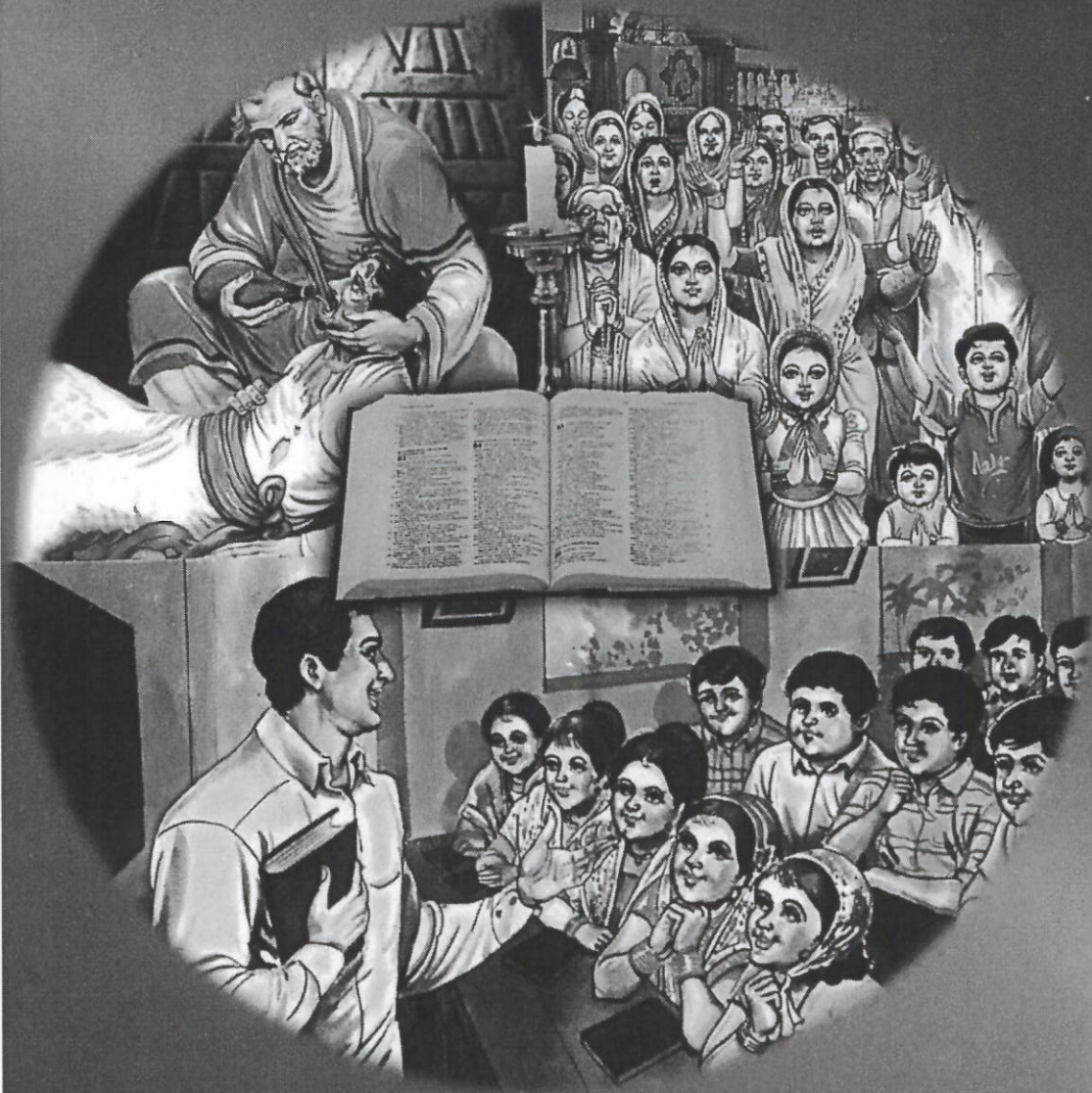


# THE PROCLAIMING COMMUNITY



MALANKARA CATHOLIC CATECHISM

10

**MALANKARA CATHOLIC CATECHISM**

**THE PROCLAIMING  
COMMUNITY**

**STANDARD - X**

M.C.E.S. Commission for Catechesis  
Santhinilayam, Tiruvalla - 689 101

Imprimatur : HIS BEATITUDE  
MORAN MOR BASELIOS CLEEMIS  
CATHOLICOS  
Major Archbishop

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Malankara Catholic Catechism - 10  
**The Proclaiming Community**

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## FOREWORD

The publication of the Malankara Catholic Catechism texts for the faith formation of our faithful is something unique. While thanking the Almighty Lord for His wonderful providence, I wholeheartedly congratulate all those who are involved in the faith formation of our Church at different levels in India and abroad.

We have received in Jesus Christ the fullness of God's self-communication revealed invisibly in the Old Testament and visibly in the New Testament right from the creation of the universe especially that of man. The story of revelation is the story of salvation. The core of catechism is this story of revelation and salvation. Through the Holy Spirit this story of salvation continues today in and through the Church. For us this salvation becomes a living experiential reality through the life and mission of the Malankara Catholic Church. Therefore the story of salvation and the patrimony or the venerable tradition of the Malankara Catholic Church become the fundamental sources for the Malankara Catechism. Thus our catechism is founded on the salvation history and the venerable patrimony of the Malankara Catholic Church.

I am really glad to announce that hereafter this Catechism text will be the official text for standard ten in the Malankara Catholic Church. I earnestly advise the faithful to receive this text and promote the faith formation of our Church. I am really confident that this attempt will have its momentum in the Extra Territorial Region (ETR) in India under the leadership of Most Rev. Jacob Mar Barnabas, the Apostolic Visitor and in the Region of North America and Europe under the leadership of Most Rev. Joseph Mar Thomas, the Apostolic Visitor.

I thank and appreciate all the initiatives taken in the ETR in India and the region in North America to have catechetical text in English for the use of our people over there. In this regard Rev. Dr. John Berchmans O.I.C., the former coordinator of ETR in India is specially remembered for his sincere effort. Through the present texts we intend to bring all our texts into a unified series. Our children will learn our Catholic faith through our venerable tradition and they will become true sons and daughters of our Church. It is my hope that our new generation take legitimate pride in their patrimony and place our Church and find their legitimate role in the universal Church.

On behalf of the Malankara Catholic Major Archiepiscopal Church, I joyfully express our sincere thanks to His Grace Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Tiruvalla who is the Chairman of our Catechetical Commission and all those who have collaborated with this noble effort especially Rev. Dr. Antony Kakkannatt, the Secretary of the Commission.

God bless you all.

+ Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis Catholicos  
Major Archbishop of the Malankara Catholic Church

# 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 Thykoottathil 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.

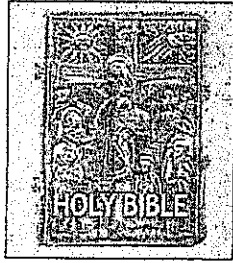
I pray that through this catechism text each child may be brought to and nourished in and confirmed in the faith of the Malankara Catholic Church and thus be able to know and experience Christ's love more profoundly.

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

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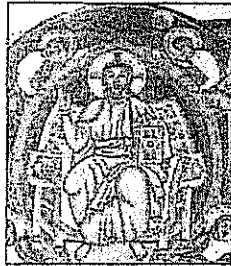
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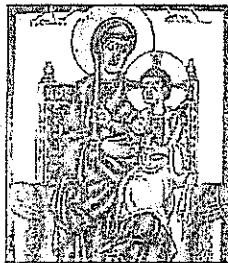
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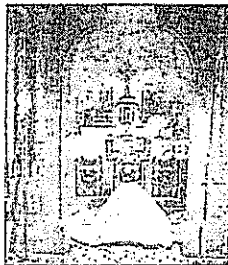
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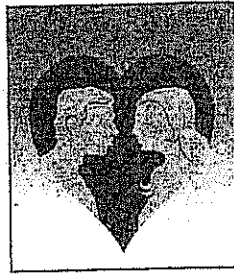
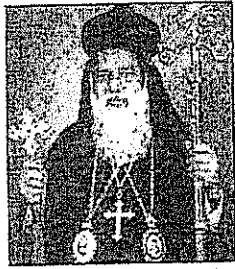
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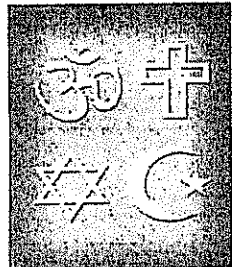
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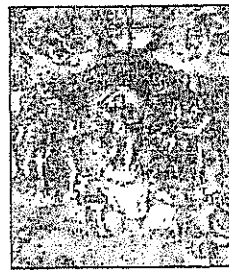
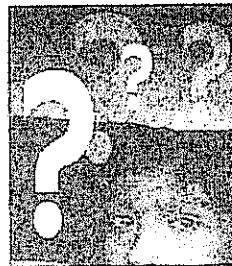
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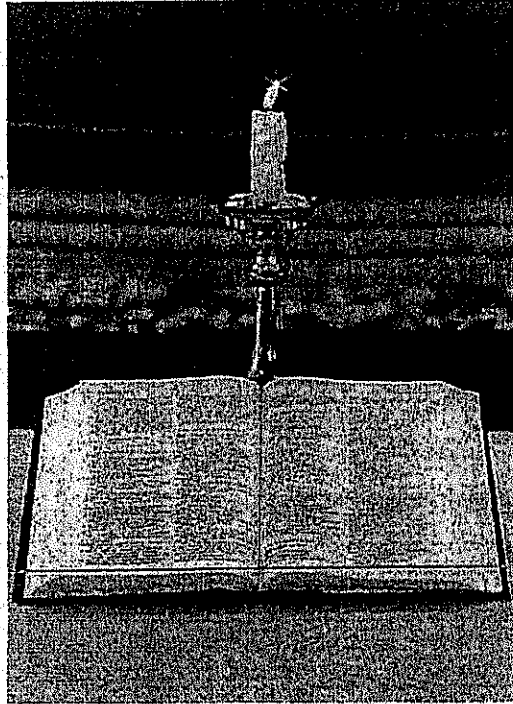
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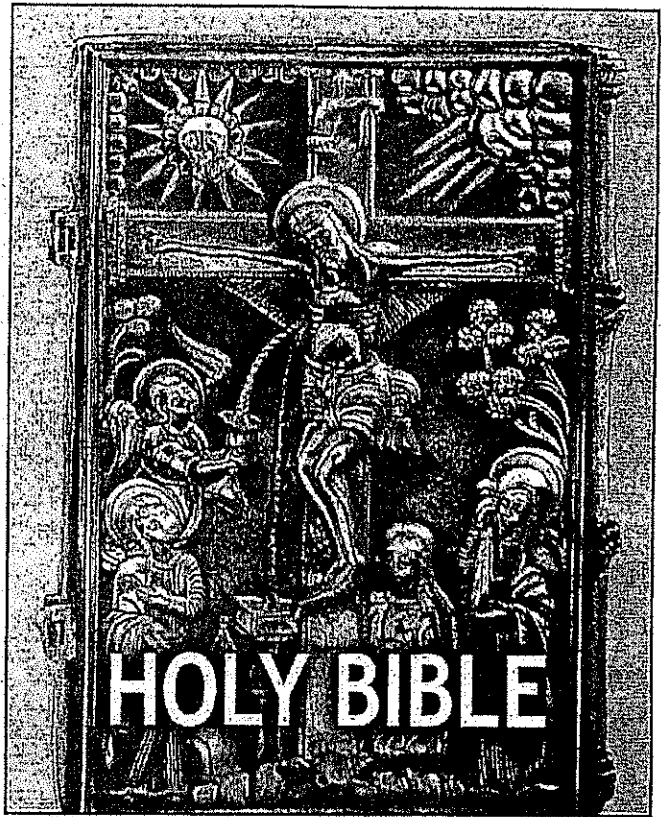


**HOLY BIBLE**



# THE HOLY BIBLE

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 Qurbano. The prayers and symbols of the Holy Qurbano 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

and 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 especially 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 Eucharist, 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.

### **4. 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. The Bible has depicted these truths in the form of a story and in symbolic language. The 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 Gamow, 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. His 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 Qurbono, 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 Qurbono, 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)

## 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 of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; sumptuous 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

us: "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 a riot in the city in the name of Christ".

In a letter written by Plinius Minor, the Roman governor of Bithynia (110-113 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 100 A.D. 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 to 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 is still 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

in Rome, began to calculate the era basing on the birth of Christ. Thus, history came into existence basing on Christ as A.D. and B.C.

### **3. Jesus Christ, Perfect Man and Perfect God**

We have understood that Jesus, who was born from the Virgin Mary of Nazareth, became part of history as perfect man. He became similar to men in everything except sin. Just as all other men, Jesus too was born of a woman, grew up in a family, worked with human hands, reasoned with human intellect and loved with the human heart. Jesus had all the natural qualities of the human body. Jesus had the human fatigue, disease and hunger. Jesus had all the feelings common to all men. We can see in the life of Jesus, joy, sorrow, anger, etc. At the end, Jesus experienced suffering on the cross and descended to the depth of bodily and mental torments and died like other human beings. We realize from all these that Jesus is perfect man.

When we say that Jesus is perfect man and that he is part of history, we should not forget the truth that he was perfect God. Before being born from the Virgin Mary of Nazareth, Jesus had an existence. Jesus, who was born in the fullness of time from Mary, was the Son, born from the Father from all eternity. In short, Jesus was the Son of God, the Word, the Second Person of the Trinity and the Messiah, whom Israel had expected. The Gospel according to John begins thus: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). "Thus, the only begotten Son, born of the Father, born from woman in the fullness of time, was known by the name Jesus. The Word became flesh and lived among us" (John 1:14; Philippians 2:6).

The conception of the Virgin through the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35), 'This is my Son, the Beloved', the proclamation of the Father at the time of baptism (Matthew 3: 17), the various miracles of the public life of Jesus, the authority of Jesus over death and the power over nature, the transfiguration of Jesus, 'you are the Messiah, the Son of the living God', the confession of Peter (Matthew 16:16), the confession of Thomas, the apostle looking at Jesus 'My Lord and my God' (John 20:28), the resurrection of Jesus and his appearances thereafter and his ascension, all prove that Jesus is true

God. The conviction of Jesus that he is the only begotten of the Father, the understanding that Jesus and the Father are one and the inseparable relationship between the Father and Jesus also indicate the divinity of Jesus.

### **In the Malankara Liturgy**

It is quite common in the Malankara Liturgy that when the divinity of Jesus is extolled, his humanity also is confessed. In the prayer of praise to Christ "Holy are you God" said at the beginning of the *Kauma* and at the beginning of the public service of the Holy Qurbono, while the sanctity of God Jesus, his power or strength, his immortality or eternity are extolled, at the same time, his humanity too is remembered and confessed by continuing to say: "who is crucified for us".

In this way, it is very common throughout in the Malankara Liturgy, prayers, which confess the divinity and humanity of Jesus: 'As the whole earth is filled with you, you dwelt in the womb of Mary for nine months. You, who are the creator of the universe, walked as a toddler while you protect every creature in your divine power, you sucked milk as a baby while you rule over the whole universe with your might, you lay down in the humble manger like a helpless baby' (*Yaldo* – Night, 1<sup>st</sup> *Kaumo* – Sedro).

We recite in the prayer said in the beginning of the public service of the Holy Qurbono, 'He who by nature is immortal...' that Jesus is the Son of God, who became man, that he is the Messiah, that he is the only begotten Son of the Father, Word and King, that he is the Saviour of humankind, that he is God, together with his Father and that he is one in the Trinity.

### **4. Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Deliverer**

The angel of God came near the Virgin Mary of Nazareth and said: "You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus" (Luke 1:31). The meaning of the word Jesus is saviour. The messenger of the Lord said thus about the birth of Jesus: "I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). When Jesus was presented in the temple, Simeon confessed the truth that Jesus is the Saviour

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

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*.

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 Qurbono, 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 Qurbono. The public service of the Qurbono 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 5 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

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

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

We firmly believe that Mary, who perfectly cooperated with the Son of  
d, and was the Mother of God assumed into heaven, would pray to God  
us always. In the *Boutho* (petition), which we sing at the end of the  
*kkilion* in honour of Mary, this belief is quite evident. 'Jesus, Lord, by  
blessing of your cross and through the prayers of your mother, remove  
m us all punishments of sin and the wrath of God'. We can believe that  
ry has become the Mother of all, who believed in Jesus, because Jesus  
ered her standing at the foot of the cross on Calvary, to his disciple as  
ther. Just as the intercession of the mother has become a blessing for  
t family at the marriage-banquet at Cana, we believe that even today she  
ll intercede for us to her divine Son in our needs.

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

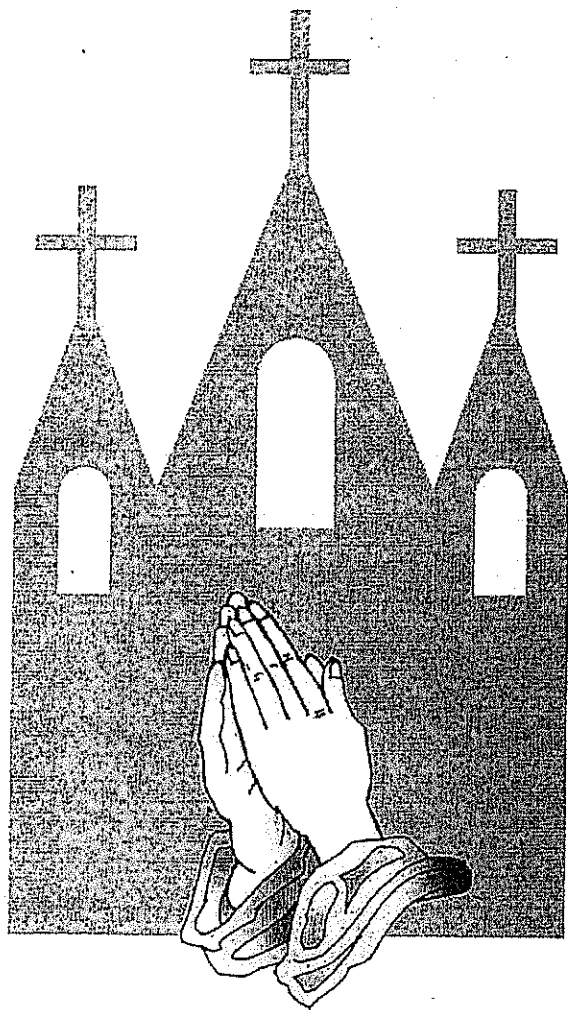
### Memorise

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?

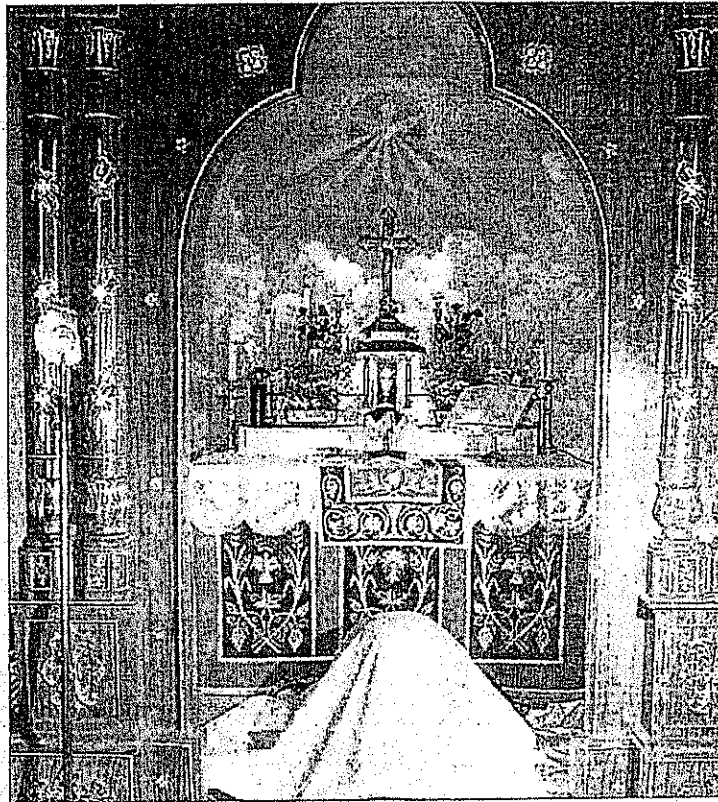
**PART - II**



**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).

## 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 Qurbano. This part is didactic. The Service of the Word of the Holy Qurbano 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 Qurbano: 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 *Kurieeleison*. 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.

## 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 Qurbono. 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 Qurbono 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 Qurbano 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 Qurbano 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 Qurbono 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)

## 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?

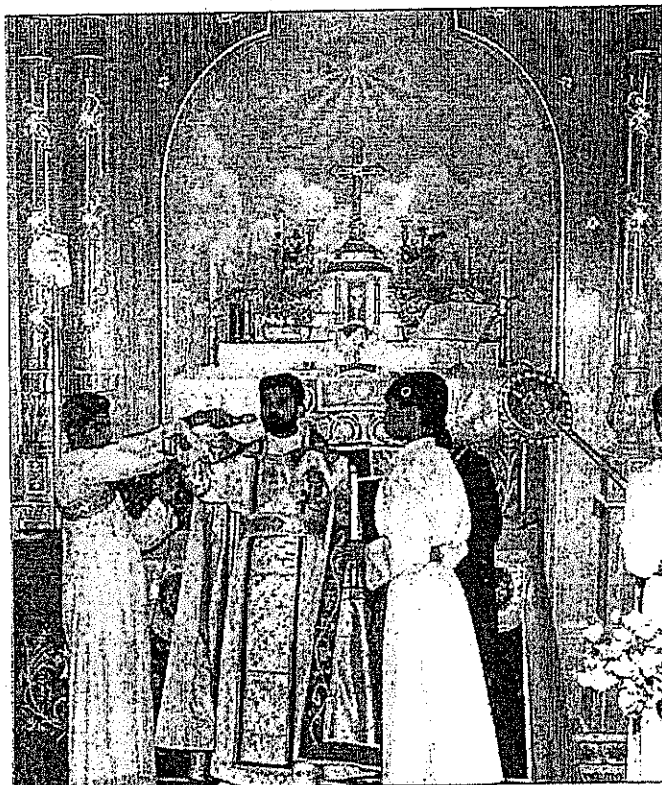
# HOLY QURBONO – SACRIFICIAL BANQUET

The part from the Service of the Fraction up to 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 your 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?

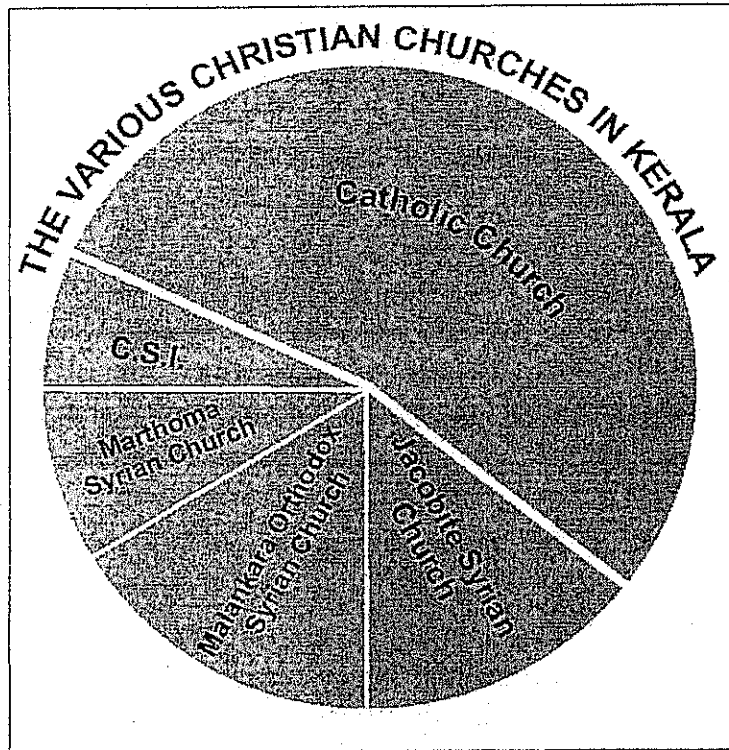
PART - III



CHURCH HISTORY

# THE VARIOUS CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN KERALA

Thomas apostle, the disciple of Christ, came to Kerala in 52 A.D. and reached 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 Iazranikal*'. 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.

### **. 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.

### **) 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 *Puthenkoor* group left communion with the Catholic Church and accepted communion with the Antiochene Jacobite Church. Several attempts were made to bring the *Puthenkoor* 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 *Puthenkoor* 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 Methany. 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 653. 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 *Puthenkoor* 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 a bishop the leader of the *Puthenkoor* 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 *Puthenkoor* 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 *Puthenloor* 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 *Puthenloor* 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 *Puthenloor* community part of the Antiochene Jacobite Church. But a group of the Jacobites over here was not interested either to bring the *Puthenloor* 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 Diavannasios 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 Qurbono 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 20th 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 *Puthenkoor* 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 *Puthenkoor* 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 *Puthenkoor* 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 viewpoint 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>