayathil was raised as the head and Major Archbishop. There are about 35 lakhs of faithful in this Church. This is the biggest community among the Kerala Christians.





## ii) Latin Catholic Church

The Latin Catholics in Kerala form the part of the Roman Catholic Church, which has the patrimony of Saints Peter and Paul. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Portuguese missionaries came to Kerala, began preaching the Gospel and marked the beginning of the Latin Church. They started work in Kochi, Kollam, Travancore and Kannur and received many people into the Christian religion. As a result of the mission work of St. Francis Xavier many people were received into the Latin Catholic Church.

The history of the Latin Catholics in Kerala is related to the history of the Marthoma Christians. The Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Catholics and Latin Catholics were often missionaries. Later on, separate dioceses were established for both the groups. In the year 1886, when Pope Leo XIII established Latin Hierarchy in India, Varappuzha was raised as the Archdiocese of the Latin Church of Kerala and Kollam as its suffragan diocese.

Until the 16<sup>th</sup> century there was only the Chaldean Syrian liturgy here. Latin liturgy began to be used here after the coming of the Portuguese missionaries and marked the beginning of the Latin Catholic Church here. These are called the Latin Catholics or the Roman Catholics, because they are a part of the Latin Church of Rome. There are over 12 lakhs of people in this Church.

## iii) Syro-Malankara Catholic Church

After the *Koonan Cross Oath* of 1653, those who belonged to the *Puthenkor* group left communion with the Catholic Church and accepted communion with the Antiochene Jacobite Church. Several attempts were made to bring the *Puthenkor* community that lost communion with the Catholic Church, back to the same communion. Even though these attempts were made from the time of Mar Thoma I, none was successful. Among the *Puthenkor* faithful, an independent Church community called the Orthodox was formed in 1912. The Orthodox Church, which was engaged in litigation with the Jacobite Church, began to think about communion with the Catholic Church.

Attempt was made for reunion with the Catholic Church keeping intact the customs and religious practices of the Malankara Church and preserving

the Antiochene liturgy. This reunion attempt was in accordance with the decisions of the Bishops' synod of the Orthodox Church on November 1, 1926. The Bishops' synod entrusted this mission with Mar Ivanios of Bethany. By the time a favourable reply came from Rome, many of those who showed interest for the reunion stepped back. But Mar Ivanios decided to reinstate the communion with the Catholic Church, which was lost in 1653. Accordingly, Geevarghese Mar Ivanios, Jacob Mar Theophilos, Fr. John OIC, deacon Alexander and Mr. Kilileth Chacko, as representatives of the Church were reunited with the Catholic Church at the Bishop's House Chapel, Kollam on September 20, 1930. Through the Apostolic Bull "*Christo Pastorum Principi*", the Malankara Catholic Hierarchy was established. Thus, a group of the *Puthenkor* community, which lost communion with the Catholic Church re-established Catholic Union in 1930. They are the Syro-Malankara Catholics.

The 75 years old Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, is in the path of growth today. Pope John Paul II remarked about this Church as the 'fast growing Church'. On February 10, 2005, Pope John Paul II raised this Church to the status of a Major Archiepiscopal Church, having autonomy and the synodal form of administration and raised Cyril Mar Baselios, the head of this Church as the Major Archbishop and Catholicos. There are at present in the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church over 5 lakhs of faithful in 6 dioceses. Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis is the head and father of this Church.

## 2. The Jacobite Syrian Church

After the *Koonan Cross Oath* of 1653 A.D. 12 priests together ordained bishop the leader of the *Puthenkor* group, Archdeacon Thomas, under the name Mar Thoma I. Having understood that he has no valid Episcopal Ordination, Mar Thoma I approached many Churches of various places in order to convalidate his ordination to the Episcopate. As a result of this Mar Gregorios, an Antiochene Jacobite Bishop arrived here from Jerusalem in 1665 A.D. He united the *Puthenkor* community and gave leadership to them. The Antiochene Jacobites were the people, who did not accept the Council of Chalcedon of 451 A.D. and had severed communion with the Catholic Church from that time onwards. The liturgy of the Antiochene Jacobites was not the Chaldean Syrian liturgy. The Antiochene Jacobite Church used the Antiochene Syrian liturgy.



Even though Mar Gregorios came here in 1665 and afterwards several Antiochene Bishops, they did not change the Chaldean Syrian liturgy, which the *Puthenkoor* people were using. The Antiochene Syrian liturgy began to spread here after 1751. With the Synod of Mavelikara held in 1836, the relationship with the Antiochene Jacobite Church and the Antiochene liturgy got strengthened here. With the Synod held at Mulanthuruthy in 1876, the *Puthenkoor* community began to use the Antiochene liturgy fully. Thus the *Puthenkoottukar* were known as Jacobites. Thus, three liturgies spread among the Kerala Christians: the ancient Chaldean Syrian liturgy, which was prevalent here; the Latin liturgy, which the Portuguese brought and the Antiochene Syrian liturgy, which the Antiochene Bishops brought here.

Patriarch Abdulla, who was the Patriarch of Antioch came here in 1911 and ordered that all Bishops over here should surrender in writing the spiritual as well as temporal authority to the Patriarch. Metropolitan Vattasseril Mar Divannasios, who was then leading the Church, disagreed and the rest of the Bishops agreed to it. Hence, the Patriarch excommunicated Vattasseril Mar Divannasios and entrusted the responsibility of the Church to Mar Koorilos. Thus the Jacobite Church was divided into two. Those who accepted the Patriarch and Mar Koorilos were called the Patriarchal party (*Bava Kakshi*) and those who accepted Vattasseril Mar Divannasios was called the Metropolitan party (*Methran Kakshi*). Later on, the Patriarch party was known as Jacobites and the Metropolitan party as the Orthodox. For the Jacobites, who fully accepted the Antiochene Patriarch, the Patriarch installed a Catholicos and entrusted him with the responsibility of the Jacobite Church over here. The head of this Church is Baselios Thomas I. There are about 12 lakhs of faithful in this Church.

### 3. The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

The Antiochene Patriarch continued trying to make the *Puthenkoor* community part of the Antiochene Jacobite Church. But a group of the Jacobites over here was not interested either to bring the *Puthenkoor* community under the Antiochene Patriarch or to become part of the Jacobite Church forgoing the right for self-governance and freedom of the Church over here. Vattasseril Mar Divannasios, the then Malankara Metropolitan,

did not agree to surrender the full authority and rights of the Church to Patriarch Abdulla, who came here in 1911. Hence, the Patriarch excommunicated Mar Divannasios and in his stead Mar Koorilos was entrusted with the responsibility of the Church.

In order to annul the excommunication of Vattasseril Mar Divannasios and to establish a Catholicate with the right for self-governance, Abded M'seehah, the former Patriarch of the See of Antioch was invited and brought over here. He came here in 1912, annulled the excommunication of Vattasseril Mar Divannasios, established here an autonomous Catholicate and installed Murimattathu Mar Ivanios as the first Catholicos under the name Baselios Paulose. Thus, with the erection of the Catholicate, the Jacobite Church was split and those who accepted Vattasseril Mar Divannasios and the Catholicos were called *Methran Kakshi* or *Catholica Kakshi* and those who accepted the Patriarch and Mar Koorilos were called *Bava Kakshi*, which was later on known as the Jacobite Syrian Church.

The *Methran Kakshi* adopted the name Orthodox Church from 1934 A.D. They made the constitution in 1934 recognizing the Antiochene Patriarch as one having spiritual authority alone. Because of the court verdicts and other disputes, the Orthodox Church has completely severed their relationship with the Antiochene Patriarch. 6 Catholicoses led this Church after 1912. Baselios Mar Thoma Didimos I, the 7<sup>th</sup> Catholicos is leading the Church now. There are about 14 lakhs of people in this Church.

### 4. The Independent Malabar Syrian Church (The Thozhiyoor Church)

Kattumangatt Abraham Remban of the *Puthenkoor* Jacobite Church was ordained Bishop under the name Mar Koorilos by Mar Gregorios, an Antiochene Bishop in 1772. But Mar Divannasios, the head of the Jacobite Church did not approve it. Thus, Mar Koorilos was excommunicated from the Jacobite Church. Mar Koorilos went and stayed at Thozhiyoor near Thrissur and marked the beginning of the Independent Malabar Syrian Church (Thozhiyoor Church). This is a very small community. They follow the Antiochene liturgy.



## 5. The Chaldean Syrian Church (The Church of the East)

The Kerala Christians split into two in 1653 as *Pazhayakoor* and *Puthenkoor*. *Pazhayakoottukar* did not like the authority of the western missionaries. They sent a letter to the Eastern Syrian Catholic Patriarch in order to get Eastern Bishops. Bishop Mar Rokkos came here in 1861. The people received him. But on account of the pressure of the missionaries, Rokkos went back in 1862. Bishop Melus came to Kerala in 1874. Due to the pressure of the missionaries, he too went back in 1882. Members of a few families near Thrissur, who accepted Rokkos and Melus, preserved the Eastern relationship and rejecting the leadership of the missionaries, left the Catholic communion, and established communion with the Nestorian Church of Persia. They are known as *Soorayikal* or 'Eastern Chaldean Syrians'. They use the Chaldean Syrian liturgy. The present head of this Church is Mar Aprem. There are 30,000 faithful in this Church.

## 6. The Protestant Churches – C.S.I. Church

The missionaries of the Anglican Church (Protestant Church of England) came to India after 1795 with the intention of doing mission work. They tried to understand the *Puthenkoor* community. The CMS missionaries (Church Missionary Society) began to work around on Alapuzha in 1816. In the beginning, the missionaries worked among the *Puthenkoor* community with the help of Colonel Montro. They gave a lot of help to the Jacobites. Thus, they got the opportunity to preach freely in the Jacobite churches. The Protestant ideas thus spread among the Jacobites. The missionaries taught that the Jacobite faith was superstition, the Order of the Holy Qurbano should be renovated, that they should disown the Mother of God and the Saints, and that they should not remember the dead. Thus, there arose a crisis between the Jacobites and the missionaries. At the synod of Mavelikara held in 1836, the Jacobite Church decided to stop all relationship with the missionaries.

Before the English missionaries stopped relationship with the Jacobites, they had converted about 6000 families to the Protestant faith and had enrolled them in their community. Later on, different sects of the Protestant Church came and started missionary work. Four Protestant Churches: Presbyterian, Congregational, Anglican and Methodist, united on September 27, 1947

and became one Church CSI (Church of South India). The CMS Anglican High Church got separated from the CSI Church in 1964.

## 7. The Marthoma Syrian Church

Even though the relationship between the Jacobites and the missionaries was cut away, the reformation ideas of the Anglican Protestant missionaries continued among the Jacobites. Abraham Malpan (scholar) was one who showed interest in the Protestant reformation. Abraham Malpan, who understood that there should be a Bishop to give leadership to his ideas, sent deacon Mathan to the West Asian Jacobite Patriarch in 1841. In 1842 deacon Mathan was sent back to Kerala with proper testimonials after having been ordained Bishop. He was known as Matthews Mar Athanasios.

Matthews Mar Athanasios, holding protestant ideas reached Kerala when Cheppatt Mar Divannasios was the Malankara Metropolitan. As per court verdict, Matthews Mar Athanasios ruled over the Jacobite Church. In the year 1868, Thomas, the son of Abraham Malpan was ordained and was appointed Bishop Auxiliary under the name Thomas Mar Athanasios.

Patriarch Peter III, having understood that there was conflict between Mar Divannasios and Mar Athanasios, came down to Kerala in 1876 and convened a synod at Mulanthuruthy. He excommunicated Matthews Mar Athanasios and his allies. He appointed Pulikkott Mar Divannasios as the Malankara Metropolitan. Thomas Mar Athanasios and his allies, who failed in the litigation in the year 1889, came and settled down at Maramon and continued as a new Church under the name the Reformed group. Later on, they were known under the name Marthoma Church. Tiruvalla is the head quarters of this Church. This Church has the Antiochene liturgy and Protestant faith.

At present, Metropolitan Mar Joseph is the head of this Church. There are about 8 lakhs of faithful in this Church.

## 8. Lutheran Church

Protestant revolt started in Germany in the 16<sup>th</sup> century under the leadership of Martin Luther. The followers of Luther were called the Lutheran Church. They started work in India in 1706. They are working in Kerala from 1911.



## 9. Baptist Churches

Another sect that was formed from the Anglican Church is the Baptists. This community exists in Kerala and various places in India.

## 10. Salvation Army – *Reksha Sainyam*

William Booth, a Methodist priest, formed this community in 1865. Their aim was to carry out works of fraternal charity. Booth gave to his Church an administrative system in accordance with the military rule. The workers are known under the names: General, Colonel, Captain and Soldiers. This community spread in Kerala from 1892 onwards.

## 11. Brethren Community

This community took its origin from the Protestant Church of England in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They deny the sacraments in general and especially the priesthood. They think that the Christian duty is to live apart from the world. Hence, they are called the Separatists (*Verpadukar*). They work in Kerala from 1895. They came as the fore-runners to Pentecostalism with 'wakeful assemblies'. Pentecostal groups were formed later on from this group. Pentecostals are not considered as a Church. For, they do not have the framework of a Church. Hence, they are known as Pentecostal communities. Pentecostals are the communities formed as independent Christian communities from Protestant ideologies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Since Christ is one, Christ's Church also should be one. All Churches have the obligation to preserve unity in faith, taking into account the various local differences. The Church of Christ existing today in Kerala as separate Churches without unity is a counter witness to the teachings of Jesus. Let us pray and work for the unity among these Churches.



## Worship

O Lord, who desired for one shepherd and one fold, grant the grace and blessings necessary for the different Churches to work in unity and love. Bring back all those who have separated themselves from the One, Holy, Apostolic and Universal Church to the unity and peace of the Holy Church.

## Action

Find out in what all spheres the Catholic and non-Catholic Churches could work together.

### Memorise

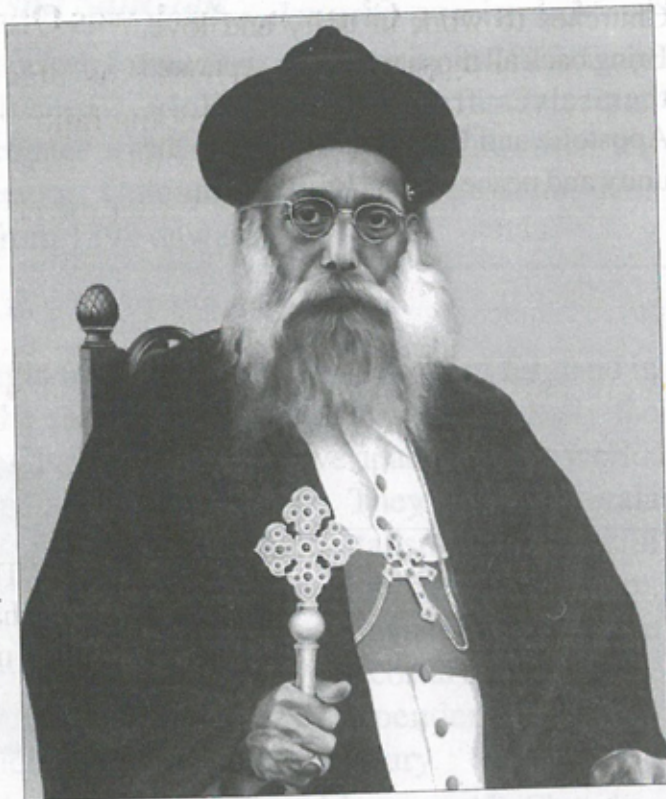
"The glory you have given me I have given them so that they may be one, as we are one"  
(John 17:22).

## Questions

1. Explain the *Koonan Cross Oath* and its after effects.
2. Which are the Catholic Churches of Kerala? Prepare a short explanation about each.
3. Which are the non-Catholic Churches of Kerala?

# REUNION AND ECUMENISM

Reunion and Ecumenism are two words very familiar to us. All of us are aware about the Reunion Movement, started under the leadership of Mar Ivanios. All of us, Malankara Catholics, have arrived at full communion with the Catholic Church through the Reunion Movement. Similarly, we have heard about the ecumenical endeavours, learnt and participated to an extent in those endeavours of the Catholic Church. We know that reunion and ecumenism point to the



unity of the Church. In this lesson we discuss in brief about them and about their relationship. After the Second Vatican Council, the relation between these two is widely discussed on various stages.

## 1. Reunion Movement

A considerable part of the Orthodox Church in Kerala has arrived at the canonical communion with the Catholic Church on September 20, 1930 under the leadership of Mar Ivanios. As a result of this, the Malankara Catholic Church got its present form. This Church union event is known as the Reunion Movement.

The basis of reunion is the prayer of Jesus for the unity of the Church. Mar Ivanios gave leadership to the Reunion Movement, understanding that the preaching of the Gospel becomes meaningful only through the unity of

Churches among themselves. Besides, the thought that the Marthoma Christians, who were divided after the 16<sup>th</sup> century, should also unite, persuaded him.

## The Malankara Church, which was One

The Malankara Church, which was planted and brought up by St. Thomas the Apostle in India, kept the faith as one unit for a period of 16 centuries, grew in faith and bore witness to Christ in this country. The waves of split rose in this Church after the church assembly known as the synod of Diamper (1599) and as a result of the reign of the Portuguese Latin Bishops (1599-1653) and the *Koonan Cross Oath* (1653), the after effect of this rule. Many reasons could be pointed out for this. The Portuguese Latin missionaries and the Antiochene Jacobite leaders have all caused these splits.

## The Various Sects Existing Today

The Malankara Church, which was one, was split into two after the 16<sup>th</sup> century (1653): the *Puthenkoor* and the *Pazhayakoor*. In course of time, there occurred in the *Puthenkoor* community many splits. They are as follows: Thozhiyoor Church (1772), Marthoma Church (1889), Orthodox Church, Jacobite Church (1912) and Malankara Catholic Church (1930). Besides these, the *Marthoma Nazranikal*, who in 1836 changed into the Central Kerala diocese from CMS (CSI), were also *Puthenkoottukar*. In the *Pazhayakoor* community: (1) the Syro-Malabar Church (those who always remained in full communion with the Catholic Church) (2) The Chaldean Church of Thrissur (*Soorayikal*) (1908).

## In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Among the *Puthenkoor* division of the *Marthoma Nazranikal*, there arose regularly subdivisions. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, two divisions: Jacobite and Orthodox. They dissented among themselves and went forward for a century (from 1913) in harmony and opposition, in litigation and compromise. Thus, the *Puthenkoor* community moved forward without missionary vigour and spiritual growth.



## **The Renovation of Bethany**

In this background, Mar Ivanios marked the beginning of *Bethany Sanyasa* (Religious) Movement (in 1919) centred at Perunad, with the intention of spiritually renovating the *Puthenloor* community. The Bethany monks gave leadership to direct the people of God towards spirituality and to foster the thought of unity of Churches and mission spirit. That flourished and led to the Reunion Movement and through that the Malankara Catholic Church was formed as we see it today.

## **Why is it called Reunion?**

The Malankara Church was in full communion with the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church until the synod of Udayamperoor. From 1599 to 1653 all the Malankara *Nazaranies* were under the direct rule of the Pope of Rome through the Latin Catholic Bishops. That means, until a period of 16 centuries all the Malankara *Nazaranies* were in full Catholic communion. In course of time, on account of the relationship with the Jacobites, who came from Eastern Asia and with the European Protestants, the *Puthenloor* community lost full Catholic communion. This endeavour for reunion, since it is an endeavour to bring back to the canonical communion with the Catholic Church of those communities, which lost full catholicity, is called the Reunion Movement. This Movement prepared the way to go back to the stage of unity before 1653.

## **The Speech of Mar Ivanios in 1925**

Mar Ivanios had made the invitation that all children of the Malankara Church, who were in various Church communities, should unite again and become one in 1925 itself. He made this invitation in the prolonged speech that he delivered at the Niranam church after he had been ordained Bishop in the Orthodox Church. That was partially fulfilled through the Reunion Movement.

## **The Nature of the Reunion**

We can understand the lofty vision of Mar Ivanios about this from the correspondence regarding reunion, which he made from 1926 A.D. The reunion, which Mar Ivanios had envisaged had the following qualities: the

Orthodox Church as a whole should come to the full communion with the Catholic Church; to uphold in tact the liturgies and rites prevalent here; to perpetuate the autonomy and the right for self-governance of the Church through the compositions of the Catholicate and Synod; to enter into the Catholic communion, remaining as an Individual Church; to uphold the spiritual authority of the Bishops over their faithful; not to lose the freedom of the Individual Church in the communion; and to come to communion with the successor of the Apostle Peter and the head of the Universal Church, the Pope of Rome. But because of the Western Ecclesiology then prevalent, he could not realize this vision fully. Besides, he did not get the necessary cooperation of the co-workers and faithful of the Orthodox Church. Hence, the reunion was only partially realized. Only those who were convinced of the wide vision of Mar Ivanios and were subject to the influence of Bethany were attracted first to the Reunion.

## **The Achievement of the Reunion**

Through the Reunion Movement, the Malankara Church came to communion with the Catholic Church. The path is opened for those who have the good will to arrive at communion with the Catholic Church. Thus, a lot of people became Catholics from the Orthodox, Jacobite, Mar Thoma, CSI, and Thozhiyoor Churches. There is considerable growth in the sacramental and prayer life. The community has received spiritual renovation. A new Christian life style is seen within the *Puthenloor* community, which was filled with quarrels. When the spiritual life was strengthened, an awareness of social commitment rose up. The Church began to turn attention towards social action and educational activities conducive to the advancement of the country. The reunited Church community engaged itself in all sorts of enterprises helpful to the people living today to achieve enlightenment, spiritual strength and temporal prosperity to the extent within their limits and even beyond.

## **Missionary Message**

Those who were united through the Reunion Movement received a big persuasive strength for missionary activities. Propagation of faith is a basic Christian message. But in Kerala that remained dormant for a long period. The Malankara Catholic Church showed great enthusiasm in the mission



fields even in the nineteen thirties. Remaining within the limits of that time, amidst difficulties and oppositions the leadership of the Malankara Catholic Church set out enthusiastically in order to propagate the message of the Gospel. The fruits produced in the districts of Kannyakumari and Thiruvananthapuram were miraculous. Besides opening the door of unity for other Churches and communities, it gave them great persuasion and encouragement for renovation. The Syro Malabar Church, which stands first with regard to vocation, entered into the mission field after this period.

### **Reunion, a Divine Work**

All activities for unity are divine. Our Lord desired that there should be unity among Christians. Such kind of a divine activity was the Reunion Movement of 1930. Its goodness could be understood from the blessings God has showered on the enterprise.

### **2. Ecumenism**

The word 'ecumenism' has different meaning in the early periods of the Church and now. This word, in the early centuries, showed the activities of the Church in full communion. For example, 'Ecumenical Council' signifies that the Bishops of the Church, who held unity in faith and full communion, gathered together to discuss ecclesiastical matters. In modern period, the word 'ecumenism' signifies the activities, which enable the re-establishing of Christian unity. Similarly, the various Christian communities give different meaning to this word. But, to say in general, ecumenism is a word that connotes the activities for unity.

### **The Entrance of Individuals to the Church and Collective Unity**

The Church teaches that in the Catholic Church, the Church of Christ exists fully. Being convinced of this, there is Church unity through individuals and small communities coming into communion. There is also Church unity, where the whole Church is united and becomes one. The Catholic Church considers both these as the work of the Holy Spirit. Regarding ecumenism, the Catholic Church published a Decree under the name 'Church Unity' in the Second Vatican Council. The ecumenical principles of the Catholic Church are clear in this Decree and in the Papal documents that followed.

The Catholic Church published a renewed Ecumenical Directory in 1993. So also, the Encyclical: "That all may be one" (1995) makes clear the view-point of the Catholic Church about Church Unity.

### **The Ecumenical Outlook of the Catholic Church**

The Catholic Church considers that the division existing among Christians is diametrically opposed to the will of the Lord and a sin. Along with the Second Vatican Council, very many changes have happened in the Catholic Church regarding its approach to the other Churches and in the outlook of the Unity of Churches. The Church teaches that in all Churches there are parts of truth and the basic units necessary for salvation, but its fullness is in the Catholic Church. Even now, there is communion with the ancient Eastern Churches. The Catholic Church is in communion with these Churches regarding the basic truths of faith. That is, the difference is not in the essence of faith, but in the mode of its presentation. The difference of opinion with these Churches is chiefly regarding ecclesiology only. Even that can be transformed into an understanding through dialogue.

The ecumenical aim of the Catholic Church is to come into full communion in Christ in a visible manner through the operations of the Holy Spirit in the manner and at the time God wills. The Church tries to recognize other Churches and to bring about unity according to the will of God. The Catholic Church accepts the sacraments of the non-Catholic Eastern Churches, respects their autonomy and they are considered as sister Churches.

The Catholic Church is committed to ecumenism in spite of all hindrances. The Church does not see the activities for communion of Churches as one among many activities of the Church, but as its most important mission.

### **Ecumenical Dialogue**

The Catholic Church enters into ecumenical dialogue with the important Churches and Church Communities under the light of precise ecumenical outlook. The Catholic Church enters into dialogue with the Eastern Orthodox belonging to the Byzantine tradition, with the Oriental Orthodox Churches of the Jacobite tradition and with the Assyrian Church, known as Nestorians; besides these, with the Western Protestant Churches and with the World Council of Churches (W.C.C.). The Catholic Church has come to an



understanding with the Oriental Orthodox Churches regarding Christological truths. Among them, with the Syrian Orthodox Church (Jacobite), agreement has taken shape with regard to sacramental communion and conducting of marriage under grave necessity; with the Assyrian Church, unity of opinion is arrived at with regard to Christology and sacraments; with the Lutheran Church a united statement regarding the subject of justification has been made; and ecumenical dialogue with the Anglican Church has progressed to a great extent. In this respect, the present ecumenical dialogue is hopefully progressing.

### Ecumenism and Reunion

Mar Ivanios was a philosopher, who had imbibed the core of modern ecumenism far in advance. It is under its light that he gave shape to the Reunion Movement. He tried to put into practice the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council many years ago. With regard to the *Marthoma Nazranikal* of Kerala, this Church Unity is the reunion. Even though many attempts for reunion of Churches were made in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the ecumenical endeavour that achieved the greatest success is the Reunion Movement of Malankara.

The point of view, which the Western Church fostered about the unity of Churches until the Second Vatican Council, was quite different from what it is today. But even in the nineteen thirties, Mar Ivanios tried to introduce a different view and to get the same approved till the last moment. The establishment of the Malankara Hierarchy and the right of self-governance, which the Malankara Catholic Church got, can be considered as the recognition of this vision.

Those who believe in Christ should be in unity. Reunion and ecumenism are means for this. All should try to strengthen this unity and communion. That is why the Second Vatican Council accepts the entering in of individuals separately and union of Church as a whole with the Catholic Church.



### Worship

O God, who blessed us to become members of the Catholic Church, grant the grace that the Churches should come in full union among themselves in accordance with the manner and time you desire through the works of the Holy Spirit. Help us to accept each other and to bring about union according to your divine will. Strengthen us to know and live that the Catholic Church is the one, true Church.

### Life Witness

Prepare a pamphlet about Mar Ivanios and present the same.

### Memorise

“I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd”  
(John 10:16).

### Questions

1. Why is it called reunion?
2. Describe the achievements of Reunion.
3. Describe the ecumenical view-point of the Catholic Church.



## THE MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH- MAJOR ARCHBISHOP & CATHOLICOS

On February 10, 2005, Pope John Paul II raised the Malankara Catholic Church, which had the system of Metropolitan Administration to the status of Major Archiepiscopal Church and its head as Major Archbishop and Catholicos. Thus, the Malankara Catholic Church was raised as an autonomous Church and one having the Synodal form of administration. We discuss in this lesson about the system of administration, which prevailed in the early centuries of the Church and the status of Major Archbishop and Catholicos.



### Authority of the Church in the Early Centuries

After the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the disciples of Christ preached the Gospel in different parts of the world. Thus, the Christian communities grew in different places. It was in the Roman Empire that the Christian Religion strengthened in the early centuries. Even though the Christian Religion was persecuted in the early centuries in the Roman Empire, Emperor Constantine gave freedom to the Christian Religion in 313 A.D. through the edict of Milan and raised the Christian Religion as the official religion of the Roman Empire. Thus, the Church attained very speedy growth.

The mode of the political division of the Roman Empire gradually entered into the Church. On political basis, the Roman Empire was divided into two

parts: East and West. Besides, the Roman states were divided into dioceses and provinces. These civil names were used in the Church as well. The presidents of the head quarters of the provinces, chief city (metropolis), were called the Metropolitans. Gradually, they came to the leading position as Metropolitans, having authority over the Bishops of the provinces.

### Patriarchal Churches

As the Church grew and got strengthened in different places of the Roman Empire, different liturgies too grew up. Five cities of the Roman Empire grew up as Church centres. Latin liturgy grew up centred on Rome, Coptic liturgy centred on Alexandria, Antiochene liturgy centred on Antioch, Greek or the Byzantine liturgy centred on Constantinople and on Jerusalem, the head quarters of the Church, also grew up. Thus basing on these places: Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople and Jerusalem; the Patriarchal system of administration was established and their Bishops were known after the name Patriarchs.

### The Name, Patriarch

The meaning of the word 'Patriarch' is 'Common Father'. In Greek, it is said *Patriarches*. It was used to denote the father of a Family or Clan or Tribe. This word was used to denote Abraham (Hebrews 7:4), the 12 children of Jacob (Acts of the Apostles 7:8), and David (Acts of the Apostles 2:29). The lofty prefect of the Jewish Synagogue was called Patriarch until the 5<sup>th</sup> century. It is from about the 5<sup>th</sup> century, a Bishop, who has full authority over a Regional Apostolic Church and has authority over the Bishops of that Church began to be called Patriarch. Before that, they were known by names such as Episcopa, Metropolitan, Archbishop and Exarch. Thus, by the 5<sup>th</sup> century, there were in the Roman Empire Patriarchates and five Patriarchs. All had accepted that among them, the Roman Patriarch had the primacy. He got this primacy in the state as the successor of Peter, the head of the Apostles and as Bishop of the capital of the Roman Empire.

### Authority of the Church outside the Roman Empire

In course of time, the Church got strengthened outside the Roman Empire too. The Persian Church was on the path of growth by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup>

century. The head of the Persian Church, outside the ancient Roman Empire, was called Catholicos from the 5<sup>th</sup> century. In the later period, the heads of the Armenian as well as Georgian Churches were also addressed Catholicos.

### **The Name, Catholicos**

The head of a Regional Apostolic Church outside the Roman Empire was known as Catholicos. But the presidents of the Ethiopian and Malankara hadn't this name in the early periods. The meaning of the word Catholicos is 'head of the Church'. The position of the Catholicos was below that of the Patriarch.

There were government officials in the Roman Empire under the title 'Catholicos'. The title Catholicos began to be used to denote one having authority over a definite geographic region. This name was used from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. But the word Catholicos was used as 'head of the Church' from the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century.

This title was used in the Persian Church from the synod held in 410 A.D. The Armenian Church too accepted this title during the same period. The head of the Georgian Church began to use this name from 609 A.D. In the later period, all of them added the word Patriarch to Catholicos.

Catholicos enjoyed all authority and rights like that of the Patriarch within the territory of his rule. In short, all authority that the Patriarch has in his Patriarchate, the Catholicos too has in his Catholicate. In the Arab Code of Canons, it is said thus about the authority of Catholicos: "Catholicos is the supreme head. All those who are under him should obey him. He has authority over all Metropolitans and Bishops in Persia. Nobody has the right to judge him. He is the pastor, who teaches the people authoritatively. He is the one to take final decision on matters concerning belief. So is it with regard to matters of liturgy. He has the right to introduce feasts as well as to remove them. Catholicos is to be commemorated in the liturgy. The decisions of the Catholicos will be final. He has the right to convene synods, to approve the Bishops, whom the Metropolitans choose, to erect dioceses, to alter their boundaries and to transfer Bishops".



### **Maphrian and Catholicos in the Antiochene Tradition**

Those who did not accept the Council of Chalcedon were known as the Monophysites. Later on, they were known by the name Jacobites. These people are also known as the Syrian Orthodox. The Jacobites, who were opposed to Chalcedon, worked centred on Antioch. Thus, the Antiochene liturgy became the chief liturgy of the opposers of Chalcedon. Lot of Jacobites emigrated to Persia fearing the religious persecution of the Byzantine emperors. Thus, the number of Jacobites increased in Persia. In order to cater to their spiritual needs a Jacobite Bishop, by name Ahudenme was appointed in Tagrith of Persia, in the year 559 A.D.

In 629 A.D., the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch appointed Mar Marutha, the chief Metropolitan, as the spiritual head of the Jacobites residing in Persia. The Patriarch had appointed Mar Marutha as the chief Metropolitan and *Maphrian* of Tagrith. Thus, Tagrith of Persia rose as a centre of the Jacobite Church of Antioch and a Metropolitan, having the status of *Maphrian*, took charge.

The Syriac word *Maphrian* means 'one who begets'. This head of the Church of Persia was known in the following names: one who has the authority to install Bishops and Metropolitans, one, capable of producing a lot of spiritual fruits and the Chief Priest of the Eastern Region. In short, this Metropolitan, having the title of *Maphrian*, is the representative of the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch.

*Maphrian* Bar Hebraeus (1264-1286) used the title Catholicos along with his name. But, till that time, the title 'Catholicos' was used in Persia only by the head of the Chaldean Syrian Church. The *Maphrian*-Catholicos of Tagrith, in course of time, acted as head of the Church, having the right of self-governance. The Jacobite Church of Tagrith slowly began to decline due to religious persecution. Thus, during the period of 1860-1863, the Patriarch abolished the *Maphrianate* of Tagrith or the Catholicate.

### **The Establishment of the Catholicate in the Malankara Church**

The Marthoma Christians of India were in communion with the Persian Church from the early period. Thus, the Chaldean Syrian liturgy of Persia was used here and the Chaldean Syrian Bishops of Persia gave leadership

to the necessary spiritual needs of the Church over here. But the temporal administration of the Church here, was done by the Archdeacon priest as 'one who fulfils duties to the race' (*Jathikku karthavyan*).

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Marthoma Christians were divided into two groups: the *Puthenloor* and *Pazhayalloor*. The *Puthenloor* community left the Catholic communion and established communion with the Jacobite Church of Antioch. Gradually, the *Puthenkoottukar* accepted the Antiochene liturgy and were known as Jacobites.

Efforts were made to bring the *Puthenloor* Jacobites of Kerala under the full jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Antioch. But Mar Abdulla, the Antiochene Patriarch, excommunicated Metropolitan Vattasseril Mar Divannasios, who intended to remain as a Church having the right for self-governance in communion with the Church of Antioch. Under this circumstance, Vattasseril Mar Divannasios and Fr. P.T. Geevarghese (later, Mar Ivanios of Bethany) together, understanding the need of establishing a Church having the right of self-governance and the system of synodal rule, invited and brought Abded M'seeha, the former Patriarch of Antioch, and informed him of the needs of the Church here. Accordingly, Patriarch Abded M'seeha came to Kerala in 1912 and annulled the excommunication of Vattasseril Mar Divannasios. In the same year, at Niranam, he established a Catholicate with the right of self-governance and the synodal form of rule for the Church here and installed Murimattathil Mar Ivanios as the first Catholicos. Thus, there came into existence in Kerala among the *Puthenloor* Jacobites, a Catholicate and a system of administration of Catholicos according to the Antiochene tradition. Those who accepted Vattasseril Mar Divannasios and the Catholicos were known as *Methran Kakshi* (Bishop's group) and later, as the Orthodox Church.

### **The Malankara Catholic Church and the Status of Catholicos**

The *Puthenloor* group of Malankara consists of those who lost communion with the Catholic Church after 1653. From the time of losing communion with the Catholic Church, many attempts were made for reunion. A group of Jacobites, under the leadership of Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Ivanios, became reunited with the Catholic Church on September 20, 1930 and regained the lost Catholic communion. Thus, those who have

come to the Catholic communion from the Malankara Jacobites, having the Antiochene tradition, are called the Malankara Catholics.

Before the reunion, Most Rev. Mar Ivanios had correspondence with Rome enquiring about the possibilities for reunion. Most Rev. Mar Ivanios had desired to come to Catholic communion upholding all patrimony and traditions of the Malankara Jacobite Church. What he asked Rome was whether it was possible to have communion with the Catholic Church, preserving the individuality in matters of liturgy, spirituality, theology and code of administration. Rome sanctioned majority of these demands. But, Rome did not send a positive reply with regard to the synodal method of autonomous rule and about the status of the Catholicos. Rome said that those things would be positively considered later on. Thus, Rome accepted the reunited Mar Ivanios as the Metropolitan Archbishop and the Malankara Catholic Church as having the system of administration of the Metropolitan Church. A Church, having the system of the Metropolitan administration does not have either the right of autonomy in administration or the synodal system and the Metropolitan has no authority over the Bishops of the Church.

### **The Malankara Catholic Church as a Major Archiepiscopal Church**

Pope John Paul II raised the Malankara Catholic Church from its state of a Metropolitan Church into the status of a Major Archiepiscopal Church and its head, Cyril Mar Baselios, as Major Archbishop on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2005 according to the Code of Canons for the Oriental Churches. As per Code of Canons for the Oriental Churches (CCEO - c. 151), the Major Archbishop has the same rights and duties as that of a Patriarch. All things mentioned in the common canons about the Patriarchal Churches and Patriarchs are applicable to the Major Archiepiscopal Churches and Major Archbishops (c. 152). In short, instead of granting anew to a growing Church the Patriarchal system and the status of Patriarch, who has full authority over a Regional Apostolic Church, a similar system and status are the arrangement of the Major Archiepiscopal Church and the status of the Major Archbishop.

According to the Code of Canons for the Oriental Churches, the Regional Apostolic Churches are grouped under four authoritative rows: 1) Patriarchal Churches, 2) Major Archiepiscopal Churches, 3) Metropolitan Churches



and 4) Eparchial Churches, having only one Bishop. Of these, the Patriarchal Churches and the Major Archiepiscopal Churches can be said to be the same according to law. The Malankara Catholic Church is raised to such Major Archiepiscopal Church. There are four Churches in this status at present, in the Catholic Church: Ukrainian Catholic Church, Syro-Malabar Catholic Church, Syro-Malankara Catholic Church and Rumanian Catholic Church. The heads of these Churches are called Major Archbishops.

### **The Major Archbishop and the Status of Catholicos**

We understood that the head of the Malankara Catholic Church has been raised Major Archbishop as per Oriental Code of Canons of 1992 on February 10, 2005. The Malankara Catholic Church follows the liturgical traditions and patrimony of the Antiochene Church. Hence, when it is said that the Malankara Catholic Church is raised Major Archiepiscopal Church and its head Major Archbishop as per Canons, we have to understand that this Church has been raised, in accordance with the traditions of the Malankara Church, to the system of the Catholicate and the head of this Church as *Catholica Bava*. The heads of the Orthodox and Jacobite Churches, which follow the Antiochene tradition, are known by the name *Catholica Bava*. The word *Bava* means Father.

In the Code of Canons, common for all the 22 Oriental Churches, the name of Major Archbishop is given to all. It is in the particular law of each Regional Church that it is specified under which name the head of their Church should be known. Hence, the Major Archbishop according to the Code of Canons for the Oriental Churches will be called *Catholica Bava* according to the Malankara tradition. In short, in the appointment of the Major Archbishop is included all powers, rights and the status of the Catholicos. Hence, the head of the Malankara Catholic Church is Major Archbishop according to the Oriental Code of Canons and Catholicos according to Malankara traditions. For this reason, he is called Major Archbishop – Catholicos. The use of both these words means the same.

The promise of Rome made in 1930, that the synodal system, having the right for self-governance and the status of the Catholicos would be considered favourably later on, was fulfilled on February 10, 2005 by granting the status of Catholicos to the head of the Malankara Catholic Church.

### **The Mission of the Malankara Catholic Church**

Over and above having received any particular status for the Malankara Catholic Church by being raised to a Church having the right of self-governance, the Church has obtained more special responsibilities and obligations through this. The risen Christ told his disciples: "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). The only mission Jesus gave to the Church was to preach the Gospel. Hence, the mission of the Church is to preach the history of the perfect revelation in Jesus throughout the world till the end.

There are three phases for the mission of the preaching of the Gospel; to teach, celebrate and live the Gospel. All the activities of the Church belong to these three phases.

Through having obtained the right of self-governance, the Malankara Catholic Church has to carry out great obligations in all these three phases. Firstly, when we say to teach the Gospel, we mean that the Church has to work more in the spheres of the apostolic activity, religious instruction and the codification of theology. There are only 2% Christians in India. Many of young men and women are to be prepared for the apostolic work. Thus, the Malankara Catholic Church has to set out on a concerted apostolic activity. The Church should be able to impart faith-instruction to both children and grown ups. The Church should be able to evolve a theology of the Malankara Church taking into consideration its patrimony and traditions.

Secondly, when it is said to celebrate the Gospel, we mean the liturgy and the sacraments of the Church. Liturgy is the celebration of faith. The Church is obliged to celebrate the same in a meaningful way. The Church ought to impart the experience of the Malankara liturgy fully to the faithful. The Church should teach and prepare the faithful to conduct a perfect, lively and conscious liturgy. The Church should be able to celebrate the Malankara liturgy without losing its originality. Thus, the Church has the responsibility to lead the faithful to the true experience of God.

Thirdly, what is meant by living the Gospel is to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus. The Malankara Church should be able to bear witness to the Gospel of Jesus in a special manner. The Church has great obligation to

side with the poor, to uplift those who are disregarded in every respect and to perform real service in the field of education, nursing the afflicted, etc.

In short, by obtaining the new status, the Malankara Catholic Church has to fulfil great responsibilities in these three spheres. All the children of the Church have to understand this obligation and work accordingly.

### Worship

O God, who, in the fullness of time, has formed the Malankara Catholic Church, bless the leaders of the Church that they may lead the faithful to the true faith of God, that the children of the Church may be made able to live and work, understanding their responsibilities and through that the Catholic Church may bear true witness to the world.



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### Life Witness

Discuss what could be done for the growth of the Malankara Catholic Church.

### Memorise

“Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists authority, resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment”  
(Romans 13: 1-2).

### Questions

1. Describe the names: Patriarch and Catholicos.
2. Describe the institution of the Catholicate of the Malankara Church
3. Why is it said that the head of the Malankara Catholic Church is the Major Archbishop - Catholicos?
4. Describe the mission of the Malankara Catholic Church.

## THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS IN THE MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH

‘God is love’. God created human beings through love. The ultimate end of human life is to reach God, the embodiment of love. For that, God invites human beings to different states of life. He invites some to the family life, some to the priestly life and some others to the religious life.

In the Church, from the early period, there were monks (*sanyasis*) who had dedicated themselves. “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me” (Matthew 19:21). The monks (*sanyasis*) of the early period were those, who had renounced the earthly pleasures and conveniences, basing on the above-mentioned divine words, and had spent their lives in prayer and meditation. In the early periods, they led solitary life. It was in the later period, the monks (*sanyasis*) began community life under the leadership of St. Basil (Mar Baselios). It was through these monks (*sanyasis*) the real nature of the Church was expressed.

The history of the Church bears witness that whenever the body of the Church was weakened spiritually, the Religious Congregations (*Sanysa Ashrams*) became effective remedies and made the body of the Church strong and gave her new life.



## The Order of the Imitation of Christ (Bethany - OIC)

The Order of the Imitation of Christ is a Religious Order (*Sanyasa Ashram*), which had the lion's share in the spiritual progress of the Malankara Church. This Order is generally known as Bethany.

In order to renovate the Malankara Jacobite Church, which had lost its fundamental spiritual value through group strifes and litigations, Fr. P.T. Geevarghese Panickarveetil – later, Mar Ivanios Metropolitan – came forward. In those days, he thought about and prayed for the renewal of his own Church. As a result, the Bethany Movement, which he started at Serampur on an experimental basis for the renovation of the Church, was transferred and established on the Small Mount (*Mundan mala*) at Ranni-Perunad in the district of Pathanamthitta on August 15, 1919. Very soon, *Mundan Mala* became the spiritual centre of the Malankara Church. As part of the renovation of the Church, Mar Ivanios and the members of the Ashram entered into full communion with the Catholic Church on September 20, 1930. As a result of this, Bethany became the cradle of the Malankara Catholic Church and of the Reunion Movement.

### Call and Mission

'Bethany' means "the house of consolation". The Bethany of the Gospel is the house, which loved Jesus deeply and the house, which Jesus specially loved. Lazar was the friend of Jesus and the witness of the resurrection of Jesus. Mary was the symbol for prayer life. Martha was the model of service and apostolic activities.

Ashram is the residence of a monk (*sanyasi*), who enthusiastically strives for the experience of God through prayer, silence, simplicity and hard work. The life and the vision of Mar Ivanios, the founder of Bethany Ashram, were the spring and inspiration of this community life. The Bethany Religious Order was raised to the Pontifical status on April 14, 1966. Bethany was divided into two Provinces on April 24, 2000. The Generalate of Bethany Ashram is at Kalathipady, Kottayam and the head quarters of the Bethany Navajeevan and the Bethany Navajyoti Provinces are at Nalanchira and Aluva respectively.

The aim of the Christian *sanyasa* (asceticism) is to imitate Jesus through perfect observance of the Evangelical virtues of obedience, chastity and

poverty. The *Sanyasi* is one, who totally dedicates himself to God and to his brethren.

The charism of the Order of the Imitation of Christ is founded on the tradition of Eastern Asceticism and Indian *Sanyasa*. The Bethany *sanyasis* use the saffron cloth, which is the symbol of Indian culture. Bethany has the aims of evangelizing India through the spiritual renovation of the Malankara Church and to imitate Jesus in his prayerful and active life.

## The Sisters of the Imitation of Christ (Bethany - SIC)

Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Ivanios, the architect of the Reunion of the Malankara Catholic Church, is the one who founded the Order of the Bethany Sisters.

He, who started the Bethany *Sanyasa* Ashram for men desired to establish a Religious Order for women to render service in the educational, social, cultural and spiritual spheres in the Malankara Church. He was convinced that only women could enter into the families and enlighten the women folk. Thus in 1920 he started special preparation at Thirumoolapuram to give training to girls for training in *sanyasa* and started the same.

Fr. P.T. Geevarghese was consecrated Bishop of Bethany on May 1, 1925. On 8<sup>th</sup> September 1925, on the Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God, the first members of the Bethany Sisters: Mother Saino, Mother Huba and Mother Denaha made their religious profession before His Grace Mar Ivanios, accepting poverty, chastity and obedience as their life-vows. His Grace Mar Ivanios formed a Code of Rules for the Order of Bethany Sisters, basing on the rules of St. Basil, the Father of the Church.

### Call and Mission

This Religious Order is given the name 'Bethany', commemorating the house, which rendered consolation to Jesus and which received his blessings. The adjective "Imitation of Christ" is prefixed with the aim that the members should bear witness to Jesus, who went up to the mountain and acquired strength from prayer and descending to the valley, shared that prayer-experience and thus to imitate closely the meditative private life of Jesus and his public life ennobled with actions. The vision of the Founder Father is,



“to earn God is the noblest thing than to serve God”. The Order of the Bethany Sisters exists for the unity of Christians, for the evangelization of India and for the integral development of human society.

The Sisters resided at Tiruvalla itself from 1930 to 1936. The Community grew as two Diocesan Congregations of Thiruvananthapuram and Tiruvalla under the leadership of two Generals from 1936 to 1956. On August 21, 1956, Pope Pius XII combined these two Communities, brought it under one General and raised the same to the Pontifical status. The first Mother General of the unified Order was Mother Maxa, one of the first 10 members. Until 1975, when the Generalate was established for Bethany at Kottayam, the first house at Thirumoolapuram, Tiruvalla was used as Generalate. Bethany has at present 5 Provinces: Thiruvananthapuram, Tiruvalla, Bathery, Pathanamthitta and Moovattupuzha.

### **The Daughters of Mary (DM)**

The Religious Congregation of the Daughters of Mary was established in the Archdiocese of Thiruvananthapuram of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. Its inspiration is the pure, poor and humble Christ, the Lord, who promised the vision of God to the pure in heart. Its objective is to proclaim the Gospel, like Christ, to the poor, particularly non-Christians. It aims also to bring non-Catholic Christians into the full communion of the Catholic Church.

According to the invitation of Mar Ivanios, Rev. Fr. Joseph Kuzhinjalil, a member of the parish of Pravithanam of the Diocese of Pala, came to Marthandom in 1934 for missionary work. He decided to start a Missionary Religious Order of Sisters in order to help in his endeavours for the spread of the Kingdom of God. Accordingly, Rev. Msgr. Joseph Kuzhinjalil established the Religious Order of the Daughters of Mary at Marthandom in the Kanyakumari District with the blessings and best wishes of Most Rev. Metropolitan Mar Ivanios, the architect of the Reunion Movement. Pope Pius XI granted formal recognition to this Order. The first members: Mother Mary Kallarackal (Co-foundress), Sr. Agnes Vadakkan and Sr. Therese Kochukalayil, leading a life of full dedication, worked tirelessly to impart the presence, love and protection of Jesus to the poor and illiterate community of people.



### **Call and Mission**

The main aims of the Order are to imitate Jesus through living pure and poor, to spread the Kingdom of God through prayer, work and life, through which to experience genuine peace and joy of the children of God, to give special consideration to the poor and the disregarded and to attend to their spiritual and temporal prosperity in every respect.

The Blessed Virgin Mary is the model and intercessor of the Daughters of Mary. St. Francis Assisi is their special intercessor. The Daughters of Mary make the pure life of the Holy Mother, her humility and faith in the providence of God, meaningful in their life.

The Order was raised to the Pontifical status in 1988. They serve in four Churches: Syro-Malankara, Syro-Malabar, Latin and Melkite, within India and abroad. The Generalate of the Order is situated at Kudappanakkunnu, Thiruvananthapuram. The Order marches forward in the path of growth, having four Provinces: St. Joseph's (Marthandom-Tamil Nadu), St. Mary's (Pongamoodu - Thruvananthapuram), Nirmala (Venniyoor - Thiruvananthapuram) and Christuraja (Kappurthala - Panjab) and two Vice Provinces: Mary Matha (Bathery) and Amala (Chanda - Maharashtra).

Until now we learnt about three Religious Orders formed in Malankara and work in Malankara. But what we going to discuss now is the Religious Orders that were formed in other Churches and are working in Malankara.

### **Order of the Franciscan Missionaries**

This is the Religious Order for Brothers founded in India by Paulos Moritus, a native of Germany. This Order has the special aim of spreading the message of Christ, imbibing the simplicity and mission spirit of St. Francis Assisi. They concentrate in the spheres of parish activities, orphanages and education. This Religious Order works in the Malankara Catholic Church from 1936.

### **Kurisumala (Mount Cross) Ashram (Kristia Sanyasa Samajam) (KSS)**

This Ashram was started at a place called Kurisumala at Vagamon in the District of Kottayam by the monks: Francis Acharya of Belgium and Bede

Griffiths from England, in 1957. This Ashram was established there with the permission of His Excellency Zacharias Mar Aathanasios, Bishop of Tiruvalla. This monastery has an order of life insisting on simple life, incessant prayer, observance of the order of the Antiochene liturgy, meditation, solitude and study.

### **Kristu Sanysa Samaj (Chayalpadi Ashram)**

Rev. Fr. Philipose Nadamala, who was a member of Kurisumala, established this Ashram in 1972 centred at Anganmuzhy in the District of Pathanamathitta. This Religious Community has adopted certain basic disciplines of Kurisumala and practises a life-style involving more in pastoral activities.

### **Dyanashram (Ashram of Meditation)**

Dynashram was started by Rev. Fr. Sylvester Kozhimannil, a former member of Kurisumala, at Nambyarkunnu in the Diocese of Bathery on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1979. Importance is given to prayer life based on the Malankara Syrian liturgy, solitude, silence, meditation and physical labour.

### **Kristu Sanysa Samajam (Ashram of Peace)**

Swamiji Cryspin Acharya, a one time member of Kurisumala, started this Santhy Ashram at Mukkal, in the Kanyakumari District, in 1987. The monks have adopted a meditative style, manifesting the idea of the Indian culture similar to that of Kurisumala.

### **The Capuchin Religious Order**

This is a Religious Order started by Fr. Matheo Debabi in Italy in 1525. They engage themselves in Evangelical activities adopting the simplicity and ascetic life of St. Francis Assisi. This Missionary Order carries out apostolic works in many places in the Malankara Church.

### **The Salesian Order (S.D.B)**

This Order was founded by Saint Don Bosco in Italy in 1859. This is a Religious Order, which gives special attention to the apostolic activities centred on youth and on their faith formation. They also serve in the Malankara Catholic Church.

### **Holy Spirit Sisters (O.S.S.)**

This Religious Congregation was started by Fr. Bernard Bendel in the Diocese of Limburg in Germany in the year 1950. The members of this community, identifying themselves with the common folk, use the Sari, the Indian dress. These have dedicated themselves to the Holy Spirit. The charism of this Order is to pray for a new Pentecost. They wear a medal having the emblem of the Annunciation in order to show their special devotion to the Holy Mother of God.

They started their first house in India at Tiruvalla in 1969. They combine prayer and work and give priority to the following activities: education, service to the afflicted, protection of old people, faith training and parish renewal.

### **The Order of Sisters of the Sacred Heart (S.H.)**

This is the Religious Order founded by Fr. Matthew Kadalikkattil in the Diocese of Pala in 1911. They have imbibed inspiration from devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and work. This Religious Order works in several places in the Malankara Church.

### **The Order of the Sisters of Charity of Vincent De Paul (V.S.C.)**

This Order was started by Cardinal Araman D. Rohan at Strab Burg in Germany in 1734. The fundamental vigour and aim of this Order is the works of Charity of St. Vincent De Paul. They have houses at Thuvayoor and Pathanamthitta in the Archdiocese of Trivandrum and do service.

### **Sisters of Mount Tabor (S.M.T.)**

Sr. Mary Veronica and Sr. Mary Roselin together started this community at Nedumangad Parithikkuzhi in the Archdiocese of Trivandrum on 19<sup>th</sup> March 1979. At present its head quarters is at Chirattakkonam. Their chief aim is to render service to the world through the life of prayer.

### **Snehagiri Sisters (Sisters of the Mount of Love) (S.M.S.)**

Fr. Abraham Kaipnplackal started this community at Karoor in the Diocese of Pala in 1969. Its aim is to serve the destitute and helpless people of the society. They do service at Thottappally and Kannancode in the Archdiocese of Trivandrum.





## Deena Sevana Sabha (D.S.S.)

This community was started by Mother Petra, a native of Germany, who was a member of the Ursuline Order on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1969 at Pattuvam in the District of Kannoor. They work basing on the ideal to worship Christ through service to the poor. They do their work in the Diocese of Bathery and the Archdioceses of Trivandrum and Tiruvalla.

## Gethsemane Samarpitha Satsangam (Dedicated Venerable Assembly of Gethsemane)

Sr. Catherine Leena, who was a member of the Apostolic Carmelites of Mangalore, started this community in 1984. The members lead a dedicated life, meeting God through prayer, mortification, simplicity and service. They are working at Theckemala in Pathanamthitta.

## Little Sisters of the Divine Providence (L.S.D.P.)

Dr. Sr. Mary Litty, who was a member of the Congregation of the Medical Sisters of St. Joseph in Kothamangalam, is the foundress of this Order. The first community was started at Kunnanthanam in the Archdiocese of Changanacherry in 1978. This community works in Ernakulam in the Diocese of Muvattupuzha. They do their service among the destitute, handicapped and mentally retarded people of society.

## Basilian Sisters

This Order was established at Palermo in Italy in 1921. The founders are Fr. Nileborgia and Mother Macrina Regaria. Their mission is to spread the Kingdom of God as missionaries of Jesus through love and service. They started a house at Tiruvalla and do their service.

## Salesian Sisters (S.M.A.)

This Order was founded by St. Don Bosco and St. Mary Masarello on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1872 in Rome. They appropriate the spiritual vigour of St. Don Bosco and do apostolic work among the youth. They have houses at Kattappana and Puthuppally in the Archdiocese of Tiruvalla.

## Sisters of John the Baptist (S.J.B.)

This Religious Order was founded by Fr. Alphonso Maria Fusco at a place, Angri in Italy on 26<sup>th</sup> September 1878. Their chief aim is to uplift the people of the lower strata of the society. They are doing their service in the Diocese of Bathery.

We studied about the different Religious Orders, which were started in the Malankara Catholic Church serve here. The fact that many persons come forward to serve the people of God through diverse service, is a matter for the Church to be proud of. It will render immense good to the Church that more people, imbibing the spirit of Jesus, come forward for these services.

### Worship

O Jesus! Eternal priest, protect those who have dedicated themselves in accordance with your evangelical counsel. Delivering them from every human weakness, help them to become people, who pray and work for the prosperity of the Church. O God, who said that the harvest is plenty, but the labourers are few, bless us with granting plenty of divine vocations.



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### Life Witness

Make a discussion in the class on the share of Religious Orders in the growth of the Church.

### Memorise

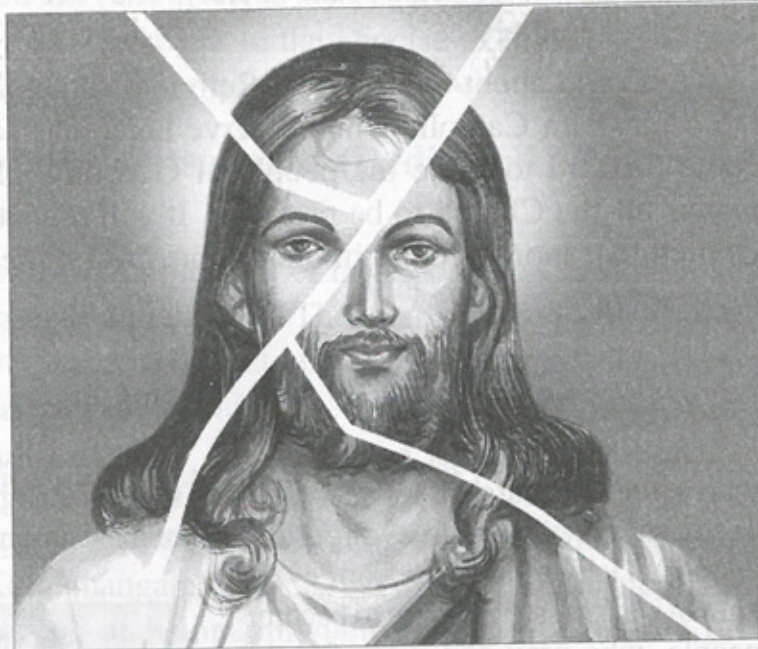
“Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong”  
(1 Corinthians 1:26-27).

### Questions

1. Describe the Religious Orders established in the Malankara Catholic Church.
2. Which are the Religious Orders that were formed in the other Churches and work in the Malankara Church?

## THE ERRONEOUS TEACHINGS OF THE PENTECOST GROUPS

Protestants are those who have separated themselves from the Catholic Church of Europe in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was Martin Luther, a German religious priest, who gave leadership to the protestant ideas. Supporting his ideas, John Calvin, William Pharel and Ulric Swingly of



Switzerland and king Henry VIII of England gave leadership to these ideas and started religious revolution. Under the shade of Protestant ideas there arose various Christian Communities. The Catholic Church of Europe, which was one, became two factions and the Protestant group was shattered into several Churches. The various independent Church groups, which originated in the 20<sup>th</sup> century on the basis of the Protestant ideas, are called the Pentecost Groups. The idea of the Pentecosts is called Pentecostalism.

### Martin Luther and Protestant Pattern of Thought

Martin Luther (1483 - 1546), who was a member of the Augustinian Religious Order of the Roman Catholic Church and a professor in Wittenburgh University, gave shape to his own theology. Luther, who had fostered undue anxiety about salvation, experienced severe mental conflict. The thought about the judgment of God instilled terror in him. The thought that "the one who is righteous will live by faith" (Romans 1:17) gave him

consolation. He began to think that God is a cruel judge and that faith is the only foundation for salvation. Where he went wrong, was in the conclusions he took under this background. Belief in God alone is the foundation for salvation. One is not able either to please God or achieve salvation through virtuous deeds or good life. In order to achieve salvation one needs only to believe. On this basis he considered it his duty to oppose the belief and teaching of the Catholic Church of the past 16 centuries.

The foundation of salvation is faith only. The foundation of belief is Scripture alone. There is no need for priesthood, hierarchy (authority), tradition or the sacraments. There are only two sacraments: Baptism and Qurbano. Thus, Luther had reduced Christianity to some of his own thoughts. Luther denied the holy traditions, sacraments, authority of the Church, priesthood, which she considered sacred from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, an independent Church pattern of thought instead of a strong Church-constitution was realized through Luther. Even though Luther's intention was to renovate the Church, his thoughts, only paved the path to split the Church and shatter it into pieces. In course of time, 12 Lutheran Churches were formed in Germany itself. Hundreds of Protestant Churches, such as: Lutheran Church, Presbyterian Church, Swiss Brethren, Mennonites, Anglican Churches, Baptist Churches, Methodist Churches, Salvation Army, Brethren Communities, Sabbath Mission, etc. holding different ideas of faith through the influence of Luther, came into existence in Europe, America and in other parts of the world.

### Pentecostal Communities

As a result of the wake-up conventions that rose up in the Protestant Church early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, petty groups separated from the Church and were known as special sects. The members of these sects confess their faith, get immersed in water and receive baptism. They claim that through this baptism in the Holy Spirit, they get the gifts of tongue and of healing the sick. Thus, there took place very many wake-up conventions after 1900 in America and England and a lot of people left the Protestant Church and became members of these Independent Christian Communities. These Independent Christian Communities began to be known as Pentecosts.

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, wake-up conventions started first in Kerala in India. These conventions were held in the C.M.S. and Marthoma Churches. As a continuation of it, these meetings were held within the Brethren Community also. These groups paved the path for the establishment of the Pentecost Movement in Kerala. The Pentecosts of the early period belonged to the Brethren Churches. Many foreign Pentecost missionaries came to Kerala in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and spread the Pentecost teachings here. Thus, various Pentecostal communities happened to get established here. At present there are hundreds of independent Pentecost communities in Kerala. Among them the important ones are: Assemblies of God, Church of God, Perfect Evangelical God's Church of India, Indian Pentecost God's Church (I.P.C.), The Pentecost Mission, etc.

Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, independent Prayer Groups began to come into existence, having separated themselves from communion with the Pentecost community. Many independent preachers of the Gospel came forward, claiming that they have received special anointment from the Holy Spirit. Separate communities came into existence after the name of each preacher. Several independent communities, following the Pentecost ideals work here under different names. These groups of people convoke conventions in open-air grounds, attract the attention of large crowds, conduct services of healing the sick, delivering from curse, expelling evil spirits, etc. Thus, these independent preachers, having no allegiance with any Church, interpret the Holy Scripture at their will and in accordance with the interests of the audience. This is the form of Pentecostalism of the current period.

### **The Sentimental Spirituality of Pentecostalism**

When the Protestant ideal "Bible alone" had strengthened in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Protestants fully rejected the sacraments, sacred traditions and the sacramental spirituality, which the Catholic Church followed from the early period of the Church up to that time. Instead of the sacramental life, they made the preaching of the Gospel and Bible conventions very common, in order to stress more importance to the Sacred Scripture. They made preaching

of the Bible more attractive through the singing of convention-hymns with the accompaniment of musical instruments. The Gospel preaching of the early period, later on, gave way to the wake-up conventions, which chiefly promoted sentimentality. The horrible sound of the wake-up conventions and the sentiment-provoking-style of preaching created in the minds of the audience a kind of emotional spiritual awakening. They considered this emotional experience as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. They believed the utterances of those who have lost their reasoning power under the influence of strong emotional feelings as gift of tongue of the Holy Spirit. Human beings can forget the ailments of the body and mind for a little while in the rush of strong emotions. This is proclaimed as miraculous healing of the sick and making the person publicly confess his/her experience in order to create a strong impression in the people gathered, that the Holy Spirit wrought the healing. This kind of spiritual style easily influences the common man.

The sentimental style of the preaching of the Gospel of the Pentecosts creates a movement in the body and mind. This renders a kind of spiritual satisfaction to the human being. It is dangerous to consider this emotional satisfaction as true spirituality and true Christianity. This is a passing feeling that comes in the mind. This transient feeling and movement of the body and mind will neither form permanent conviction nor disposition. One is able to acquire true Christianity and permanent Christ-experience only through a long period of time. The Catholic Church fully rejects the thought that the essence of Christianity is merely a sentimental experience, which could be achieved within an hour or two from hearing Gospel-preaching.

The Catholic Church does not deny the good that is in the sentimental-spiritual style of the wake-up conventions, which grew up in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But the Church tries to include this sentimental spiritual style in a manner agreeable to the two thousand and odd age-old traditional style of spirituality.

The Charismatic Movement originated, of late, in the Catholic Church is an advance under the background of the emotional spirituality of the wake-up conventions. This Movement too, renders an emotional spiritual

experience. In the Catholic Church, the Charismatic Movement is approved in general. That is, the Church never denies the good which is in the emotional spirituality; it only encourages the same. But the emotional spirituality of the Charismatic Movement will have no place in the Catholic Church unless it gives encouragement to the traditional faith and style of spirituality and strengthens the same.

Even though the Catholic Church approves the good things of the emotional spirituality of the wake-up conventions, she does not hesitate to point out its hollowness. The Catholic Church fully rejects the approaches of the Pentecosts, such as, 'Bible alone will do', and 'the essence of Christianity is the emotional experience, which is derived from the preaching of the Bible'. The view-point of the Catholic Church is that this emotional spirituality will not be sufficient to form an integral Christian life. The Church doesn't encourage the boisterousness, uproar and tumult. The general view-point of the Catholic Church is that one enters more into God-experience through solitude, tranquillity and the spirit of meditation. The Catholic Church holds fast the traditional belief that one enters into the true Christ-experience through the Church and through the sacraments of the Church, especially through the Holy Qurbano. The Catholic Church fully rejects the Pentecost spirituality, which is opposed to this.

### **The Foundation of the Catholic Faith: Sacred Tradition and Holy Bible**

The apostles epitomized in their hearts what they had seen, heard and experienced from Jesus (1 John 1:1). They shared the same with others first by word of mouth. After that, with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they put in recorded form some of their Christ-experience. They began to keep in writing the Gospel of Christ, which existed in the oral form, after A.D. 50. But they could not write the whole Gospel. That is, all things that Jesus Christ taught and did, were not in the written records. The instructions and actions of Jesus, which were not written down, existed in the life of the faithful, in the liturgy, in the testimonies and in the preaching. St. John concludes his Gospel as follows: "This is the disciple, who is

testifying to these things and has written them... There are yet other things, which Jesus did. If everyone of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (John 20:30; 21:24-25). One thing is evident from this. Nothing is fully written about Jesus the person or about his teachings or about his activities. Whatever that is written is also not fully available to us. For example, in the epistle to the Colossians 4:16, mention is made about the letter to the Laodiceans. There are several such instances. Those which were not written prevailed significantly in the early Christian Community by word of mouth through their life-style, rituals and preaching. That exists in the Church even today through generations. Thus, what is written about Jesus, the Church calls as Holy Scripture or Bible and what is not written, as Holy Tradition.

### **The Relationship between Holy Tradition and Holy Scripture**

The Second Vatican Council says about the relationship between holy tradition and Holy Bible thus: 'We can see that there exists substantial relationship and exchange between Holy Bible and holy tradition. For, the origin of both is from one and the same sacred source. In one way, both combined to go forward towards the same goal. The reason is, the Holy Scriptures are the words of God, since the word of God is copied in written form under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. At the same time, the word of God, which the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit had entrusted to the apostles, is handed down to their successors through tradition without any change whatsoever. As a result of which, through the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, they would be able to faithfully preserve the word of God, to explain and propagate the same through preaching the word of God. One thing is evident from this, namely, the Church gets the indubious knowledge of all truths concerning divine revelation not only from the Holy Scriptures. Hence, we ought to accept and revere the Holy Scriptures and traditions with the same respect and honour' (Revelation 9).

The apostles had entrusted their successors, the Bishops (*Episcopoi-presbyteroi*) with the written as well as the non-written Gospel. The Church



considered the holy tradition and Holy Scripture in the same manner. She handed down to the succeeding generations, traditions along with the written books. The word 'holy tradition' means the faith that existed in the Holy Church from apostolic times, rites and rituals, rites of the liturgy and religious principles. The literal meaning of the word 'Tradition' is that which is passed down from generation to generation.

In this manner, the Catholic Church is passing down to the succeeding generation the Gospel of Jesus for the past two thousand years, fully and without any adulteration through the holy tradition and Bible. The Pentecost communities have disfigured Jesus and the essence of Christianity by not fully introducing Jesus, the Good News (Gospel) and by teaching that the Jesus of the Holy Bible alone will suffice, Holy Bible alone will suffice and the foundation of the Christian faith is only the written word of God. Thus, the essence of Christianity has been reduced to Bible alone, separating it from the true Jesus.

### **The Necessity of the Holy Tradition**

Holy tradition also is needed in order to fully interpret and understand the written word. We can see people depending upon traditions and precedents to interpret even human laws. When laws are interpreted in court judgments and government levels, they pass judgments and take decisions only after examining traditions and precedents. Then, there is no meaning in saying that there is no need of tradition in interpreting the written word. The obligation of interpreting authentically the holy tradition and Scripture rests with the teaching authority of the Church. It was the community that believes in Jesus, which first came into existence. The Holy Bible is written by this community or Church, their Christ-experience, having been inspired by the Holy Spirit. Hence, it is the Church that came into existence first. The Bible is written for the Church. Hence, the authority to interpret the Bible belongs to the Church. Each individual has no right to interpret the Bible according to his will. Hundreds of Protestant churches and communities came into existence, especially in the Pentecost communities, as a result of having interpreted the written word, each one according to one's own will.

One thing is evident from all these. The holy tradition, Holy Scripture and the teaching authority of the Church are intrinsically related to one another so that they cannot be separated from the sublime planning of God. Hence, it is not possible that one remains separated from another. On the other hand, all together, but each according to its own manner helps to achieve salvation fruitfully through the same operation of the Holy Spirit.

### **Holy Tradition and the Catholic Church**

St. Paul exhorts us to hold fast to the holy traditions: "So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter" (2 Thessalonians 2:15). "Now we command you, beloved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from believers who are living in idleness and not according to the tradition that they received from us" (2 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 Timothy 1:18-19). "Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you" (1 Timothy 6:20). "What you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well" (2 Timothy 2:2).

Holy tradition is the preaching of the Christ-events, celebration, life and interpretation through the operation of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). St. Paul says: "I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I handed them on to you" (1 Corinthians 11:2).

The basic tradition is the apostolic tradition. That was given to the succeeding generation through the apostles in two ways: Holy Scripture and holy tradition. The deposit of true faith, the mode of behaviour, the rules of community life and the systems of worship are in the holy tradition. St. Agustin says: 'The Church considers as apostolic tradition, those that existed in the Church at all times and throughout the Church'. What the Church believed and lived throughout all times, is the apostolic tradition. Its natural growth is seen in the tradition of the Church.

Hence, the Catholic Church, which has the apostolic basis, which proclaims the Holy Scripture and tradition alike, is that fully proclaims Jesus. Hence, if there is in the Catholic Church anything what is not in the Bible, it is from the holy tradition, which is the very word of God.



## The Holy Traditions, which the Pentecosts have Lost

The Catholic Church considers the holy tradition and the Holy Scripture as venerable from the apostolic times until the present. But the Protestants, who had left the Catholic Church after 1600 A.D. and the Pentecosts, who took origin from them in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, lost as a whole, the holy traditions which the Catholic Church followed from early times. They have made Jesus imperfect and are preaching the essence of Christianity only partially. Some of the holy traditions they had lost and certain new systems they have added are noted below:

1. The Catholic Church considers the 73 books of the Bible as venerable from the beginning till now. After 1600 A.D. the Protestants began to use the short Bible consisting of 66 books, leaving aside 7 books. The Pentecosts too use this short Bible.
2. Rejecting the holy traditions for the past 2000 years of the Church, they have reduced Christ and the essence of Christianity to the written Bible alone and thus made Jesus imperfect.
3. Rejecting the God-instituted apostolic authority, the sacraments of the imposition of hands, the divine traditions and order of the liturgy, they have chosen segregation and disintegration instead of communion and association.
4. They present a disfigured prayer, having belittled the ancient modes of worship and other activities continued by the apostles and the early Church and by rejecting even the prayers 'Our Father' and 'Hail Mary' which are found in the Holy Scripture and through introducing prayers according to one's own fancy (Matthew 6:7).
5. They have rejected the cross of Jesus, the sign of salvation. Without wearing or venerating the cross, they have removed Jesus from the cross and made him imperfect. Instead, as St. Paul says, they live as enemies of the cross (Philippians 3:18).
6. Having questioned the authority of the Church to interpret the Bible, they made it possible for each one to interpret the Bible at will. As a result each one began to proclaim self-made Jesus. Thus, thousands of Pentecost communities originated.

7. They have forsaken the prayer for the departed, which was maintained from the time of the early Church. Thus, they denied association with the departed souls.
8. They have refused the 2000 year old Christian art, sculpture and paintings and introduced God as one opposed to artistic culture.
9. They deal in an inhuman manner, fostering the thought that those who are not Pentecosts are not the children of God.
10. Having denied the age-old child baptism, they bring up children as mere corporeal beings without the presence of the Holy Spirit in them.
11. They oppose rendering veneration and respect to those who lived a holy life. While we seek help of prayer from even ordinary people, they think it wrong to seek prayer and intercession of the saints.
12. They degrade the Holy Mother of God denying her even the respect, which we give to our own mothers.
13. Those who have received the Holy Spirit through baptism are denying the true Holy Spirit by receiving baptism for a second time and thereby they commit sin against the Holy Spirit.

Hence, be on your guard against those who bring Jesus and his word partially. They introduce Jesus making his true face disfigured. St. Paul, in his own times, had advised such people: "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel- not that there is any other gospel, but there are some who are confusing you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what we proclaimed to you, let that one be accursed!" (Galatians 1:6-8).



## Worship

God, the Word of life! We offer to your mercy, all the individuals and communities, who having rejected the fundamental views and traditions of the Church, which you have instituted, testify opposite witness to the world and especially to the Church through false ways of thinking and activities. Grant us the grace to understand that the Catholic Church, which proclaims the Sacred Scripture and tradition alike, does truly bear witness to Christ.

## Life Witness

Discuss together and chalk out plans as how you can react against the false teachings of the Pentecosts.

### Memorise

“Now we command you, beloved, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to keep away from believers who are living in idleness and not according to the tradition that they received from us”  
(2 Thessalonians 3:6).



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## Questions

1. Describe the origin of the Pentecost communities.
2. How does the Catholic Church see the holy traditions?
3. Which are the holy traditions the Pentecosts have lost and the new systems they have added?

# DIFFERENT RELIGIONS AND RELIGIOUS FRIENDSHIP

From the beginning of the history of humanity, there was the search for God innate in human beings. Ancient religions were formed as a result of this search for God. We can consider religions as systems proclaiming the history and character of the relation between God and man. The English word ‘Religion’ is derived from the Latin word *Religio* which means relationship. In general, all religions teach about the God-man relationship and point out the means to maintain that relationship. Hence, from the very outset of humanity different kinds of religious beliefs and planning existed. Before the manifestation of modern religions, the religions of the early period of the history of humanity are called rustic religions or ancient religions. The rustic or ancient religions did not have either definite form and shape or rite and rituals as the modern religions have. According as human history progressed, religious beliefs and rituals progressed and assumed definite structure. In this lesson we make very short narration about the Jewish religion, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism and the Christian religion. The religions Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism and Jainism took their origin in India.

## 1. Hindu Religion

Hindu religion has very many specialities and complexities. It is not possible either to define or understand Hinduism fully. We cannot say about



this religion, when or how or where it started. Its tenets are not based on any founder or religious book like in other religions. Yet, it is considered that the Hindu religion originated from the Arians, who immigrated to India between the centuries 18 and 15 B.C. Hindu religion started in India and it is the collection of the code of beliefs which inseparably related to the culture of the Indians. Hindu religion is known also after the names of eternal morality and priestly morality.

The Hindu religion considers authoritative, the God experience of the sages who lived in India several centuries ago. The most important religious books are Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagavad Geetha. The Ramayana and Mahabharath as well as their Puranas (ancient texts) are widely known and recognized books. But these are not official religious texts. The Vedas alone are the fundamental religious books of the Hindus. Diversity of beliefs, practices and rituals is peculiar to Hinduism.

There is no uniformity in Hinduism on the understanding of the divine. Both monotheism and divine pluralism are accepted. Hinduism gives prominence to the God who creates, protects and destroys. Thus the main Gods are Brahman, Vishnu and Siva. Hindus adore innumerable other gods and goddesses as well. Thus there is local diversity in celebrations and feasts. Hinduism has many pilgrim centres.

Hinduism, which originated in India, has extended to other parts of the world. There are over 800 million Hindus in various countries. The majority of the population of India is Hindus.

## 2. Buddhism

Buddhism was formed in India in the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. The advices and teachings of Prince Siddhartha Gauthaman, son of the king of Kosala, constitute the foundation of the Buddhist Religion. The efforts of the prince to find out the cause of the miseries and sorrows, which fill the whole world, led to the birth of Buddhism. Having left the kingdom and royal palace, the prince arrived at a place called Buddha Gaya. In order to find out an answer to his enquiries, the prince adopted the way of meditation and he immersed himself in meditation under the tree of enlightenment. The enlightenment, which Siddhartha Gauthaman received as a result of meditation, became the foundation of the beliefs

of the Buddhist Religion. Siddhartha Gauthaman was known as Sree Buddha.

Sree Buddha gave importance to the moral principles, which are related to human life. His chief aims were to achieve perpetual deliverance from sorrow, the greatest problem that vexes human being in the worldly life and to show others a means for the same. The sum-total of the Buddhist teachings was to understand what sorrow is and to find out means to obtain release from this worldly life full of unsatisfaction. The doctrines of Buddhism could be summarized under four principles, known as *Arya-satya-chatushtaya*. These principles include the universality of sorrow, the reason of sorrow, the resistance of sorrow and the means of resisting sorrow. The other teachings of Buddhism exist related to the *Arya-satya-chatushtaya* principles. This religion teaches that only the one who practises the Buddhist principles in life can attain *nirvana* or *moksha* (salvation).

Buddhist Religion grew up very vigorously and spread out in India, its house of birth. But after the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D., it began to gradually decline in India. By about the 10<sup>th</sup> century, the influence of Buddhism was almost lost in India. But Buddhist Religion still has very strong hold in Japan, Sree Lanka, China, Burma, Thailand and Tibet. The main religious sects of the Buddhist Religion, numbering about 32 crores of faithful, are the 'Mahayana' and 'Hinayana'. The holy scripture of Buddhism is 'Dharmapath' and its holy city is 'Buddhagaya'.

## 3. Jainism

It is not possible to point out any particular person as the founder of Jainism. Historical scholars teach that Jainism was formed as a result of the studies of 24 sages, who lived in different ages. Historical researchers introduce Vardhamana Mahaveera, the last sage, as the founder of this religion. Vardhamana Mahaveera and Sree Buddha were contemporaries. Hence, it is to be understood that Jainism originated at the same time when Buddhism took its origin.

The word 'Jainan' was formed from the root 'Jina', which means 'leader' (*Jetavii*).

'Jinai' are those who have won victory over love and hatred and acquired Moksha. They and their followers are known under the name 'Jains'.



We do not see a belief in an omnipotent Easwara (god) in Jainism. Hence, they don't give much importance to devotion or worship. Even though there is no divine worship, the followers of Jainism worship the sages, who are reckoned to be the founders of the religion. Jainism admonishes the followers of the religion to attain Moksha through their own efforts like the sages. The Jainist Gurus (teachers) suggest chiefly three ways to attain Moksha. They are the right belief, the right knowledge and morality. These three means are known as the triple pearls.

In Jainism there are two religious groups called the 'Digambaras' and the 'Swedambaras'. The holy scripture of Jainism is known as 'Jaina Sutras'. Even though it exists today, Jainism is not a thriving religion.

#### 4. Sikhism

Sikh Religion started in the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Punjab under the leadership of Guru Nanakh. The noun 'sikh' was formed from the Sanskrit word 'sikshya', which means disciple. The Sikh Religion achieved growth under the leadership of Guru Nanakh, the founder of the religion and under the concerted efforts of nine gurus, who followed him as a group of sikshyas. The Sikh Religion, started in Punjab, spread in the different districts of India and Pakistan and also in the different parts of the world. The holy book of the Sikh Religion is 'Guru Grandha Sahib' and its holy city is Amruthsar. At present, there are almost 1.5 crores of members. The head quarters of this Religion now is the golden temple, which is situated in the district of Jalantar in Punjab, India. The external signs of the Sikhs are beard and turban.

Sikhism, over and above a religion, is a system of life that it envisages. Guru Nanakh, the first Guru teaches that the aim of the Sikh Religion, which believes in one God only, is the realisation of Easwara. The Sikhs have accepted many good things from the Hindu as well as Islam Religions. Sikhism, which started as a system of life is progressing in the political, religious and social realms.

Till now, we tried to understand some of the religions that took their origin in India. What we are about to discuss are the World Religions, such as, the Jewish, Islam and Christian Religions, which were formed in the Mid-East-Asia.

#### 5. Jewish Religion

The Jewish religion is one of the oldest religions of the world. It has a history of about 4000 years. The other religions that were among human beings at that time took shape related to the search of human beings for God. But, in the Jewish religion, we can see God coming down in search of human beings. God specially chose Abraham, who lived in the 17<sup>th</sup> century B.C. and revealed himself to him. God chose the generations of descendents of Abraham as his own people and revealed himself to them. The Israelites, the generations of the descendents of Abraham are known as the Jewish religion. The word Jew began to be used to signify one who belonged to the strong tribe Juda among all the tribes of Israel. Gradually, the people of all the tribes of Israel began to be known as members of the Jewish religion. The basis of the Jewish Religion is belief in Yahweh, the only God and the belief that they are chosen by Yahweh.

Since Judaism was the common religion of the country of Israel, the Jewish religion was inseparably in relation with the growth and fall of the country. Israel was formed into a country under the background of one and the same faith and mode of worship. The Jewish religion took definite shape after the people of Israel, who left Egypt had reached the land of Canaan. After that the Judges, the Kings, the Priests and the Prophets gave leadership for the growth of the Jewish religion. The temple, which was built during the reign of king Solomon turned to be the centre of the Jewish religion. In course of time, the temple of Jerusalem became not only the centre of Jewish religious life, but the centre of the social, economic and cultural life of the Jews.

The Jewish religion, which was on a very strong footing before Christ, met with destruction as a result of the continuous assaults of the foreigners and was scattered in the different parts of the world. The Renaissance Movements, which took place among the Jews during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries reunited them and with the re-establishment of the country of Israel in 1948, the Jewish faithful were brought together. Today, there are about 1.5 crores of Jewish faithful all over the world.

Jerusalem is considered to be the holy city of the Jews. The Old Testament is their Holy Scripture. Their day of worship is Saturday, the Sabbath day. Until the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, those who performed the



priesthood were the tribe of Levi. But, now, it is the Jewish Rabbis, who give leadership to the priestly service.

## 6. Islam Religion

The divine revelation, which Muhammad Nabi received while he was engaged in prayer on the mountain of Hira in the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia during 610-632 A.D., is the basis of the Islam Religion. The religious book of the Muslims is Quran in which these revelations are recorded. The Muslims look at their belief as the latest revelation, humankind could receive before the consummation of the world. Macca, where the Islam Religion started, is the holy city of the Muslims.

The Muslims address God as *Allahu*. Just as the Jewish and Christian Religions, Islam Religion too, is based on belief in the only God. The fundamental idea of the Muslims is the profession of faith that 'there is no other God besides *Allahu* and that Muhammad is his prophet'.

The origin of the word Islam is from the Arabic word *Salam*, which means peace, salvation, etc. The word 'Islam' is used to mean 'submission to God'.

Islam Religion sees prophets of the Jewish Religion and Jesus Christ as prophets. But a higher position is given to Jesus Christ than to the other prophets.

The aim of the Islam religion is to reinstate the friendship that existed in the Garden of Eden between the creatures and the Creator. The Islam Religion demands its faithful to have belief in Quran, prophets, angels and in the consummation of the world along with the belief in *Allahu*.

The one who leads prayer in Islam Religion is known as Imam. The word meaning of 'Imam' is model. The Imam's position is in front of the praying community. Islam observes Friday as the day of worship. Their chief religious practices are prayer, fast and alms-giving. The two important religious groups within Islam are the Sunny and Shiya. Among the Muslim faithful about 83% of the members belong to the Sunny group. There are about 100 crores of Muslims now in the world.

## 7. The Christian Religion

The search of man for God is evident in all ancient religions. But, we have grasped that in the Jewish Religion God comes in search of humankind

and that he has revealed himself to human beings. The revelation, which began in the creation of the universe, has continued through the creation of mankind. God called and set apart Abraham and revealed himself and formed the community of Israel through Abraham's descendents. God willed to perfect his revelation. For that he specially prepared the people of Israel through the prophets. Thus, the expectation of the coming of the Messiah became strong among the Israelites. This is the background of the Christian Religion. The revelation of God and its perfection, we see in the Christian Religion unlike in other religions.

In the fullness of time, the Son of God assumed body from the Virgin Mary of Nazareth by the power of the Holy Spirit, was born in Bethlehem, received the name Jesus and grew up in Nazareth. He proclaimed the Gospel in Palestine, Galilee and other places. Jesus revealed God the Father through his teachings, miracles and other activities. Thus, the humankind understood the love and mercy of the Father through Jesus. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16).

At the end of his public life, Jesus offered his life on the cross as sacrifice for the remission of the sins of the whole humankind and for the salvation of human beings. Through the resurrection on the third day, he won over death and gave eternal life and salvation to human beings. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to the world after his ascension into heaven. The Holy Spirit came, encouraged the disciples of Jesus and brought up those who believed in Jesus as a community. The disciples of Christ preached the Gospel in different places of the world and conferred baptism to those who believed in Jesus. Thus, those who accepted Jesus Christ and received baptism were known as Christians. Today there are over 200 crores of Christians in the world. Christians are known under these groups, namely, Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants. The biggest religion of the world also is the Christian Religion.

The Christian Religion does not see Jesus Christ as one among the founders of many religions. The Christians understand Jesus Christ as the only Saviour and the Saviour of the whole world. Jesus Christ is perfect God and perfect man. Being God, he identified himself with man and gave the love of God and salvation to humankind. This is what differentiates Jesus Christ and Christian Religion from the other religions.



## The Approach of the Catholic Church

The Catholic Church believes that in all religions there is the ray of truth, the salvific presence of God and his activity. Thus, since there are the partial truth and the presence of God in all religions, they are the signs of salvation for those who believe in those religions. The Church specially teaches through the Second Vatican Council that since the ray of truth is spread in all the religions, the spiritual and moral principles of all religions and their social and cultural values are to be accepted and preserved. 'The Catholic Church does not deny any truth or holy thing found in other religions. But their style of working, modes of life, principles and doctrines are different in many ways from what the Holy Church believes and teaches. However, the Holy Church sincerely respects and observes all of them' (Non Christian Religions 2).

Even though the Holy Church accepts and respects perfectly the other religions, she does not consider the other religions equal to Christianity. For, the Church teaches that the perfection of truth and revelation is in Christ and in his Church. Hence, the Holy Church likes to see the other religions as sign-posts towards the God and as preparation for the reception of Gospel (Evangelisation 3).

God is the Father of all human beings. God does not exclude anyone from his plan of salvation. God's salvific love includes everyone. Jesus became man and instituted the Church in order to give this love to the whole world.

### Religious Friendship

The Catholic Church teaches that the faithful of all religions should live with mutual love and co-existence irrespective of colour, class, caste and religion. The Church makes it clear through the Second Vatican Council that the freedom of religion of others should be respected and the other religions are to be perfectly honoured.

In our country the Hindus, Muslims and Christians live intermingled. There are the houses for worship of all these three religions in one and the same place. We ought to view the people belonging to the other religions, their houses of worship and their rites and rituals with utmost reverence. There should be neither talk nor action that would wound the religious feelings of others. In this period when religious fanaticism and violence on behalf of

religions are on the increase, it is highly necessary to promote religious tolerance and the atmosphere of love. All violence, injustices, exploitations and persecutions prevalent on behalf of religion, are against the basic ideals of all religions. It is the greatest denial of God not to respect human beings who are created in the image of God and their freedom. Under this background, let us try to understand more about other religions, to enter into dialogue with the members of the other religions and to work united in spheres where united efforts are possible.

### Worship

O! Merciful God, grant the grace to us, who live amidst various religions, so that we achieve greater refuge in you, who are the only God and Saviour, to honour and accept other religions and to attract the faithful of other religions towards Christ. Give us the strength to live with religious tolerance, having understood that all religions basically seek you.

### Life Witness

Enquire and know the religious experiences of the children who study with you and present the same in the class.

### Memorise

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"  
(John 13: 34-35).

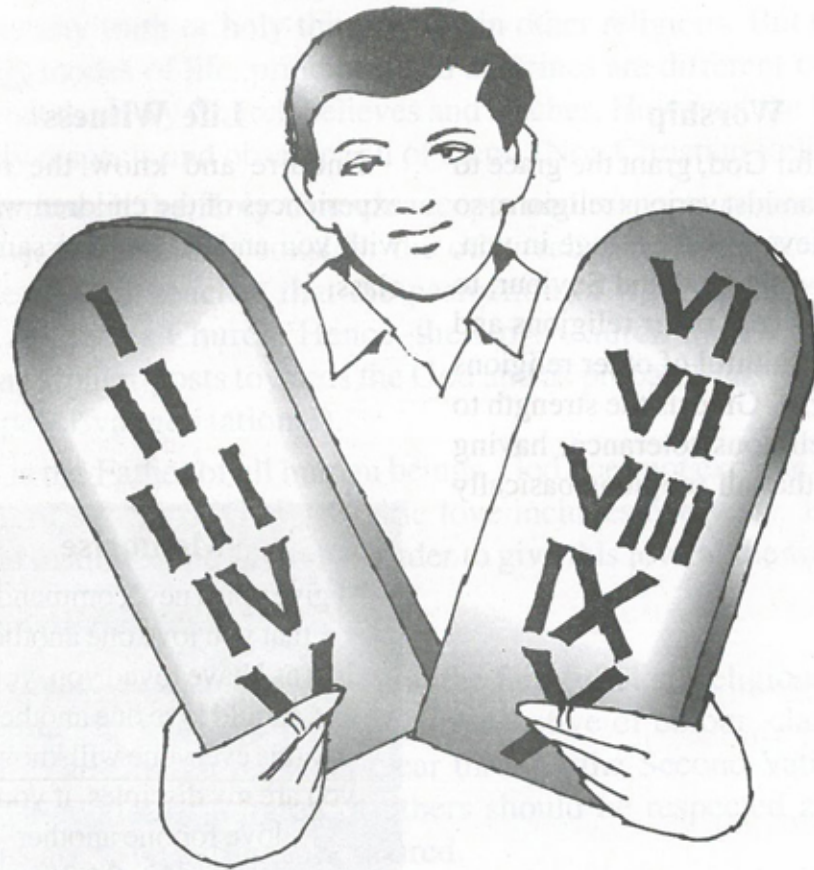


### Questions

1. What is the approach of the Catholic Church to the different religions?
2. What is the need of religious tolerance?

## THE UNEASINESS AND WORRIES OF ADOLESCENCE

### PART- IV



## CHRISTIAN LIFE



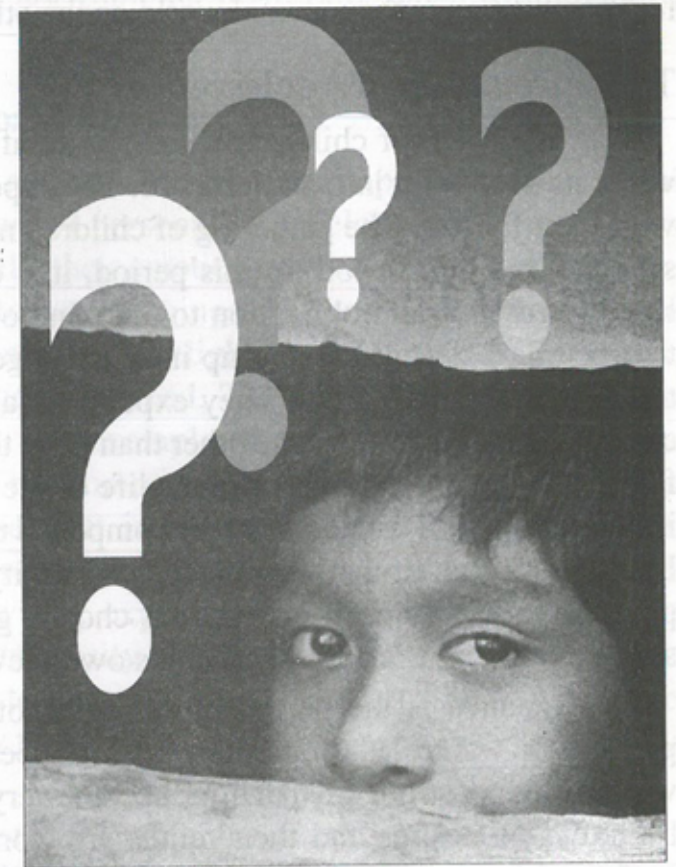
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Adolescence is the period of problems, conflicts and challenges. Similarly, that is the period of changes. There happen many bodily and mental changes. Psychologically speaking, it is the period of evolution from the dependence of childhood towards the consciousness of independence of adolescence. If childhood was safe and clear, adolescence is filled with problems. Questions such as, 'Who am I? What am I? What does the world expect from me?' often remain as unanswered questions in the age of

adolescence. For those in the age-group of adolescence it is a strong urge to get one's individuality. In the course of getting one's individuality accepted, the adolescents desire to appropriate the recognition and attention of the public. Often, this journey is painful. On account of the desire for establishing one's identity, some adolescents dare to oppose the old style and traditions and to defy authority.

Another problem, which the children who enter into adolescence face, is whether one is still a child or an adult. On reaching adolescence, boys and girls who earlier made little self analysis become concerned about their explicit physical developments and mental anxieties. On this occasion, the parents



and the society sometimes deal with them as if they were grown ups and at other times as if they were children. Due to these contradictions, often the adolescents may experience some mental conflicts. This is because they experience on the one side the inconsistency of adolescence and the responsibilities of the external world on the other.

### **The Specialities of Adolescence**

The life circle of children, who were confined to the family, becomes wider as they enter into adolescence. They spend more time outside home with their friends. The gathering of children numbering four or five, is the speciality of this period. In this period, it is quite natural that they show blind obedience and obligation to this kind of groups. They turn towards the members of their age-group in order to get released from the solitude that remains within them. They experience a sense of safety, which they could never get from anyone other than from their friends. These groups of friends bear a decisive share in the life of the adolescents. But, due to the influence of these friends, they are compelled to do many things they do not like. On account of that, there is the possibility that they jump into several problems. Hence, each one should choose good friends in adolescence and learn to work according to one's own view-point.

Adolescence is the period of strong emotions. Often, it wouldn't be possible to control the emotions with deliberations. The sexual desires, which were not strong till that time, become very intensive. They are attracted by intensive desires and their minds are worried and become uneasy on account of suppressed prohibitions. The results of all these are quick temperedness, revolutionary mentality, guilt consciousness and despair. The adolescents should be careful in handling these emotions in a healthy manner.

Uncertainty and instability are the specialities of adolescence. Often, there will be problems in matters of study. There are several subjects for studying. All subjects may not be easy. One has to pass all examinations. There is no possibility for higher studies and to secure a job, unless one passes with high marks; in addition the expectations and worries of the parents. Many anxieties of this type are likely to happen in adolescence. Firm faith in the providence of God and prayer will help to overcome such anxieties. Along with that, one should have clear knowledge about one's own abilities and

interests. In the light of objective self-assessment, one should tell one's own desires and determinations to one's parents. Besides, one can avoid unnecessary anxieties about studies by daily learning the lessons, which are taught each day, by revising the lessons taught on holidays and by learning the lessons in advance and not studying them only when examinations approach.

### **Adolescence and Emotional Maturity**

In personality formation, adolescence has great importance. Emotional maturity is an important part of personality development. Hence, boys and girls should learn to handle their emotions with maturity. Emotions are gifts, which God has given to human beings. The emotions that influence most in our lives are love, animosity, delight, sorrow and fear. Emotions, in themselves, are neither good nor bad. The mode of expressing them may be either good or bad. For example, if a friend finds fault with a wrong thing, which one has not committed, it is but natural that one feels animosity towards the accuser. But, in order to express the just animosity, if one were to use bad words or torment the one who falsely accused him/her, that would be a wrong expression of animosity. At times in adolescence, one may feel animosity towards one's parents, who did not fulfil one's likes and against teachers, who harshly dealt with him/her. The adolescents should be ready to accept those decisions, thinking that they are for their own good.

The adolescents often foster thoughts that nobody understands them, loves them or accepts them. It is one of the most necessary mental needs of a human being that he/she is loved and accepted. Psychological studies point out that love is necessary not only for the mental growth of children, but also for their bodily growth. The strong conviction that one has the parents and society that love one and provide one's just needs, is necessary for one's growth. At times, it is not possible for the parents to give their children love and acceptance in a manner they desire, on account of the pressure of their work and other engagements. Some parents may not show their love externally. Under such circumstance, the adolescents should not foster the thought of being disregarded. God is love in the Christian view-point. He is the Father, who loves all. He not only loves, but he is the



protector, who fulfils all our needs. Belief in the loving God will give the mental courage to overcome the problems of the age of adolescence.

Joys and sorrows, success and failures are necessary elements in life. There will be many such experiences in adolescence. It may happen many times that one failed in the exam, that one did not get any prize in athletic competitions and that one did not attain the expected rank. A mature person will neither rejoice exceedingly in success nor succumb to despair in failures, as if everything is lost. The adolescents should learn to encounter with equanimity failures and worries that come in their life. Failures and oppositions are helpful to achieve more strength in our journey of life. Failures will convince us of our mistakes and will help us to live avoiding such mistakes in future.

### **The Needs of Adolescence and their Fulfilment**

In the opinion of psychologists, the reason pointed out for several problems of adolescents, is the lack of fulfilment of some of their basic needs. Hence, adolescents should know about their important mental needs and how they can be fulfilled.

#### **1. Safety-Consciousness**

This is the period of anxiety. Those who have great anxiety about their future can overcome this safety-consciousness through healthy relationship with their parents and friends. They should be ready to open their difficulties and problems. Faith in God and prayer will help them to grow in the good end of affairs.

#### **2. The Need for Freedom**

The thinking pattern of the adolescents is as follows: "Till now, I was the small child of the parents. Now I am grown up. All should approve this". Surely, the parents and the society should grant them freedom proportionate to their age. But, the adolescents should be prepared to accept the advices and directions of the parents and teachers, who know more and have greater life experience.

#### **3. The Need for Experience**

The adolescents will always seek new experiences. They feel bored with old things. They feel like imitating what they have seen in a film or read in a

novel. This is the thought-pattern that works in children who elope from home. There are many young people, who try to taste the experience of the hero or heroine they have seen in a film by being identified with them. But, life is not like what one sees in a film or what one reads in a novel. If one tries to imitate them, one will land in difficulties. The adolescents, sometimes, try to imitate the film-actors in order to 'shine' before their friends. Fostering the experiences described by friends regarding sex and intoxicants, those who try to experiment them in life, risk dangers.

#### **4. The Need for Recognition**

It is very important for the adolescents what the society, especially, the members of their own age-group think and say about them. Hence, they will always try to get this recognition among their friends. This recognition could be gained by participating in art and sport competitions and by evincing dexterity in academic matters. It is dangerous to gain attention of others through bad behaviour and conversation.

#### **5. To Form a Healthy Personality**

Personality development is important for adolescence. There are several factors for personality development. The first factor is our bodily nature. This is the bodily side of personality. What we receive from tradition and our bodily structure are included in this factor. For example, consider someone whose parents were small in size and had dark complexion. Their son or daughter may get a bodily-nature of short size and dark complexion through heredity. At times, that might influence his/her thought and behaviour. Here, the important thing we ought to remember is that we receive certain factors of our personality through our birth. The adolescents often show excessive anxiety over their height, size and complexion. We are not able to make substantial change with regard to our height and complexion. We have to accept things of this kind. It is not through any fault of ours that we lack height and complexion.

The second factor of personality is capabilities. A person may have different kinds of capabilities such as: intellectual capabilities, natural aptitude for music, artistic talents, etc. Some of these capabilities are inborn. Some others can be developed through personal efforts. We know about certain individuals, who had stammering in childhood and who, by dint of constant efforts, have become renowned orators. Adolescents should form consciousness of their



own capabilities and should have an ardent desire to develop them. It is not necessary that each one has all capabilities. One may have the capability for public speaking; another may have capability for singing. One should not grieve, thinking that one has no capacity, which one's friend possesses. Another may not have the capacity which one has. It does not behove a good personality to grieve over, thinking about the capabilities of others and envying them.

The third factor of personality is to have desires and objectives. It is necessary to have objectives such as: to be first in studies, to study well and to acquire a good job, to gain efficiency in a particular field, etc. In the opinion of the renowned psychologist Victor Frankal, the strongest need of the mind is to have a meaning for one's own life. Frankal, who had to spend six years in the Nazi Concentration Camp, could overcome all torments and atrocities, because he had the conviction that his life had a special worth. A person, who believes that the ultimate aim of life is to reach the presence of God, will not have any difficulty to tide over the problems of life.

The fourth factor of personality is values. Love, compassion, responsibility, sincerity, truthfulness, etc. may be called natural values. These values are necessary for the good of individuals and communities. When the weakening of value happens in an individual, it will affect the community also. That is why suicides and crimes are on the increase in our country. Along with the natural values, personal qualities such as punctuality, simplicity and cleanliness are also necessary for personality development. Fascination for fashion and luxurious life style, cause many problems prevailing in our country. One should learn from the age of adolescence itself, to spend money for necessary things only and to reject articles of luxury as far as possible. Appropriate dress, suitable for the age and our climatic conditions is most desirable in the age of adolescence.

## 6. Necessity of Self-Esteem

In adolescence itself, each person should have true knowledge about one's own abilities and defects. It is necessary to have self-esteem for our own mental health. Inferiority complex often stands as obstruction for the development of personality of the adolescents. Inferiority complex is the belief that one is insignificant, that one has no ability whatsoever and that one is stupid when compared to others. It is this inferiority complex that causes several mental

diseases. Unhealthy thoughts about family background, body structure, caste, etc. will pave the path for inferiority complex. We are not responsible for any of these. It is nothing but natural that each individual should have his/her own abilities, defects and drawbacks. A person having plenty of abilities should understand that they are special gifts of God and that they are to be utilised for the common good of the society. Lack of abilities need not lead to inferiority complex. In fact, there is no individual without any quality. Hence, baseless inferiority complex should be removed in adolescence itself. Along with finding out the cause of inferiority complex, the belief that God loves him/her and that he has given him/her many abilities will do immense good.

Adolescence is a very important period of human life. This is the time for growth of body and mind. Together with that, it is the period of challenges too. Success in life consists in overcoming these problems and challenges in a healthy manner.

### Worship

O Jesus, who grew up in wisdom, in years and in divine and human favour, make us grow up in the love of God and our brethren. Grant us the grace that we may not engage ourselves in bad friendship and evil habits and that we work for God, his people and for the Holy Church. Lead us by the Holy Spirit to live in holiness, realising that our body is the temple of your Holy Spirit and by discerning good and evil.

### Life Witness

Chalk out a plan regarding how to bring your friends, who have engaged themselves in bad habits, back to a virtuous life.

### Memorise

“Out of my distress I called on the Lord; the Lord answered me and set me in a broad place. With the Lord on my side I do not fear, what can mortals do to me?”  
(Psalm 118:5-6).



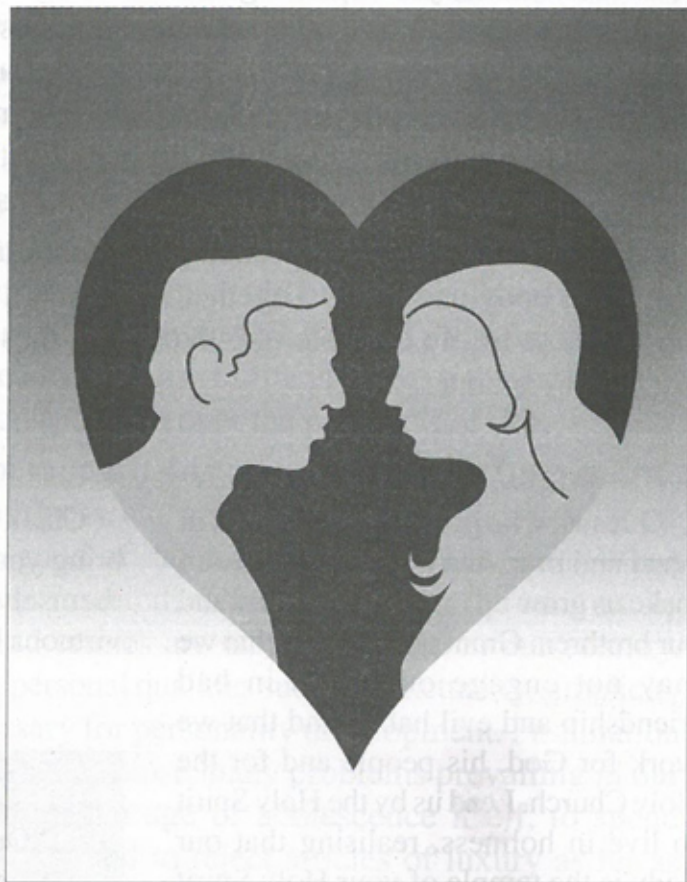
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### Questions

1. What are the main problems of adolescence?
2. Which are the basic needs of adolescence?
3. How does inferiority complex affect a person badly? What is its remedy?

## SEXUALITY - GIFT OF GOD

The word 'Sex' took its origin from the Latin word *Secare*, which means 'to cut'. In many Puranas (Mythologies), there were legends that in the early periods, man and woman were one. The explanations of the Puranas say that the power of God divided them into two. We see in Genesis 2:21-22: "The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man; and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up the place with flesh. And the rib which the Lord has taken from the man he made into a woman". Thus, man who was one was divided by the power of God. From this, the word 'sex' was formed. The sum-total of the mutual attraction and love of two individuals, man and woman, is sex.



### Sex - in the View-Point of the Holy Scripture

The narration about sex in the Holy Scripture is divine and holy. God has given sex for the good of humanity. In the Holy Bible, the Book of Genesis begins with the description of creation. At the end of creation, God created man in his own image and likeness. God created the human

being, the crown of creation, as man and woman. After creating human beings, God blessed them in this manner: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28). In the second chapter of the Book of Genesis, the inalienable unity and mutual reciprocity between man and woman are described: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will give him a helper as his partner" (Genesis 2:18). When Eve was brought before Adam, the first father, Adam said thus: "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called woman" (Genesis 2:23). The Holy Scripture testifies thus: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife" (Genesis 2:24). Thus, mutual attraction and love between man and woman took shape. The capacity, which God gave to human beings that man and woman love each other and in the fullness of love to impart life, is sex. In the Old Testament, the 'Song of Songs', which explains the sacredness, glory and beauty of conjugal love, is very much deserving of attention. We can see in several places in the Old Testament that the love, which the Lord God had towards Israel, is compared to the descriptions of the love-relationship of marital life. Besides this, the evil effects of the abuse of sex, the gift of God, is described in several places in the Old Testament (Leviticus 18). The Holy Scripture criticises stringently all sins, which pollute the sanctity of sex.

The New Testament deals with the love and sanctity of married life. Jesus teaches that the love of conjugal life should last forever (Matthew 19:1-12). St. Paul, the Apostle teaches that the human body is the temple of God. Hence no human being should defile his/her body (1 Corinthians 6:12-20).

### Sex – God's Gift

Through creating human being as man and woman, God gave them both the capacity of sex. This capacity is given to human beings in order to love and to impart life and thus to become sharers in the act of creation. The love of the woman for man and that of man for woman is an inevitable part of sex. God gave this capacity to human beings on the occasion of creation, so that there may be mutual attraction and love between man and woman



and to impart life. Sex is God-given. As it is an inseparable factor in the plan of God, it is holy and divine. After creation, "God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31).

### **The Aim of Sex**

The natural aim of sexuality in human being is the sharing of love and through it the procreation of progeny. It is their sexuality, which makes the married couple, who become one through the sacrament of marriage, capable of sharing their love. It is in the sharing of love that the statement of the Book of Genesis, "Man shall leave his father and mother and cling to his wife. And they shall become one flesh" becomes meaningful. Sexuality has a great share in married life. The couple is called to love each other and to become one through that love. The Lord Jesus too, taught this in the New Testament. "But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two, but one flesh" (Mark 10:6-8). It is this becoming one in the married life is the perfection of the love of the husband and wife.

The love-relationship of the married life aims at the begetting of children. God calls man and woman through married life to share in his work of creation. The married couple, who receive the call of God become one in the perfection of mutual love and imparts life. This becomes possible through the life-giving capacity, which is included in the sexual capability. The begetting and bringing up of children are included in this. To express in other words, the love-relationship instigates man and woman to show fertility by giving birth to another person through perfect self dedication. The sublime capability of generating life is a call to share in the work of God for creation.

### **The Morality of Sexuality**

We have seen that sexuality is good, since it is a creation of God. Hence man has the obligation to use sexuality in the proper manner. Man and woman are complementary in God's creation. God has given the capacity of sexuality to the creature of God, man and woman, so that in married life

they may love each other and become one. Hence, sexual intercourse has position only in wedded life. When we think of the morality of sexuality, every use of sexuality outside conjugal life is wrong.

Each one should honour and joyfully recognise one's own personality and that of others. Sexual morality becomes mature only when the individuals honour and respect each other.

Bodily changes occur in boys and girls in the various stages of their growth. Each one should be able to accept these changes for good. God the Creator had in the beginning envisaged the bodily and mental differences between man and woman. The bodily and mental specialities render manliness to a man and womanliness to a woman. Since man and woman have these differences, it is natural that boys and girls feel mutual attraction in the period of adolescence. This is part of human nature. There is the possibility that this attraction leads to mutual liking. But this liking that takes place in adolescence is merely emotional. These love-relationships, having no firm foundation are transitory. It is not wrong to love each other. But, in order to enter into love-relationship, there is an age-limit. It is because of that, Government has specified that in order to enter into marriage, man must have 21 years and woman 18 years. This is the age, 21 and 18, approved by the society to be able to take decisions. If any young man and woman mutually wish to enter into love-relationship, let them share it with their parents or other elderly people and arrange life according to their instructions. These kinds of emotions, which happen in adolescence, will seriously affect studies and other responsibilities of young boys and girls. Hence, it is better not to give heed to such emotions. These attractions of adolescence, although natural, if not checked, may often go against the holiness of the aim of sexuality. Hence, they are to be dealt with maturely.

All will have to shun bad books, pictures, films, talk and evil friendships, which affect the emotional realm of sexuality. For, all of them will lead human beings to the abuse of sexuality. We will be able to be faithful to the gift of God, sexuality, if only we avoid what solicit us to do evil.



## Chastity

We can understand sexuality as the ability of each individual to love. To limit this ability to love another individual alone, is family life. One is able to utilise one's ability of sexuality to love the whole world, especially, God and humankind, instead of one person, Thus an individual, who dedicates his/her sexuality, the gift, for the whole world is the state of priestly and religious life. An individual who offers oneself perfectly to God will ever preserve his/her sexuality unsullied. These people try to live near to God and human beings, rendering love alone, as measure to their sexuality. When man and woman live as complementary to each other, the self-dedicated ones, stand close to God and love the world.

Sexuality is a great gift, God gave to human beings. An individual should be able to experience it in a mature manner, in the various spheres of growth, understanding the purity of its aim. We ought to receive the grace necessary for this from God. Let us pray for the same.

### Worship

O God, you made us sharers in your work of creation, by giving us the gift of sexuality. Thinking of this gift you have given us to love and to be loved, we praise you. Bless us, so that we may share this love in a holy manner, to realise sexuality, the divine gift, in a mature way and to live understanding the nobility of this sacred gift.

### Life Witness

Under the background of the description of creation, introduce sexuality in the class as a gift of God.

### Memorise

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body”  
(1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

### Questions

1. Why is sexuality said to be a gift of God?
2. What is the aim of sexuality?



# SUFFERING IN CHRISTIAN LIFE

Suffering and its concomitant afflictions are a reality, which had churned human minds at all times. The death of innocent children, the unexpected demise of the dear ones, incurable diseases, the torments which persons suffer, poverty, accidents, war, natural calamities, etc. all these carry the experiences of endurance. The pressure of ideas and circumstances that cannot be reconciled with, is unbearable. Suffering leads some people to severe despair and remorse. Persons, who are cleansed through pain and thereby become mature and filled with hope, are not rare.



### Searching for the Reason of Suffering

Man has always searched for the reason of suffering. He/she has thought about, meditated upon, prayed for and has offered sacrifices for averting pain. Gilgamesh of the Babylonian epic, who set out in search of the meaning of life and death and Prometheus, character of the Greek epic, who ventured to obtain superhuman strength and Nachikethas of Kadopanishath, who went in search of the way of immortality and the cause of death, are the symbols of the search of the human race. Sree Budha, who taught that unbounded desire is the reason for all human sorrows, points out to one of the main causes of sorrow.

The literary and artistic forms have made suffering and tragedies as chief themes for their works. The compositions on human sufferings are the lofty works of literature. The works of Sophocles are examples for that. But the works of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, which present human beings, who have overcome tragedies and awakened trust, render hope to many human beings.

Poet, Nalappattu Narayanan introduces the immense possibilities of suffering through these words, he sang:

“Urukkidunnu mizhineerittu  
Mukkunnu muttum Bhuvanaikasilpi  
Manushyahritham kanakathe-etho  
Panitharathinnu upayuktham akkan”.

This literally means:

‘The world’s craftsman melts gold, the human heart,  
And dips it in tears, in order to make some kind of ornament’.

Human beings have formed philosophies, which having searched after the cause of suffering and at the end arrived at, up to the rejection of the very life and the visions that extol the loftiness of life that is revealed through sufferings.

## **Suffering in the Holy Scripture**

### **Old Testament**

What the Old Testament sees as the cause of suffering is the sin of the first man (Genesis 2:14-19). It is as the result of sin that Adam and Eve lost the fortunes of the Garden of Eden and fellowship with God. Just as suffering, death also entered into the world through sin. The incident of the flood makes it clear that the increase of sin of humankind is the reason of the increase of suffering and that punishment is inevitable for sin (Genesis 6:1-8). Israel had believed that the transgression of the commandments of God would make the individuals and communities prey to enemies, diseases and other sufferings (Deuteronomy 30:15-20). Apart from the general thought-pattern in Israel, we see the personal responsibility of sin and suffering firmly related in the Prophetic tradition. Ezekiel taught: ‘the word of the Lord came to me: what do you mean by repeating this proverb

concerning the land of Israel, “the parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge ?” The life of the one who sins shall perish. You may ask, “Why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father ?” When the son has done what is lawful and right, and has been careful to observe all my statutes, he shall surely live. The person who sins shall die. A child shall not suffer for the iniquity of a parent, nor a parent suffer for the iniquity of a child; the righteousness of the righteous shall be his own, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be his own’ (Ezekiel 18:1-4, 19-20). The prophets further proclaimed: ‘If a person turns away from the path of sin, he shall not be punished, but shall be saved’ (Ezekiel 18:21-22).

We also see the idea in the Old Testament that there is deep meaning for the suffering and pain of the human being. Prophet Isaiah makes it evident that suffering has a salutary meaning pointing out the figure of the suffering servant (Isaiah 42-53). We see in the Wisdom Books that suffering and pain have a salutary value. Job, who suffered afflictions and miseries, is the representative and symbol of all oppressed people. At the end of the sufferings, Job sees God. In the presence of God, Job recognises his limitations and confesses his faith in the providence of God, which is beyond human comprehension (Job 38-42). It is also seen in the Old Testament that beyond suffering and death, there is the conviction of the glory of the resurrection. “One cannot but choose to die at the hands of mortals and to cherish the hope God gives of being raised again by him. But for you there will be no resurrection to life” (2 Maccabees 7:14). “You accursed wretch, you dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the Universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws” (2 Maccabees 7:9). We see in the Scripture, the faithful, who confess at the moment of death after their sufferings. In short, the Old Testament proclaims that suffering is not meaningless; on the other hand, it gives loftiness and perfection to life.

### **In the New Testament**

It is salutary suffering that stands foremost in the New Testament. The chief topic of discussion of the New Testament is the suffering of Jesus Christ and the hope that it gives to humankind.



## Jesus of the Gospels and Suffering

Is there any suffering, which Jesus the Son of God and perfect man, has not undergone? He who is God “He did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form” (Philippians 2:6-7). His very decision to become man is a suffering. We see that the suffering of Jesus began even before his being born into this world. Mary, carrying Jesus in her womb, wandered with Joseph seeking a place to lay down her head. Joseph and Mary, carrying infant Jesus, went to Egypt as refugees. After the death of Herod, being unable to enter into the native place, they stayed in Nazareth of Galilee as emigrants.

Jesus had to experience hunger, thirst, etc; the rejection by his own disciples and people; baseless allegations and the consequent mental afflictions. During his life of service, the attention of Jesus fell on those who suffered and who extended their hands seeking help. He cured those who suffered from various diseases; comforted those who were shattered; fed those who were hungry; freed those who were possessed with demons and raised the dead to life. Jesus thus opened before human beings the way of bodily, social, mental and spiritual freedom.

The value of suffering was one of the chief subjects of the instruction of Jesus. Grief and pain are alluded to in the Beatitudes of the Gospel. Jesus promises the Kingdom of God and its great remuneration for the poor, for those who mourn, who thirst, who are persecuted for righteousness' sake and who are reviled, persecuted and falsely accused of for the sake of Jesus (Matthew 5:1-12). “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me” (Luke 9:23). This invitation of Jesus teaches us that the pain, which suffering engenders, cannot be evaded and that they have indivisible relation to the cross of Jesus.

Jesus, not only taught about suffering, he welcomed suffering in his own life. Even though he was sinless and holy, he voluntarily accepted suffering. Jesus went up to Jerusalem to observe the Pasch, seeing before him suffering and cross (Luke 18:31-33). Jesus was participating in the plan, which the Father had prepared for the salvation of humankind. In other words, through his suffering Jesus bore perfect witness to the love of the Father for humankind.

Jesus knew that the forthcoming afflictions and crucifixion would inflict pain. In fact, he experienced immense agony at Gethsemane and he prayed: “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want” (Matthew 26:39). Yet, he submits himself to the plan of salvation of the Father. Jesus dies on the cross after the flagellation, crowning with thorns and the strenuous journey and carrying the cross. He makes a complete offering of himself saying: “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46). Jesus, raised on the cross, pours forth consolation and hope to those who strain themselves in the furnace of sufferings.

The Son of God became man in order to liberate human beings from evil. God gave him to the world, so that through the suffering of his only Son, the liberation of humankind shall be made possible. It is the unbounded love of God that we experience through Jesus: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish, but may have eternal life” (John 3:16). It is through the sufferings and death on the cross that we realise God's redeeming love in its perfect form.

The resurrection of Jesus after his death and burial is capable of giving hope to every human being amidst sufferings. It doesn't mean that resurrection has entirely annihilated suffering from human life. The resurrection of Jesus has shed light of salvation to the very many sufferings of life. Jesus has identified himself with all kinds of sufferings related to human existence. He made the sufferings of evil, salutary; he made available the way of salvation to human beings through the experience of sufferings.

## The Salutary Measure of Suffering

The pain that suffering produces makes human life sorrowful. We see individuals, families and communities wander under the severity of sufferings. A Christian should be able to see and evaluate suffering in the light of faith. The reply that St. Paul received when he prayed to lessen his sufferings is worth noting: “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9). The light of faith, which Paul, the Apostle, received in the revelation of the Lord, should supply strength to a Christian in the moments of suffering: “So, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and calamities for



the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12: 9-10). Paul raises the argument that he is a disciple nobler than the others by recounting the sufferings he endured for Jesus (2 Corinthians 11: 23-28). On the occasions of the sorrows of life, Jesus is close to us. The grace of God surpasses the weaknesses and limitations. The grace of God will strengthen us to encounter suffering with equanimity.

The advice of St. Paul to participate abundantly in the sufferings of Christ (2 Corinthians 1:5) gives us another vision about suffering. What the Apostle implies is that there is not anything wanting in the sufferings and cross of Jesus. But the scheme of salvation of God is fulfilled today through the life and communion of the faithful. The suffering of the faithful is not strictly personal. He/she is carrying the same in the mystical body of Christ. When sufferings are accepted along with the Church, they become part of the cross of Jesus; they become the completion of salvation.

### **Participate in the Sufferings of Others**

There are lots of people near us and far, who carry afflictions and miseries. It is the duty of a Christian to reduce their burden and sorrow by participating in their afflictions: "Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). We will be able to experience truly the strength of solidarity of human life, only when we participate in the sufferings of our brethren. It is easy to be happy with those who are happy. But, life becomes blessed when we impart strength to the other in the experiences of ruin. We will obtain strength to wipe away the tears of another only through the virtues of love, mercy and generosity. When we fulfil the fundamental needs of another, including hunger and poverty, we are serving Jesus himself (Matthew 25:31-40). The words of the judge in the description of the Last Judgment invite us to the style of a merciful life.

### **The Suffering that Builds up Life**

Human beings have to be prepared to accept the limitations along with the vast abilities in a realistic sense. The capabilities of a human being enable him/her to grow beyond limitations. Natural limitations and drawbacks might raise challenges in human life. Besides, the bodily and mental limitations of human beings become the cause of human sufferings, pain and sorrow. But, only when human beings overcome hostile circumstances, can they grow above themselves and achieve success. An individual may not have

fully found out his/her capabilities and potentialities when he/she progresses, having received in life only encouragements and inspirations. It is the hostile circumstances that help a person to reveal fully his/her bodily, intellectual and mental potentialities. The real great persons are those who have achieved perfection amidst sufferings, pains and sorrows. It is on the occasions of suffering that the real character and glory of a human being is known.

It becomes possible for a Christian to analyze the sufferings of the daily life and the pain they engender, through the integral vision about life. Life should not be seen partially, but all its sides should be seen together with its past, present and future. Deep faith in God, love for God and for one's brethren and hope should form the foundation for the analysis of life. The faithful should try to see suffering with a vision deepened through prayer. Let us try to make our own the prayer of the psalmist, which includes faith, love and hope (13:5-6).

"But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me".

### **Worship**

O God, who saved the world through suffering, give us the strength to endure the sufferings and afflictions of life together with you. Strengthen us to understand that suffering is the right of the disciple of Christ, to become sharers in the afflictions of others and to praise you carrying one another's burden. Bless us to see your sacred hands when we pass through the path of suffering.

### **Questions**

1. What is the measure of love?
2. How is suffering introduced in the Holy Scripture?
3. It is on the occasion of suffering that the true character and glory of a human being is known. Prove.

### **Life Witness**

Find out the persons who suffer around you and chalk out a plan, how to help them.

### **Memorise**

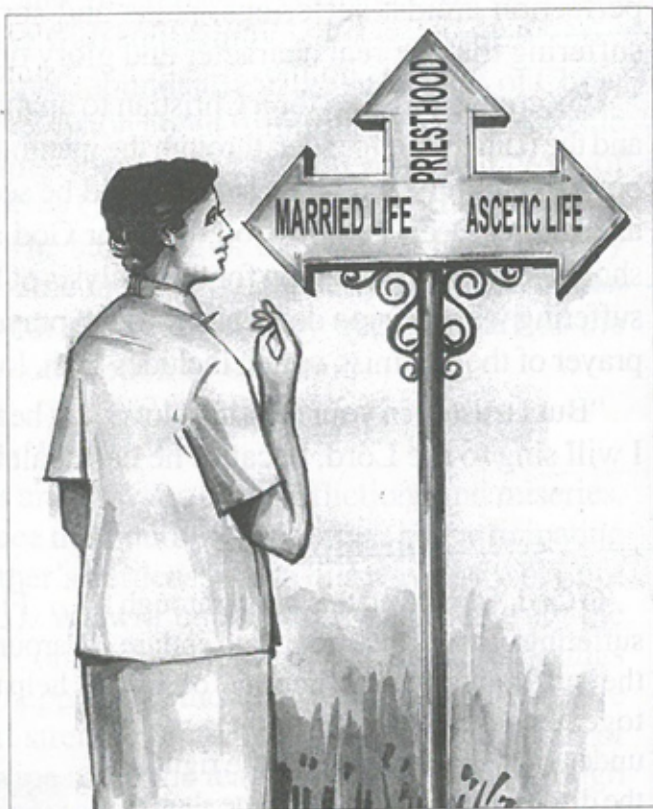
"And going a little further, he threw himself down on the ground and prayed, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want'"  
(Matthew 26:39).



# DIFFERENT STATES OF LIFE

The Bible is the history of God's call and human being's response. God created this universe out of nothing (Genesis 1:1-31). This change from non-being to being is the result of God's call. What human beings got, is the fundamental call to become the children of God, by becoming sharers of the love of God. 'For God did not call us to impurity but in holiness' (1 Thessalonians 4:7). This call is towards perfection. "Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Irenaeus, the Father of the Church, says: "The glory of God dwells in the perfection of human life". Fathers of both the East and West teach – the thought that God incarnated, in order to divinise human beings. Divinisation should take place in human beings. Each human being should respond to this call. "Let each of you lead the life that the Lord has assigned" (1 Corinthians 7:17).

The Christian accepts the call to a particular state of life as the call of God. The Catholic Church gives to 'the call of God' a particular and general meaning. Generally speaking, all those who have received baptism are called to imitate Christ and to be signs and witnesses to his kingdom. Particularly speaking, God is calling a faithful to a particular state of life. "Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (Ephesians 4:1).



## Different States of Life

We, Christians respond to the general call to become children of God through baptism by receiving particular divine calls. The various states of life are marriage, priesthood, religious life (*Sanyasa*) and solitary life. The aim of all these, is to attain holiness. And the means for this is the imitation of Christ, who is holiness itself. Each state of life is noble in itself. It cannot be said that one state of life is nobler or less noble than another. The Second Vatican Council in its Decree on the Church, makes it clear: 'Whatever be the state of life, duties and life situations, they are to be accepted believing that they come from the hands of the heavenly Father. We ought to cooperate with the will of God through our works, revealing the love, God has bestowed on the world. If they do so, the Christian faithful will grow in holiness' (Holy Church 41). According to this instruction, each Christian should grow in holiness by faithfully fulfilling the things according to his/her state of life.

### 1. Marriage

Marriage is a call for dedication. 'It is not good that the man should be alone, I will make him a helper as his partner' (Genesis 2:18). What we see in the first family that took shape in paradise is the fulfilment of this divine decision. The aim of the family is to give love, impart life, to give education and to bring up offspring as children of God. The foundation and nursery of all vocations, is the family. So also the foundation of the Church and society is the family.

To the human being, whom God created in his own image and likeness, God gives the command to participate in his work of creation and the ability to execute the same (Genesis 1:28). The book, Genesis 2:20-24 points out the unity, indissolubility and equality of the relationship between husband and wife. The basis of marriage is the relation and fidelity between husband and wife till the end of their life.

**The Call of God:** - The man and woman, who are legally wedded, are called to be sharers in the love and work of the creation of God. The coming together of man and woman in marriage may seem casual. But in the eyes of God, it is the fulfilment of the plan of God, decided even before the establishment of the world. Just like priesthood and *sanyasa*, marriage also is a call of God.

**Life, which sanctifies Each Other:-**The married couple undertakes the obligation of becoming holy and unblemished; mutually fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of the married life (Holy Church 41). The relationship of Christ with the Church does sanctify the Church. Similarly, the relationship between the husband and wife sanctifies each other. For, it is God, who unites them and blesses them.

**Sacrament:-**Under world's view-point, marriage is a social system. It is a sanction which the society grants to man and woman to live together. But, in the Christian view-point, marriage is a holy and sanctifying relationship and life-style. Marriage is the symbol of the relationship of Jesus with the Church (Ephesians 4:23-25). The couple receives through this sacrament the grace that renders the divine blessing and strength to undertake the duty and responsibility of married life. The services of the blessing of the rings and the crown in the sacrament of marriage of the Malankara liturgy, are very symbolic. Just as the indivisible love-relationship between Christ the bridegroom and the Holy Church the bride, the bride and bridegroom enter into their love-relationship through the service of the blessing of the rings. Subsequently, the service of the blessing of the crown signifies God bestowing special blessing on them.

The man and woman give their marriage consent through their own perfect and free dedication. The man and woman make their marriage consent to Jesus and to his Church.

In this sacrament, the priest (celebrant), who blesses the marriage, is the official witness and representative of Christ and the Church. The matter of this sacrament is the mind and body of the couple. The man and woman, who became the temple of God through baptism, offer their body and soul through marriage relationship as gifts to God and to one's life-partner. The couple receives from this sacrament the grace to beget children, the living memorials of their conjugal love and the responsibility to bring them up as citizens of the earth and heaven.

**The Life of Sacrifice: -** The married couple, who have participated in the priesthood of Christ through baptism, offer sacrifice as priests in their married life. Just as Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for the Church and the world, the married couple ought to continue a life of sacrifice throughout

their life. The life of the married couple is a life of sacrifice, which ought to exist till its end through favourable as well as unfavourable circumstances.

**The Married People and Chastity:-**Fidelity is the foundation of conjugal chastity and love is the central point of married life. In married life, the husband and wife offer their body and soul mutually in the perfect manner. In this hearty relationship, having sexual characteristics, it is a deception to give admittance to a third person. The test-stone of love is fidelity. The inner meaning of chastity is to safeguard the sacredness of the married life, having closed the doors of the mind and body with utmost vigilance for the sake of one's partner.

## 2. Priesthood

In all religions, priests are the servers of divine things. They are the mediators between God and human beings. In Christianity, this is a special call to become the representative of Christ. This is a call to renounce oneself and to give love like the Lord Jesus, who has taught that there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for his friend and who practised in life what he taught.

Christ, the eternal priest offered a complete sacrifice of himself as victim inclusive of life, death and resurrection. Thus, Jesus marked the beginning of the priesthood of the New Testament. The aim of the sacrifice of Christ is the salvation of humankind. Jesus established the sacrament of priesthood in order to continue the Gospel of salvation till the end of the world. United with Christ, the priests undertake the mission of sanctifying himself and the world through priestly service. The priests do this service by fulfilling a triple duty.

**Priests, the Servers of the Word of God: -** Priests are the servers of the word of God. The first duty of priests is to preach the Gospel to all people (Priests 4). "Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15). Priests fulfil this command of Christ through their priestly service.

**Priests, the Dispensers of the Sacraments:-** It is one of the vital duties of the priest to sanctify the people of God through the administration of sacraments. God alone is most holy; God alone is the one who sanctifies.



In the process of sanctifying the people of God through the administration of sacraments, the priests become the servers of Christ. 'Priests lead human beings to the community of the people of God through baptism. Through the sacrament of repentance, the sinners are reconciled with God and to his Church. Priests console the sick people through the holy unction; above all, in the holy Qurbano, they offer the holy sacrifice of Christ sacramentally' (Priests 5).

**Priests, the Spiritual Leaders:-**Priests are those who are called to give leadership to the community of the Church, which is making a pilgrimage towards eternity. They are the ones who have to unite God's family in cooperation with their Bishop, in the spirit of fraternal charity. Priests are those who have to teach the Christians, how to bear Christian witness in the community. Priests have to impart divine spirit in the community, following the example of Christ, the Good Shepherd. 'That is a life to become everything to everyone'. Especially, they are obliged to show special consideration to the poor and to those, belonging to the weaker sections.

### 3. Asceticism (*Sanyasa*)

The ascetics (*Sanyasis*) are those who bear witness to single-minded dedication for the sake of the Lord. Their duty is to give to the world Christ through prayer, suffering and service, having dedicated themselves to God through love and having appropriated divine love. The *Sanyasis* are the living symbols of the kingdom of God. *Sanyasis* express their love towards Christ, their heavenly bridegroom, through their faithful life. The three vows of poverty, obedience and celibacy are the special means of expressing that fidelity. There are priests and non-priests among *Sanyasis*.

#### The Triple Vows

The triple vows are the means to make the self-dedication, real and perfect. The vows-bound life is an inspiration to make Jesus, one's own and to belong to Jesus.

**Poverty:-**All that God created are for the good of humankind. All creatures should lead human beings towards God, the Creator. The *Sanyasi* tries to stay free from attachment to creatures in order to love God, the Creator and his own brethren. The vow of poverty helps the *Sanyasi* for this.

The *Sanyasi/Sanyasin* receives from the common things belonging to the religious community, without storing anything as his/her own. This helps the *Sanyasi/Sanyasin* to utilize his/her time and convenience fully to God and to the brethren, without becoming in any way anxious about worldly things or about their earning. The *Sanyasi/Sanyasin* accepts Jesus as his/her wealth, who, possessing everything, lived as having nothing.

**Celibacy: -**Fostering the ability to love and to be loved, the vow of chastity helps a *Sanyasi/Sanyasin*, to love God with the whole heart and whole strength and being inspired with this love to lead one's life through loving human beings and serving them. Married life is not unholy or to be avoided. The aim of celibacy is, through that vow, to dedicate the ascetic's mind and body fully to the service of the word of God and of his people.

**Obedience:-**Through obedience, the ascetics offer perfect submission of their mind to God as an object of sacrifice. With regard to obedience, the model of the ascetic is Christ who submitted himself to the will of God, the Father. 'Let not my will, but thine be fulfilled'. This was the mentality of Christ in everything. The *Sanyasi/Sanyasin* also tries to imbibe this mentality. When the *Sanyasis* work as a community, personal interests and likings may have to be rejected. They do so with their own decision and responsibility. The *Sanyasis* are enabled through that to acquire personal sanctity and fulfil their common mission.

### 4. The State of Solitary Life

We should see those who have entered neither marriage nor priesthood nor the religious state of life, but lead solitary life, as having received the call of God. Each one, in accordance with one's own circumstances and life-style, tries to bear witness to Christ and the community. God desires that we live in a manner worthy of the state of life we are called to. Hence, no divine call should not be considered either better or worse than another.





## Worship

O God, who has blessed us with the basic call to be your children, grant us the grace to understand that every state of life is equally noble and lofty and that the final end of each, is holiness. To us, who have arrived at the crossroads of our life, grant the grace to choose the appropriate state of life according to your intention and call and to lead a life, worthy of it.

## Life Witness

Let each one introduce the state of life which he/she chooses and for what reason he/she chooses the same.

### Memorise

“Just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love”  
(Ephesians 1:4).



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## Questions

1. Which are the different states of life in the Catholic Church?
2. Why is marriage said to be a call for mutual dedication?
3. Describe the three kinds of duties the priest undertakes through the priestly service.
4. Which are the means to make dedication real and perfect? Describe.

## Lesson 19

# LOVE THE NATURE

All of us will have a story of our own, the house in which we were born, the circumstances in which we grew up, our parents etc. Similarly, the earth, in which we live, also has a story to relate. This beautiful earth is the house, which God has prepared for us to live in. Hence the story of our house, this earth, is our own story. Each possibility and problem that happens in this house is also our possibility and problem. We ought to ensure the safety of the earth for our own safety. First, let us read the story of the earth and thus that of ours.



The age of the earth, the third planet of the Solar System is calculated to be 500 crores of years. It is only about 30 lakhs of years, since human beings appeared on this earth. Before that, for about 40 crores of years the centre of life was the ocean. The vibration of life first began in water. Before the inception of life, this earth was only the kingdom of minerals. The plant world was created from the mineral world. It is with the minerals and salts, the constituent elements of the body of plants were formed. If the minerals were to be made the food of plants, they are to be transformed into organic matter. The minute beings do this work. Crores of kinds of unicellular beings incessantly work on the minerals and transform the mineral world into living soil. It is this kind of soil, which is said to be fertile. In one gram of living soil, there exist several lakhs of minute living beings. The share of these atomic beings in transforming the mineral into animal kingdom cannot be

replaced by anything else. This is the means God has chosen to create the plant kingdom from the soil.

The first creatures of the plant kingdom from algae to the big trees absorbed the carbon dioxide of the atmosphere for crores of years and unceasingly pumped out oxygen and increased the ratio of oxygen in the atmosphere and made it suitable for animals to live in. Then, God gave existence to the animal kingdom. At the end, human being was created as a happy conclusion of the animal kingdom. We should know that when God created the animal kingdom, he had already arranged all complicated structure in the atmosphere, including the structure of air in the nature, with utmost care.

For the production and continuance of the human being, he/she has to depend upon everything in this universe. It is the human being, the loftiest of God's creation, who has to depend most upon others for his/her existence. A person who takes birth as a unicellular being obtains the elements for the growth of his/her body from the earth. Thus, the human being, who takes his/her origin from the earth, returns to the earth and becomes a part of nature, lives depending upon the earth. If there is no nature, there is no human being. The health of the nature is the health of the human being. Hence, we shall learn how the different elements of nature protect life. Along with that, how the intervention of human being disfigured them.

## The Atmosphere

We have already seen how the atmosphere came into existence in today's ratio, through the plant world, beginning from algae, having unceasingly pumped oxygen into the atmosphere for crores of years. In the atmosphere, it is 21% of oxygen area-wise and 46% of oxygen weight-wise; that is the life-breath. The green leaves are the medium for sending oxygen freely into the atmosphere from carbon dioxide. This process is photo synthesis. Nitrogen is another necessary element required for the production and continuance of life. 78% of the atmosphere is this gas. The minute (atomic) beings have a great share in transforming nitrogen of the atmosphere into nitrate, suitable for the plants to take as food. Through lightning and thunder, thousands of tons of nitrogen is merged into the soil of the earth. The algae and other plants absorb them into minute tissues and in course of time, they turn as part of the body of the beings, which eat them.



It is this structure of the air, which is necessary for the sustenance of life that we have destroyed through atmospheric pollution. Our atmosphere becomes contaminated mainly through burning of fossil fuel. In the Third World countries alone, about 7 lakhs of people inhale the poisonous air of the atmosphere and die, being affected by asthma and other bronchial diseases. Fatal diseases like cancer and asthma are on the increase in industrial cities. Every year, more than 30,000 lakh tons of carbon, is being increased in the atmosphere from large-scale industries and vehicles alone. How pitiable a story it is that the balanced state of the atmosphere brought about by the plant-world after working for crores of years, is being destroyed by human beings within a short span of 200 years! Is this the achievement of science?

## Water

Two third of the face of the earth is covered with the oceans. The matter, God chose first for creation is water. Later on, life reached the dry land and atmosphere. The life of a place is the continuation of that of another place. The basis of life on the land is the life of the ocean. As Eugene I. Rabinovich, the Russian scientist, who has given us valuable knowledge about protoplasm, has discovered that the plants of the dry land pump out 400 billion tons of oxygen into the atmosphere. This comes to only 10% of the oxygen the atmosphere gets. The remaining 90% comes from the ocean as per discovery of this scientist. This is produced by algae, the sea weeds.

The water, we drink today, has been drunk and dispelled for crores of years by others. After decay by passing through many beings it has reached us as pure and potable. Water is never made anew. Once it is poisoned, it is made dangerous forever. Industrialisation has poisoned the whole sea-water. All our ponds, brooks and rivers are already poisoned with the chemical manures and pesticides, we use in our agricultural farms. What we face today is that the spring of life turns into centres that sow death. It is discovered that the fish we eat contain fatal metals like mercury, cadmium and lead in a dangerous measure. It is besides this, that the pesticides and soap we use, poison water. The tea, coffee, squash, juice, etc. are contaminated by adding chemicals with water for colour and taste.

## Soil

If rock is crushed, there wouldn't be soil. We have already seen that soil is formed by the work of the minute beings in the mineral world. It is these minute beings, who break the organic matters and merge them in the soil. Organic matter becomes food for plants through this process. The health of the soil is the health of the people. Where the soil is rich in organic wealth, there will be organic diversity. The foundation of our health is the organic diversity contained in our food. Excessive artificial irrigation is said to be the cause of the destruction of the civilization of Mesopotamia, Assyria and Babylon. Due to the increase of the measure of salinity in the soil as a result of irrigation, the soil became desert. The production of food materials stopped. The production of food of the country became nil. Thus, empires grumbled. As a result of modern civilization, 36,000 lakh hectares of land is, by now, decertified. Once every thirty years, part of the earth, as broad as Saudi Arabia, is being decertified on the face of this earth. The next turn is for Kerala. The forest lands are disappearing. The organic-vegetable wealth of Kerala is dying.

Over a lakh kinds of chemical materials are put in the soil all over the world related to agriculture. On an average of three pesticides per day are newly made. Every year, at least 10,000 people are dying due to the stroke of pesticides, and at least 3,75,000 farmers die by directly consuming the food materials produced by using these pesticides and succumb to diseases caused by the effect of these pesticides. Plastic materials, which do not decay even if they remain in the soil for several lakhs of years, take away life from the soil. D.D.T., which was prohibited in America in 1972, is being widely used in India today. This is the reason for many fatal diseases among human beings and for the disappearance of many living species.

## Tree

Sit at the foot of a tree; watch its surroundings. A tree means, a big organic collection; it is a system of abode. Many kinds of living beings depend upon a tree; different kinds of vines, parasites, birds, amphibians, reptiles, insects, spiders and earth-worm, etc. a big collection. Learn, sitting under the shade of a tree, take rest, breathe pure air, sit quietly and enjoy the sweet sounds produced by various creatures from the tree. How beautiful

is the music of nature! To cut down a tree means to lose all these. A full-grown banyan tree pumps out 900 kilo-grams of oxygen into the atmosphere, every hour. In our knowledge, the sweet basil (*Ocimum Sanctum*) is the only plant, which pumps out ozone into the atmosphere, which is necessary for the formation of ozone layers. The leaves of the mango tree has the capacity to attract to themselves the dust particles of the atmosphere and thus to purify the air. In that way, what all sorts of utilities!

## Forest

If there is no forest, there is no air; no water. If you place side by side the leaves of every kind of plant of an acre of land, there forms a surface-area of several lakhs-fold. Vaporization takes place from such vast area at the same time. Thus, the atmosphere gets cooled down; water particles of the clouds get solidified. Different kinds of foliage hold the clouds which are formed from the ocean in the same place for a long time. Thus, it rains. In fact, it rains not from above downwards, but from below upwards. Deserts are formed not because of the absence of rain, but because there is no forest to cause rain.

80% of the rain that falls in the forest descends into the soil of the forest itself. It takes almost months for this water to reach the rivers gradually and our wells through water-springs. If there is no forest, the result is flood when it rains and scorched earth when there is no rain.

A kind of most important forest is mangrove forest. In the marshy regions that are formed by the sea-shore and on the banks of rivers, various kinds of mangrove trees grow and form such forests. These kinds of mangrove forests resist strong waves and reduce their violent force; thus they protect the shore. In the month of December 2004, when the giant tsunami waves were formed in the Indian Ocean and attacked the sea shores including India, danger was comparatively less wherever there were the mangrove forests. The share of the mangrove forests in preserving the under-ground-water pure without salt is incomparable. If there are no mangrove forests, salt will seep through the soil and reach our wells; the rhythm of nature will be faulty; and life will become impossible on earth.

Trees are the natural means for irrigation. Grass groups are the reservoirs of nature to preserve water. Banyan trees are the first claimants of the



underground water. The real irrigation takes place from beneath the earth (Genesis 2:6). The trees on the banks of rivers draw water from the river and give the same to the trees standing on the nearby row. Through different kinds of plants, water is passed on as if in a relay race, and thus water reaches on top of a hill quite safely.

When under-ground-water is exploited, two things happen. Firstly, banyan trees will disappear from that place. Gradually, the foliage of the small plants beneath them will perish. Finally, the whole place becomes a desert. Secondly, in the void created as a result of exploiting ground-water, oxygen from the atmosphere enters into it and oxidising having taken place in the chemical salt, the remaining water becomes poisoned. The result of both of these is the destruction of life. Now say, what is the precious product, the forest gives us? Is it foreign exchange or life, which is preserved through manufacturing water, air and soil?

## **Birds**

How diverse is this world of the feather-clad beings! The different melodies and colours are the peculiarities of the bird-world. Each tree and cluster of foliage is the abode of one kind of bird. There are over 10,000 kinds of birds the whole world over. In India alone, there are 1200 kinds of birds. When they feed on insects, rats and worms, it is our farms that are preserved. Rat is the delicious food of owls. The share of work, which the birds, beetles and butterflies perform in the pollination of flowers, is incomparable. We ought to understand the lamentable truth that pesticides cause the destruction of their race. The safety of our food is lost through that. When will we understand that if our atmosphere becomes void and our spring seasons become mute, that our very existence will be in danger?

## **Human Being and Body Ecology**

We have already seen that the human-body-ecology is the continuation of global ecology. We understand how the Creator of the universe has transformed the mineral kingdom into plant kingdom and afterwards to the animal kingdom. These are not effected through mere combination of all these elements. The power that unites them is the life of God. Any science, which does not take this into account, is imperfect. To a certain measure,



we could discover how we depend upon other elements for our existence. The human being's field of action is the garden, not city (Genesis 2:8). Our responsibility is not establishing hegemony, but to preserve life (Genesis 2:15). It is the same life that remains in everything. By no reason, the human being is above the laws of nature. Every law that moves nature is applicable to human beings also.

God has created the body of human beings not in such a manner as to receive inorganic matters or that which decay. When we see a fruit, we feel like taking and eating it, whereas when we see a dead fowl or fish, we feel disgust, because God has thus created us. Just as each part of nature is mutually related, so too, each part of the human body is related to the other. It is not in the manner a carpenter making a table, that is, making each part separately and then joining them together, that God created human beings. But, our body is formed from one cell, within which in accordance with the operation of nature, God has infused life. The body knows what it needs. This knowledge and mutually related nature are ruptured when one transgresses natural laws. What is our real food according to the natural law? What we feel attracted to eat when we directly see a thing in nature, without the help of any instrument or without making any artificial change, is our food. Before 10,000 years, until human beings discovered agriculture, the food of humankind was fruits and leaves only. Then he began eating plants of the field (vegetarian) (Genesis 3:18), later on, non-vegetarian (meat eater) (Genesis 9:3, 4), Now we are changed into mercury eaters.

In this world, where 150 to 200 lakhs of people die every year through starvation, 70% of grain produced in America alone, is changed into fodder. With the grain required to produce meat, which an American eats, 8 people could be served food. With the grain and vegetables we get, if all the Americans were to turn vegetarians, it is possible to serve food to half the population of the world. The natural food, which God has given for the existence of human beings, who stand in the position of utmost dependence, does in no way inflict a blow to nature's wealth. But the change that occurred in the food habits have made human beings invalids, has disfigured nature, and the age of man is reduced from hundreds to decades (Genesis 5:5, 6:8).

God, who has seen everything good and blessed it all, is the one, who has created everything. Hence, the vital energy that controls everything is

one. Everything comes under the same law. Human beings too, are not above that law. If this one law is transgressed, we will have to pay the price. If we love ourselves, we ought to love our abode. The welfare of this earth, our abode, is our own welfare. The Sanskrit prayer: *Loka samasta sukhino bhavanthu* (Let there be welfare in the whole world) and the prayer: "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" are the same. When there is welfare in the whole world, I, who am a part of it, too will be fine. When God's will come into force on this earth, the kingdom of God, paradise, will be established here. In the words of Alfred Kohan, the Jewish Rabbi, 'Let all of us be as merciful to life; the merciful children of the merciful Father'.

### Worship

O God, who created the universe and everything in it, grant us the blessing to see nature with all its goodness and receive the products of nature with a grateful heart. Bless us, granting the mind to live, without in any way losing the universe, you have given us, and sharing the gifts of nature with everyone.

### Life Witness

Prepare a report regarding how to protect nature.

### Memorise

"Then the Lord looked upon the earth, and filled it with his good things. With all kinds of living beings he covered its surface, and into it they must return"

(Sirach 16:29-30).

### Questions

1. Trees are the means of nature's irrigation. Why?
2. Make clear the importance of the following in nature: atmosphere, water, soil, forest, tree and the birds.
3. Why is it said that nature is to be protected? Prove.



## THE LAST JUDGMENT AND THE LIFE AFTER DEATH

Life is a journey; a journey towards a destination. It is a pilgrimage, which begins from God and embraces eternity. It is an exodus towards the Promised Land. Human beings make this journey concentrating their mind on the promises made by God, the truth itself, the Son of God and the Spirit of Truth, to humankind. If God is truth, his word also is true. The aim of the human being, who marches forward with diligence to the heavenly Jerusalem, the holy city, where there is neither tears nor pain, is God and eternal life, which God has promised. When one walks through this path, one will have to encounter various realities.



### Death

Human beings have to die once; after that comes judgment (Hebrew 9:27). The thought about death is bitter to the human being (Sirach 41:1). All look at the inevitable death, the reality, with fear and apprehension. The reluctance to face death is manifest in all phases. But, death appears through the media as a means of escaping from the futility and anxieties of this worldly life. The increasing suicides, murders and accidental deaths make us look at death lightly. In a community, which does not accept human life with respect, death is depicted as a media banquet.

Even though death is painful, Christ's death offers us consolation. Jesus gives a new meaning to death by accepting it inspired by love and in submission to the will of God (Matthew 26:39). Death becomes meaningful when the last moments change into an experience of submitting to the will of God, as a journey to the father's house and as moments of satisfaction for fulfilling the mission, one is entrusted with. Sudden deaths and untimely departure become brighter through the death of Christ. How long we lived in this world is not what is important, but how we lived is what matters. God calls back from this world the person, who has fulfilled his/her mission. "Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live" (John 11:25). "Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life" (John 6:54). It is with this assurance that a Christian begins his last journey. Jesus subdued death, the last enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26). Through his death, Christ makes the abyss, the abode of the dead, the place of the presence of God. God defeats death through Jesus. One is able to find life in death through submitting oneself to God, the Lord of life. The bite of death is brought to nil when one dies in Christ, together with Christ.

### **The Last Judgment**

As a result of sin, there arose a state, where it is impossible to distinguish between right and wrong. This is a state, where one cannot judge another. But, Christ is the Lord of life, in whom there is no sin. As Saviour of the world, the full right to judge finally the actions and hearts of human beings belongs to Christ. "All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats" (Matthew 25:32).

The thought in human beings about the Last Judgment engenders holy fear of God, which will compel them to stand for the justice of the kingdom of God and will lead towards conversion.

There are the general and particular judgments. The general judgment will be held at the second coming of Christ. It is through the general judgment, the perfect meaning of the whole creation and the plan of salvation will be revealed. The Holy Bible teaches that each person accepts reward soon after his/her death. The parable of the poor Lazar (Luke 16:19-21) and the words Christ uttered to the good thief, hanging on the cross (Luke 23:43) are proofs of this. It is through the particular judgment that the true state of



each one's relationship with God and one's identification with Christ, are revealed ultimately.

### **The Resurrection of the Body**

"If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you" (Romans 8:11).

It is the hope that God, who created everything from nothingness, is able to resurrect them, that imparted strength to accept martyrdom to the seven children described in the Book of Maccabees (2 Maccabees 7). "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). Jesus who proclaimed thus, promises that he would raise those who believe in him and who eat his flesh and drink his blood on the last day (John 5:24-25, 6:40-54).

The resurrection of the body is a truth beyond the imagination and power of grasping of the human being. God, with his omnipotent power, through the power of the resurrection of Jesus, gives eternal life to our bodies, uniting again our bodies with our souls (The Catechism of the Universal Church 1997). The resurrected body will not have the material properties as we see today. That will be changed into glorious, transformed body.

### **Purification**

The Bible gives clear revelations about the purification after death: "Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny" (Matthew 5:26). The word reveals here the possibility of repaying until the last penny. The words of St. Paul: "The builder will be saved, but only as through fire" (1 Corinthians 3:15) refer to this purification. "But whosoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come" (Matthew 12:32). These words of the divine teacher reveal that there are certain sins that are forgiven in this world and certain others that will be forgiven in the world to come also.

It is one of the very important lessons of the Bible that holiness is necessary to see God. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God" (Matthew 5:8). "But nothing unclean will enter it, nor anyone who practises abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27).

Purity of heart is essential for seeing God. It is God who makes this purification. God, who begins this purification process at baptism, does not leave it half-way. God can continue this process as long as we live. Human life does not cease to exist with bodily death. "Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live" (John 11:25). God can purify a person, wherever he/she shall be, whether in the womb of the mother or in this world or even beyond this world.

Those who die in the grace and friendship of God, even though they are not fully purified, have won the assurance of eternal salvation. They ought to acquire purification in order to enter into heavenly bliss. This is what is meant by purgatory. Purification signifies a process, more than a place. Purification is a process which wipes out all that remain as hindrance against seeing God and makes us holy and worthy.

The Holy Scripture convinces us to pray for the dead. In 2 Maccabees 12: 43-45, it is described about raising funds to offer gifts and sacrifices for the dead and about their efficacy. In Acts of the Apostles 9:36-43, it is reported that St. Peter prayed near the dead body of a disciple, Tabitha at Jope.

In the service of the Holy Qurbano, just before Kukkilion, we pray for those who have departed from us in the following manner: "Let us remember the fathers, who have taught us, when they were alive, in order that we might become children of God, in our offerings and prayers. The Son of God will give them rest in the indestructible world, the kingdom of God. Lord, have mercy on us and help us".

Here, we ought to attend to one thing specially. The Church is demanding to pray for the faithful departed. At the same time, the Church teaches that after death, a radical conversion is not possible.

We can dedicate a person to the graceful love of God through the Holy Qurbano, prayers and alms-giving. Purgatory reminds us to help each other and of the capacity and obligation to entreat help from others.

## Heaven - Hell

"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9). Heaven

is the ultimate goal of the journey of life. We experience the fullness of glory and eternal life through seeing God face to face. Heaven is the perfect life together with the Holy Trinity. He who is with Christ is in heaven. The realisation of heaven takes place when one transacts in Christ and with Christ. Heaven is made perfect at the end of time.

Hell is the state that definitely separates us from the association with God and the Saints. Since human beings have the freedom to reject the love of God, there is possibility of going to hell. God does not predetermine anyone for hell. Eternal hell is the state of those who, through mortal sin, separate themselves deliberately from God and remain in that sinful state till the end. Both the Bible and the Church teach the existence of eternal hell.

"You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire" (Matthew 25:41). "There is sin that is mortal" (1 John 5:16). These words signify eternal damnation.

## Worship

O God, who won over death and resurrected, we understand that our life on this earth is a pilgrimage to reach heaven. Help us to take into account the realities we have to encounter within this world. Grant us the blessing that in the Last Judgment, being placed at your right-hand-side, we may see your shining face and say like Paul, the Apostle: "I have completed my race".

## Life Witness

Make a discussion, on the basis of Holy Scripture, about the life after death.

## Memorise

"I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die"  
(John 11:25-26).

## Questions

1. What is the new meaning, Jesus gives to death?
2. What is meant by Purgatory?
3. Describe the necessity of praying for the dead, basing on the Holy Scripture and tradition.







Ian hawbain wahtohain: 'aykano  
 d'ofhnan shbaqan l'hayobain. Lo  
 tha 'lan l'nesyuno. 'elo pason men  
 beesho. metul d' dilok hi malkuso  
 u-hailo u-theshbuhtho l'olam 'olmin.  
 Ameen

لَا تَقْصِبْ سَعْيَكَ : لَمْ يَكُنْ بِوَدِّكَ مِنْ  
 مَخْصِي لِسُخْتِي . هَلَا أَتَى لِنَعْمَتِهِ . أَلَا  
 قُرْبِي مِنْ خَيْرٍ . فَتَهَلَّا بِوَيْلِكَ مِنْ مَدْحِهِمْ  
 سُبُلًا مَعْرُوسَةً لِأَنَّكَ تُلْقِي . أَمَقِي :

**Hail Mary**

Shlom lekh maryam malyas  
 taybuso. Moran 'amekh.  
 M'barktho 'ath bneshe wam  
 barakh u-piro dabkarsekh moran  
 Yeshu mshiho. O morth maryam  
 bsultho 'emeh daloho. B'oy hlofain  
 hatoye. Hoshho wabkul'edon  
 wabsho'so dmawthan.  
 Ameen

هَلْ لَكَ مَرْحَمَةٌ مَدْحَتُهُ لِمَحْمَدٍ . مُدْنِي  
 تَقْدِيرٍ . مَدْحَتُهُ لِمَا حَلَّتْ . مَدْحَتُهُمْ أَوْ  
 قَاوُؤُ . وَدَحْنُهُ مِنْ مُدْنِي نَعْمَةً مَدْحَتُهُ . أَوْ  
 مُدْنِي مَدْحَتُهُ حَالَهُ لِمَا مَدْحَتُهُمْ . حَالَهُ  
 سَلَفِي سَتَلْتُهُ . أَوْ مَدْحَتُهُ لِمَا مَدْحَتُهُ  
 وَمَدْحَتُهُ . أَمَقِي :

