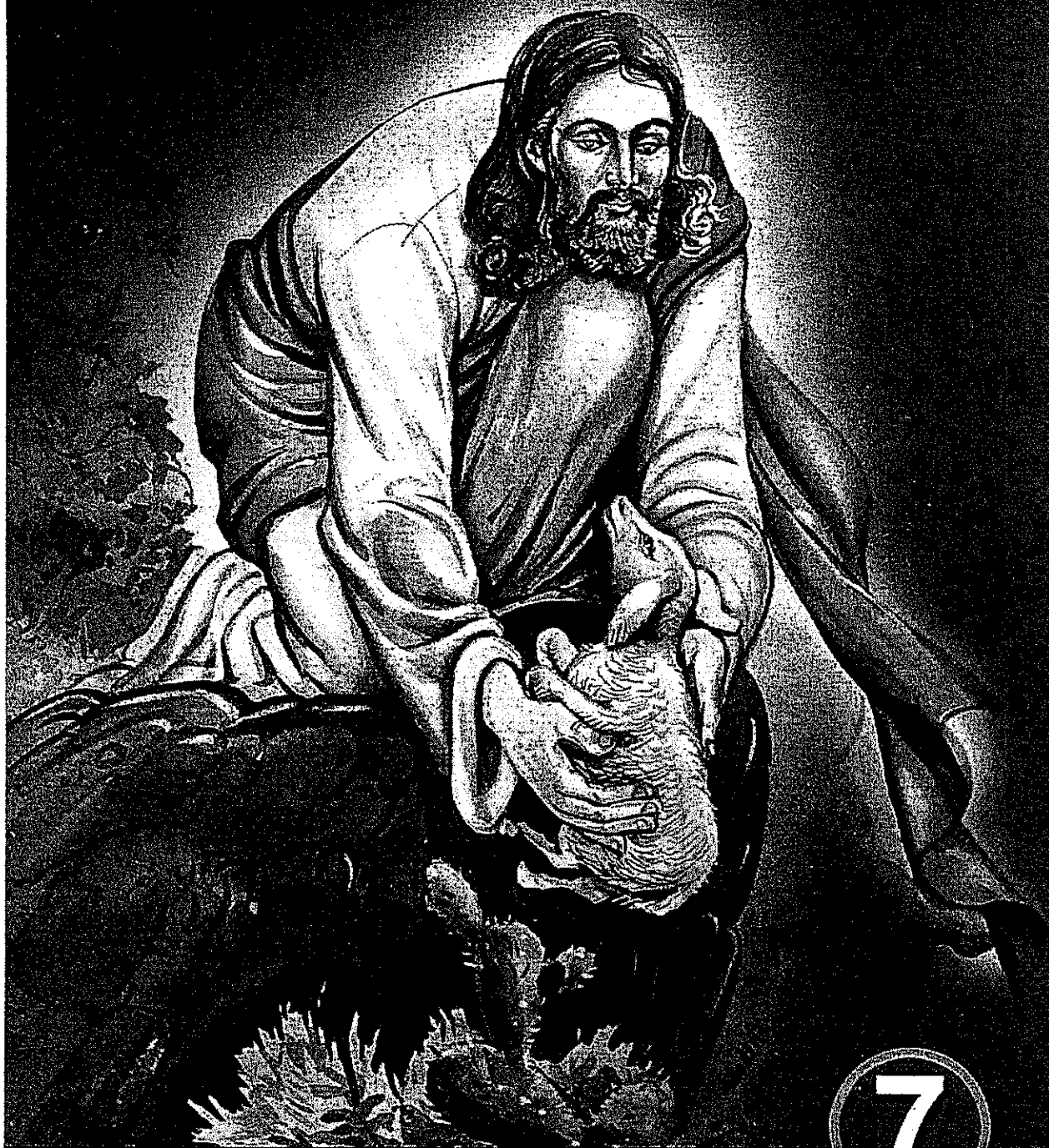


# GOD WHO SAVES



MALANKARA CATHOLIC CATECHISM





**MALANKARA CATHOLIC CATECHISM**

**GOD WHO SAVES**

**STANDARD - VII**

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

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MORAN MOR CYRIL BASELIOS CATHOLICOS  
Major Archbishop

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**GOD WHO SAVES**

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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 Cyril Baselios, 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 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. Philip Chempakasserry, Rev. Dr. Kurian Valuparampil, Rev. Dr. Chacko Aerath O.L.C., Rev. Dr. Thomas Kanjiramukalil, Rev. Dr. Eldho Puthenkandathil, Rev. Dr. Kuriakose Thadathil and Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Chediath. 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 and Rev. Fr. Varghese Valikodath. 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



# 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.

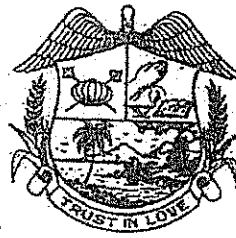
Catechism should never become an intellectual pursuit. True Catechesis should lead the pupil to a life of worship and witness. Catechesis should attempt to lead, nurture and confirm the pupil in the life of faith of the Church to which he or she belongs. Thus the catechumen will be able to know and experience 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.

In classes one to four, we prepared the children to think of the divine mysteries of salvation history and to thank God with utmost reverence. Our effort in classes five to seven is to progressively make the students confront revealed truth. In these classes they learn about God successively as Creator, Protector and Redeemer beginning with the creation of the universe and reaching the redemptive life of Jesus.

In classes five and six we met with the mysteries of revelation beginning with Creation and extending to the birth of Christ. Class seven is about God who saves. The contents of the first part include the redemptive events from the incarnation of Son of God up to the sending of the Holy Spirit. The second part deals with the feasts throughout the year commemorating the main redemptive works of Christ and relevant liturgical matters. The third part is the history of the Church in India between the Synod of Diamper and Reunion. The fourth part is about different vocations and on compassion for the poor.

HIS BEATITUDE  
MORAN MOR CYRIL BASELIOS CATHOLICOS

Major Archbishop  
Major Archbishop's House  
Trivandrum - 695 004  
Kerala, India



## FOREWORD

We praise the Lord for granting us His Grace to bring out a catechism text of our own for our Malankara Catholic Church. Indeed it is a unique moment in which a long cherished dream of the Church finds accomplishment. Let us be truly thankful to the Lord for these great blessings.

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 experimental 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 Church.

I pray that this Catechism becomes a new force in the growth of the Malankara Catholic Church and I earnestly advise the faithful to receive this catechism and promote the progress of the Church.

My thoughts particularly are turned towards our faithful outside the canonical ecclesiastical territory, which we call for convenience Extra-Territorial Region (ETR). I appreciate the endeavour of Rev. Dr. John Berchmans OIC, the Co-ordinator of the ETR in India for the English catechism books he has prepared. 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 in our Church and find their legitimate role in the universal Church. We know that the strength of our faithful is the strength of our local and universal Church.

Once again I express our sincere appreciation for this unique achievement. Our sincere thanks is due to Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos, the Chairman of our Catechetical Commission and Rev. Dr. Antony Kakkanatt, the Secretary of the Commission. God bless them and all those who have collaborated with them in this noble mission.

*+ Moran Baslios*

MORAN MOR CYRIL BASELIOS CATHOLICOS  
Major Archbishop

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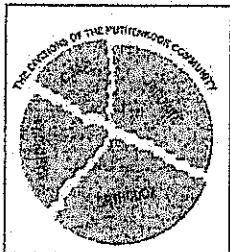
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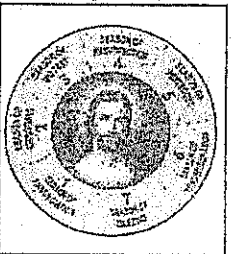
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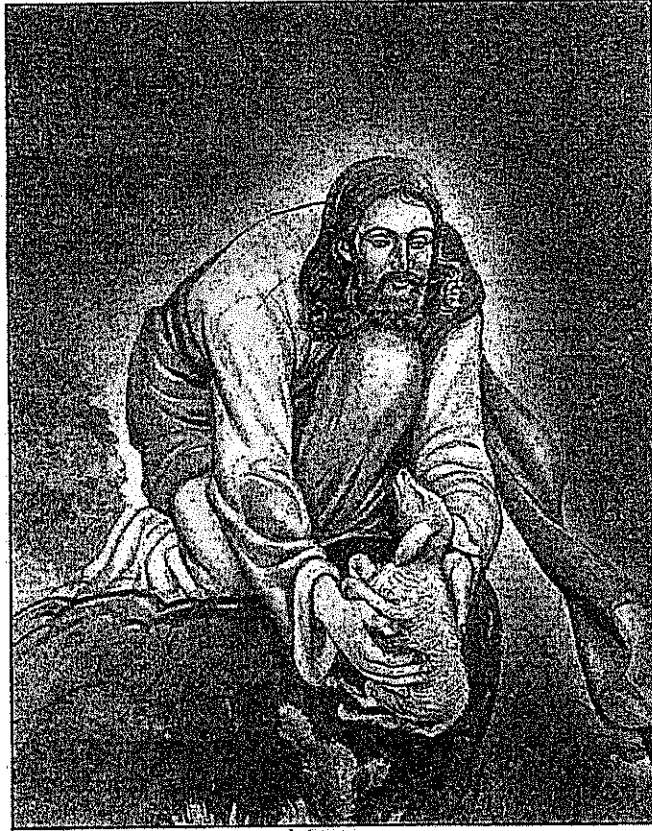


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# THE WORD BECAME FLESH

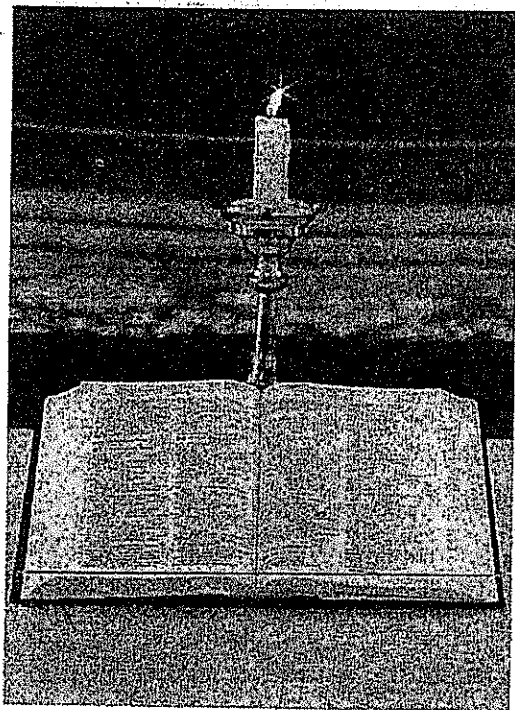
Man, the creature of God alienated himself from God through sin. God, the Father desired to save mankind, which has been ruined by sin. For that, he chose Israel as his own people. In order that all might receive salvation, God the Father willed to send his only Begotten Son to the world. God revealed his promise to the world through Isaiah, the prophet: **“The young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel”** (Isaiah 7:14). God revealed through Micah, the prophet that the place of birth of the coming Messiah would be Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Thus God prepared the people of the Old Testament through the prophets for the coming of the Saviour.



## The Annunciation

We see a nation all through the Old Testament waiting with expectation for the coming of the Saviour. Once, angel Gabriel was sent to Mary at Nazareth, a city in Galilee, a virgin, betrothed to Joseph. The angel informed her the message that God had chosen Mary to be the mother of the Saviour. The message of the angel of God was like this: **“Greetings, favoured one! Lord is with you”**; the angel continued, **“Do not be afraid, Mary, for**

## **PART - I**



# **HOLY BIBLE**

you have found favour with God. And now, 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. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end” (Luke 1:30-33). When the angel had finished saying this, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your



word”, so saying Mary submitted herself completely to the will of God. This information about the birth of Jesus is called the Annunciation.

## The Birth of Jesus

In those days a decree went out from Augustus Caesar that the people of the Roman Empire should be registered. Joseph, the husband of Mary, belonged to the house and family of David. Hence Joseph went, from the town of Nazareth to Bethlehem, the city of David, in Judea, to be registered. Joseph journeyed together with Mary, who was pregnant. Joseph and Mary reached Bethlehem, but they did not get place in the inn. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped the baby in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger.

In the fields of that region, there were shepherds keeping watch over their flock by night. The angels came to the shepherds with the news of the birth of Jesus, the Saviour of the world. The glory of the Lord shone over them. Informing the good news of joy to all people the angels sang thus: **“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours”** (Luke 2:14). When the angels had gone into heaven, the shepherds went and saw Joseph and Mary and the child lying in the manger. The shepherds returned glorifying God and made known what they had seen and had been told to them about the child (Luke 2:8-20).

When Jesus was born, the wise men from the East came to Jerusalem to see him. Because they saw his star in the East, they came to Jerusalem to adore Jesus. Having understood that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, they went there, saw child Jesus and offered their gifts.

### **Jesus is presented in the Temple**

The child was circumcised on the eighth day according to the Jewish law. His parents gave him the name 'Jesus' as suggested by the angel. On the 40<sup>th</sup> day, when the period of the purification was completed, Jesus was presented in the temple of Jerusalem. The parents of Jesus did thus, because it was written in the law of the Lord: 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord and a pair of turtle doves or two pigeons shall be offered as sacrifice' (Luke 2:21-24). Simeon, the righteous, the devout one of God and the one looking forward to the consolation of Israel, took Jesus, who was brought to the temple to do what was customary under the law, in his arms and being led by the Holy Spirit proclaimed thus: **"My eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel"** (Luke 2:30-32). Thus, Simeon proclaimed the truth that Jesus is the Saviour. Mary treasured in her heart everything she heard about Jesus.

### **The Childhood of Jesus**

As a boy when Jesus went for the feast into the temple at Jerusalem at the age of 12, he revealed his knowledge of God. **"Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour"** (Luke 2:52).

Before starting the public life, Jesus stayed in Nazareth for thirty years. He helped his parents in everything and lived in obedience to them.

The Lord Son incarnated in accordance with the will of God, the Father. From the beginning, the Lord Son, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity was with the Father. John, the apostle, introduces Jesus as the Word of God: **"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"** (John 1:1). It is this 'Word', who was born as

man on earth, Jesus Christ. John says thus about the incarnation: “**And the Word became flesh and lived among us**” (John 1:14).

## Worship

Christmas (*Yaldo*) is the day in which we celebrate the feast of the birth of our Lord. In the prayers of the Service of Christmas, the description of the fulfilment of the prophecies concerning the Messiah, are evident. The Word of God was born as man in the manger. The heavenly angels informed this glad news to the shepherds. The wise men and the shepherds visited Jesus and adored him. We remember in the hymn of the Holy Qurbano:

(Thathan than vachanam...)

“The Word of God, indeed, is God –  
Halleluiah

Wonderful! He came on earth – Kurieleison  
Unto the shepherds, this glad news – Hall...  
The heavenly splendour has given – Kuri...  
Son of God in the manger – Hall...  
Was wrapped well with swaddling clothes –  
Kuri...  
Unto the wise men, this Gospel – Hall...

Thanks to God! The star gave it – Kur...  
With the gifts and offerings – Hall...  
They had come to Bethlehem – Kuri...”

The Church commemorates all the Salvific events related to the birth of Jesus through the prayers of Christmas Eve, *Soutoro* and Night and also through Christmas Services, especially ‘the Service of the Light’.

## Life Witness

Jesus lived in obedience to his parents in his childhood and grew up in the grace of God. Similarly, let us also pay respect to our parents and teachers and live in obedience to them.

### Memorise

“And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth”

(John 1:14)

## Questions

1. Explain what ‘Annunciation’ is.
2. How was the birth of Jesus?
3. Describe the Presentation of Jesus in the temple.



# THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

The message of God came to John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus, in the wilderness. Following that, he went into all the regions around Jordan proclaiming the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The mission of John was to prepare the people for the coming of Jesus, the Saviour of the world. **“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight’”** (Luke 3:4). It was about John the



Baptist that Isaiah, the prophet, said these words. John summoned the people for conversion and baptized them with water.

## John gives Baptism

Having heard the preaching of John, ‘people of Jerusalem and all Judea went to him. They confessed their sins and received baptism from him in river Jordan’ (Matthew 3:5-6). John understood that the baptism he gave with water was for conversion. Therefore John witnessed about Jesus thus: **“I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his**

**sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire"** (Matthew 3:11).

### **The Baptism of Jesus**

When John the Baptist was giving baptism to the people, Jesus came towards him to receive baptism from him. The fact that one, who was greater than he, came towards him for baptism, was not acceptable to John. Jesus said: **"Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfil all righteousness"** (Matthew 3:15). John baptized Jesus as he wanted.

### **Baptism and the Holy Trinity**

Soon after baptism, Jesus came out of water. Then heaven was opened. The Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove. There was a voice from heaven saying: **"This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased"** (Matthew 3:17). The Holy Trinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit revealed itself on the occasion of the baptism of Jesus. Through the voice from heaven, the Father and through the very presence, the Son and in the form of the dove, the Holy Spirit, revealed themselves.

### **The Temptation in the Wilderness**

Jesus began his public life with his baptism. The mission of Jesus was to redeem the world bound by the state of sin and thereby to reconcile men with God. As a preparation for this Jesus received baptism and spent forty days and forty nights in the wilderness in prayer and fast. Satan as tempter appeared before Jesus who was immersed in prayer. Satan presented before Jesus the basic needs and desires of men one by one as temptation.

When Jesus was hungry, Satan approached him and said: **"If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread"**. Jesus answered: **"One does not live by bread alone, but also with the word of God"**. Then the devil took him to the holy city, placed him on the pinnacle of the temple and said thus: **"If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down"**. Jesus defeated this temptation for fame also saying: **"Do not put the Lord, your God to the test"**. The devil tried a third time in order to defeat Jesus. The devil took Jesus to a very high mountain. He showed Jesus all the kingdoms

of the world and their splendour. The devil said to Jesus: "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me". Then, using his power over the devil Jesus said: **"Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him'"**. Then the devil left him. The angels came and waited on him (Matthew 4:1-11). Thus the Lord defeated the temptations of licentiousness, fame, authority and wealth.

After the temptations in the wilderness, Jesus began his mission. He went all around Galilee proclaiming the message of the kingdom of God.

## Worship

We commemorate in the Service of *Denho*, John giving baptism at Jordan and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus in the form of a dove:

(Kookkoyo)

"The Son of God was going for baptism in Jordan

Without fire and firewood did the water become warm

At that time John- came there as a priest

And on the Lord's head – he placed his right hand

Just as a dove, the Holy Ghost, came down at that time

And he did hover over the waters of Jordan

Halleluiah o Halleluiah".

The Church commemorates the baptism of Jesus through the service of the blessing of water of the feast of *Denho*.

## Life Witness

After his baptism Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit and he conquered the temptations of the devil. Let us also grow in the Holy Spirit and try to conquer the temptations of our daily life.

### Memorise

"It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God'"

(Matthew 4:4)

## Questions

1. What was the mission of John the Baptist?
2. How did John bear witness about Jesus?
3. How did the Holy Trinity reveal itself at the time of the baptism of Jesus?
4. Describe the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness.

# THE PROCLAMATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

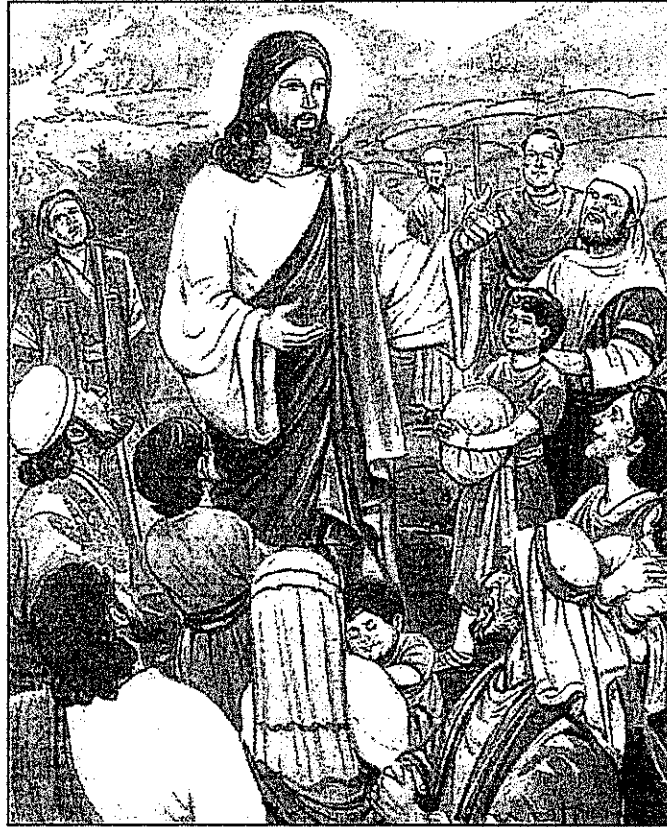
The core of the preaching of Jesus is the 'Kingdom of God'. He begins his mission thus: **"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news"** (Mark 1:15). All the preaching and the works of the life of Jesus are connected with the kingdom of God.

## What is the Kingdom of God?

The state where God reigns is the kingdom of God. The subjects are the children of God. The laws here are of God. This is the state, where the authority of God is put into practice, and is recognized and experienced. Justice, love, truth etc., are the virtues that lead to the kingdom of God. All should come into the state of the kingdom of God. Then only the kingdom of God would be perfect. The word that is used in the Gospel according to Matthew, instead of the kingdom of God, is 'the kingdom of heaven'.

## Jesus and the Kingdom of God

It is not possible to see the kingdom of God and Jesus separately. The kingdom of God came into being with the birth of Jesus. The personality of Jesus and his works are connected with the kingdom of God. The very



presence of Jesus is the proof that God rules. It is through establishing relationship with Jesus that one enters into the kingdom of God, that is, the acceptance of the discipleship of Jesus. Those who are humble like children are able to enter into the kingdom of God.

## **The Parables and the Kingdom of God**

Jesus narrated parables in order to explain the different aspects of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone, who sows good seed in the field. While everybody sleeps, an enemy comes and sows weeds among the wheat. The owner of the field permits the weeds to grow along with the wheat. This means that God protects the evil people along with good. But this protection is temporary. For, at the time of harvest, the master orders to collect the weeds and burn them. In the same way it will happen at the end of the world (Matthew 13:24-30). Thus Jesus taught that the kingdom of God includes the good and the bad and that the good ones will obtain the kingdom of heaven and the bad ones, hell.

The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field (Matthew 13:44). When someone finds it, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Because, he understands that that treasure is more valuable than all his possessions. Similarly, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant who finds a pearl of great value. He is prepared to sell all that he has in order to own it. Thus the Lord introduced the kingdom of God as a great treasure.

“The kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matthew 13:47-50). Thus, Jesus taught that it is the good men, who would inherit the kingdom of God.

The sower, who sows good seed, the treasure hidden in the field, the pearl merchant and the fisherman, who casts net in the sea were all familiar things during the time of Jesus to the ordinary people of that country. The good seed and weed, good and bad fish, mean those who live in accordance



with the laws of the kingdom of God and those who do not pay heed to the laws of God. The good and the bad equally live under the providence of God until the end of age. But, at the second coming of Jesus, each one will receive reward from the Lord according to one's mode of life. Jesus had clearly revealed that the children of the kingdom of God should receive eternal life and the evil men, unending hell.

The miracles of Jesus were signs of the establishment of the kingdom of God. Jesus teaches that the kingdom of God is for those who believe in him and for those who listen to his words. We ought to become worthy of the kingdom of God and of the eternal life, accepting Jesus and his advices. All the teachings and works of Jesus were related to the kingdom of God.

### Worship

The kingdom of heaven is likened to a wedding feast, which a person has prepared. When those who were invited rejected, he invited men from every place for the banquet. At the time of the banquet the master having noticed a man sitting in the wedding hall without the wedding robe, got angry and ordered him to be expelled. We remember this parable in the prayer of the Third Hour of Tuesday in *S'himo*:

(Swarga rajyam virunninnai...)

"The kingdom of heaven

Is like a banquet

To which the friends were called;

The invitees did one and all reject

And did not enjoy.

The master then sent servants

And they - called all the races,

From all quarters did they come

And the - wedding hall was full.

The master saw then there one without -  
the wedding robe

At once he ordered that he be thrown out  
Into the pitch darkness. 'Barekmor'.

### Life Witness

The kingdom of God is the experience being together with Jesus. Let us also accept the call of Jesus to enter the kingdom of God through repentance and grow in the experiences of the kingdom of God.

#### Memorise

"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom  
of God has come near; repent, and  
believe in the good news".

(Mark 1:15)

### Questions

1. What is the kingdom of God? Explain.
2. What is the relationship between Jesus and the kingdom of God?
3. 'The kingdom of God is like the treasure hidden in the field'. Explain.

# THE SERMON OF JESUS ON THE MOUNT

The Sermon on the Mount is the part, where Jesus presents at length the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Chapters five, six and seven of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, are known under the name 'Sermon on the Mount'. The Sermon on the Mount is qualified as the 'code of law' of the followers of Christ. The mode of life of the disciples of Christ is treated here. The gist of the Sermon on the Mount is the message of the kingdom of God. Jesus climbed on a mountain and having seated there, taught. The instructions of Jesus on the Mountain, is the Sermon on the Mount.



## The Eight Beatitudes

The Eight Beatitudes are a collection of the first eight sentences, which we see in the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus makes clear through these eight beatitudes, the blessedness of the disciples of Christ, which they receive in their lives. Jesus teaches us through these beatitudes chiefly the virtues such as, faith, hope, love, compassion, justice and holiness. The teachings of Jesus imparted consolation to men who were vexed by the difficulties of life. Jesus proclaims as blessings things which man considers as curses. The eight beatitudes reveal the nature of the kingdom

of God to come. The saints and great men kept the Sermon on the Mount as law of life.

The poor in spirit are those who are conscious that they are poor before God. They rely on God in all their needs. The poor in spirit are of four kinds:

- Having wealth, those who live in accordance with the suggestions of the Holy Spirit. This type of people does not desire to earn anything against justice and propriety or to keep in possession anything through sinful means.
- Those who really experience poverty, but accept the same with their mind. These patiently suffer their difficulties and worries and do service to God in their circumstances.
- Those who willingly and joyfully embrace poverty in order to live more closely to Christ. These are those who practise asceticism.
- Those who have the true spirit of poverty. These love God above all.

‘Those who mourn shall be comforted’. God will change their mourning into joy. Those who weep for Jesus will be comforted. The meek are those who suffer violence with equanimity, and suffer persecution like the Messiah. Jesus will give comfort to those who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens. ‘To inherit the earth’ means ‘to possess the kingdom of God’. Those who hunger after justice are those who try to practise justice. We see in the Sermon on the Mount that people should be merciful. To the merciful, the merciful God will show mercy. The pure in heart means pure conscience. Those having pure heart are those who maintain fidelity without showing fraud to God or to men. The internal purity is what is required for seeing God. The disciples of Christ should be able to establish peace and to offer good wishes. It is the mission of the disciples of Christ to stand firm for peace. The peacemakers are the children of God. The kingdom of God belongs to those who suffer persecution for the sake of justice or for the reason that they belong to Christ. Those who are persecuted and are tortured have the right to rejoice and be glad. Those who suffer more, will receive greater reward. Jesus introduces these benefits through the eight beatitudes. Jesus teaches the great truth that those who live in distress are blessed.

## The Exhortation of Jesus

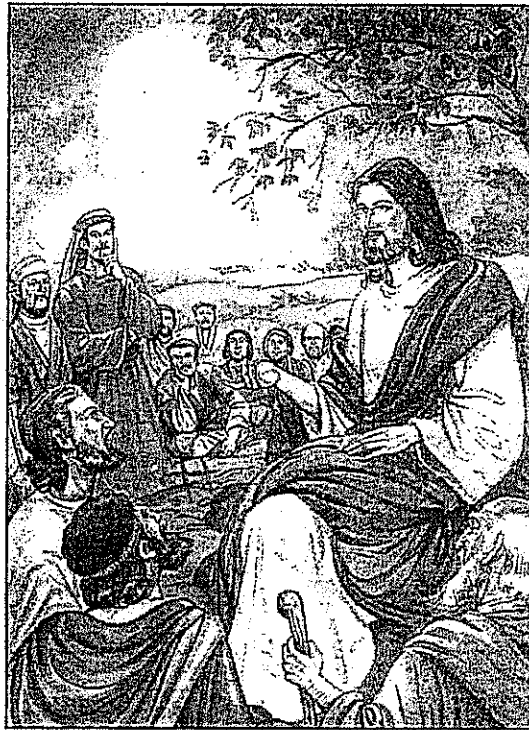
Chapters five, six and seven of the Gospel according to St. Matthew are exhortatory. For the laws, regulations and virtues, which are to be observed in every sphere of human life are treated here. Jesus, who is the completion of the Old Covenant, gave new meaning to the laws of Moses, practised among the Jews. Through that Jesus was not abolishing the law but was completing the same.

## The Salt of the Earth and the Light of the World

The disciples of Christ should be free from fault in everything. For, they are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Salt makes food tasty; and preserves from decay. Just as salt gives taste to food, the disciples of Christ should fulfil the mission of salt. The followers of Christ have to live giving the taste of love and joy to others. The disciples have the task of enlightening the world also. Jesus is the light that illumines the people, who are in darkness. His disciples too should be light to others. Just as the lamp is lit and placed on the stand gives light to all, the reputation of those who do good deeds should spread all around. Thus, every body should glorify God (Matthew 5:13-16).

## Fraternal Love

Over the commandment of Moses, namely, whoever murders his brother shall be liable to judgement, Jesus taught; he who gets angry with a brother is liable to judgement. **“When you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you,**



**leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift” (Matthew 5:23-24).**

We ought to help those who ask help from us irrespective of friend or foe. As the disciples of the Lord, who do good without asking, we also should do good to others, more than what is asked for. Through this, we will be able to love our enemies sincerely. For God makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.

We ought to be perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48). We should not give publicity to the helps we render to others. Our heavenly Father sees every help we do in secret. He will give us reward. In this manner we increase our investment in heaven.

Jesus criticized severely those who attribute evil against others. First correct one's own faults and mistakes. Only those who are aware of their own faults can forgive the faults of others and suffer them. Jesus taught thus about fraternal love.

### **Rely on Divine Providence**

Jesus taught through the Sermon on the Mount that all should rely on the providence of God. It is God, who created all. Man is the crown of creation. Hence, Jesus taught that God would protect man in all things (Matthew 6:25-34)

### **The True Disciple**

It demands great sacrifice to be the true disciple. Jesus says: **“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven”** (Matthew 7:21). The true disciples are those who build strong house on the foundation of Jesus. If the foundation is built on rock, the strong wind, flood and rain will not destroy the house. If we build our house on Jesus, the strong foundation, hostile circumstances, persecutions and insults, whatever they be, will not shake our faith and love in Jesus.



## Worship

Basing on the Sermon of Jesus on the Mount, we sing in the Night prayer of Wednesday thus:

(Satya snehikal Neetishtar...)

"How beautiful are the words

The Lord has said in his Gospel!

Those enthusiasts, who did love him, are indeed blessed

Blessed are the poor in Spirit, because they shall possess heaven

Blessed also those who mourn, for they shall be comforted;

The Martyrs and the Confessors

And those who suffer are blessed;

On account of their sufferings

They shall inherit the kingdom

And also life eternal, they shall receive".

## Life Witness

Jesus taught us in the Sermon on the Mount about the dispositions of the mind, we have to adopt in our daily life. Let us love our brethren, rely on the providence of God and work as salt of the earth and light of the world.

## Memorise

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy

Blessed are the pure in spirit, for they will see God

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God

Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven

(Sunday Morning Prayer)

## Questions

1. What does Jesus teach us through the Eight Beatitudes?
2. What is meant by, 'the poor in spirit'?
3. Explain the proposition, 'you are the salt of the earth'.
4. What does Jesus teach about Fraternal Love?
5. Who is a true disciple?

# THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

During his public life, Jesus went around all over Judea and proclaimed the kingdom of God. Jesus always proclaimed the word of God to the people, who approached him. The noble things Jesus did and the miracles and signs he wrought were helpful for the establishment of the kingdom of God. The miracles of Jesus touch all the areas of life. Jesus worked miracles by curing the sick, raising the dead, subduing the powers of nature and driving out unclean spirits. The power and work of the



creator over the creatures are shown in miracles. The extraordinary events, which show either the work of God or his revelation, are called miracles.

Jesus did not do miracles for his own glory. But, for the glory of the name of God or for divine witness or to accomplish the needs of those who confided in him. The miracles of Jesus were capable of giving God-experience.

## **Miracles in the Gospels**

All four Evangelists describe the miracles of Jesus. St. John uses the word sign instead of miracle. The other Evangelists usually use the word miracle. The works of Jesus are the works of the Father. Miracles are the signs of the kingdom of God. The one miracle, all the Evangelists deal with is the event of Jesus multiplying the five loaves of bread.

The miracles of Jesus could be divided into four groups: relating to nature, curing the sick, driving out unclean spirits and raising the dead.

### **Miracles in Nature**

Jesus had power over nature. We see Jesus controlling the powers of nature in the miracle of stilling the storm (Matthew 8:23-27). On another occasion Jesus walked over the sea (Matthew 14:24-33). The following are a few miracles Jesus worked on nature: Changing water into wine (John 2:1-11), Multiplication of bread (Matthew 15:32-39), etc.

### **Curing the Sick**

There are several miracles of curing the sick in the Gospels. Matthew, the apostle, bears witness to Jesus curing the sick: **"They brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them"** (Matthew 4:24). Special instances of Jesus curing the sick also could be seen in the Gospel. Once when Jesus was in the city, a leper pleaded unto him: **"Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean"**. Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him and said: **"I do choose. Be made clean"**. Immediately the leprosy left him (Luke 5:12-13). The cure of the woman, who had haemorrhage, was very much note-worthy. When she touched the fringe of his clothes with faith, power went out of Jesus and she got cured of her disease (Luke 8:43-48). On another occasion, Jesus cured two blind men, who came after him crying out: **"Have mercy on us, Son of David"** (Matthew 9:27-31). Thus, Jesus gave cure to many.

### **Casting out Satan**

Jesus reveals through miracles that power was given to him over Satan too. Jesus cured a dumb man, who was possessed by devil (Luke 11:14). Jesus cast out evil spirits from two demoniacs, who came out from tombs of the country of the Gadarenes (Matthew 8:28-34). Besides these, Jesus had cast out devils from many others.

### **Raising the Dead**

By raising the dead Jesus shows that he is the author of life. God alone has the authority to give life. By giving life to the dead he revealed to the world that he is the Son of God. Jesus revived Lazarus, brother of Martha

and Mary of Bethany, and his own friend, four days after his death (John 11:38-44). Jesus raised to life the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:21-43) and the son of the widow of Nain also (Luke 7:11-17).

## Jesus and the Miracles

All the miracles Jesus wrought show his divinity. It was for the good of man that he wrought all the miracles. Jesus worked miracles through his authoritative words. The miracles of Jesus were never intended for his own prestige or benefit. The primary intention of the miracles was the establishment of the Kingdom of God and the good of man.

The aim of the miracles of Jesus was to lead the people to faith. Jesus tested the faith of the people whenever he worked miracles. Jesus generally worked miracles where there was deep faith.

### Worship

The Church commemorates the various miracles of Jesus through the hymn, titled 'Jesus the Light'.

(Agnimayanmar...)

"Lord, you fed the five thousand with five loaves only

Satisfy my hunger from your Holy Table.

You saved from Satan the child of the Canaanite woman

Kindly, likewise set me also free from Satan.

Lord, you cured the suffering woman from her haemorrhage

Stop the haemorrhage of sin from me; be my refuge.

Lord, you gave back life to Jairus' little daughter

Revive me too by your Spirit, for I am dead.  
Lazarus was dead and his body was putrefied  
But you raised him to life, likewise revive me too".

### Life Witness

Jesus gave many blessings through miracles to all those who approached him with faith. If we too confess Jesus with faith, he will shower many blessings in our life too through working miracles.

### Memorise

"Ask and it will be given you;  
search, and you will find; knock and  
the door will be opened for you."

(Luke 11:9)

### Questions

1. Into how many groups can we divide the miracles of Jesus? Which are they?
2. Describe two miracles by which Jesus cured sicknesses.
3. What did Jesus reveal by raising the dead to life?
4. What was the aim of the miracles of Jesus?

# THE PARABLES OF JESUS

One third of the instructions of Jesus are parables. Small as well as big parables are recorded in the Gospels. Jesus taught the people through parables related with ordinary events of daily life. These things are recorded in the Gospel according to St. Matthew: **“Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing”** (Matthew 13:34).



In order that ordinary people might understand the instructions of Jesus, they were compared through the parables to the realities one encounters in life. Jesus referred in parables to things familiar to the hearers. We see in the parables the various phases of the kingdom of God, the central point of the instructions of Jesus. All parables are related to the kingdom of God. Hence the parables of Jesus could be classified only in relationship with the kingdom of God. We can classify the parables of Jesus as follows: (1) those dealing with the beginning and growth of the Kingdom of God, (2) those related with compassion and the Kingdom of God, (3) those about discipleship, (4) those that indicate the crisis of the Kingdom of God, (5) those related with the Final Judgement.



## **1. The Beginning and the Growth of the Kingdom of God**

The kingdom of God was established with the coming of Jesus. 'The kingdom of God' means the state of God's rule. This is the perfection of the relationship between God and man. The beginning of the kingdom of God is in small form and being. It acquires perfection at the end of ages. All the parables dealt with in chapter 4 of St. Mark are related with the beginning and growth of the kingdom of God. The parables of the Sower, the Yeast, and the Mustard Seed make clear that the kingdom of God is small in the beginning and afterwards it grows big. In the parable on the Mustard Seed (Mark 4:30-32), Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a mustard seed. Just as the small mustard seed grows big so that birds could make nests on its branches, so also the kingdom of God would spread throughout the world, and all peoples could be part of the kingdom of God. These are the messages Jesus gives through these parables.

## **2. The Kingdom of God and Compassion**

The compassion and love of God flow to men through Jesus. This compassion and love are the special features of the kingdom of God. Jesus taught through these parables that those who deserve compassion are those who lost everything, who have nothing and who suffer pain. The following are the parables Jesus told to reveal the compassion of the kingdom of God: the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, the Prodigal Son (Luke 15), the Workers of the Vineyard, the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, the Two Debtors. Through these parables Jesus taught that God the Father compassionately receives those who return after having gone astray. In the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), his father lovingly receives the younger son, when he repented and came back. But, the elder son gets angry with this. The father deals with him too lovingly. Jesus demands through this parable that those who are away from the kingdom of God should repent and return and should live in harmony with God and brethren. This parable makes evident God's compassion and patience. This parable also points out the need of the conversion of the sinner and his reconciliation.

### **3. Discipleship**

Through the parables about the discipleship Jesus describes how the man, who has experienced the love and compassion of God should respond. Jesus teaches that the foundation of discipleship is self-denial. We should be ready to renounce everything for the sake of the kingdom of God. The parable of the Precious Pearl, Men who build the Tower, the King who prepares for War, the Firm Foundation, the Cruel Servant, the Foolish Rich Man, etc., teach us about the cost of discipleship. The main themes of these parables are the spirit of dedication and self-denial for the sake of the kingdom of God. The theme of the parable of the Precious Pearl (Matthew 13:45-46) is the invitation, which Jesus gives to the children of men to appropriate the kingdom of God already present. Here, the kingdom of God is compared to the precious pearl. The merchant renounces everything he has, in order to make the precious pearl his own. He rejects the unimportant things as of little value in order to possess something precious. This parable sheds light on the attitude of self-denial, which a disciple of Christ should have. That is, the disciple of Christ should reject everything else, considering them as insignificant. The Lord Jesus teaches through the parables about discipleship that self-denial is necessary to possess the kingdom of God.

### **4. The Crisis of the Kingdom of God**

It is quite natural that the members of the kingdom of God encounter crises. But, the kingdom of God grows outliving them and in spite of them. Jesus teaches that when crisis arises in the growing kingdom of God, the disciple of Christ should be vigilant for the Gospel values. The following parables reveal the crises of the kingdom of God: the Parable of the Dishonest Manager, the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16), the Wedding Banquet, the Tenants of the Vineyard, etc. In the parable of the Wedding Banquet, the banquet did not go waste, because of those who were invited rejected the invitation. Instead of the invited, people from the streets of the city were invited and they took part in the wedding banquet. Jesus alludes that the matter of salvation too is like this, which is a gift of God. When the people of Israel rejected the Saviour, many others came forward to receive

the Saviour. There arises a crisis when the chosen ones reject the kingdom of God. This crisis is solved by the choice of the others.

## **5. The Last Judgement**

The parables that come in this group signify the perfection and final form of the kingdom of God. Jesus teaches through these parables, the Second Coming of Christ, the Last Judgement, and the Entering into the Kingdom of God. Jesus says that one should diligently wait for the kingdom of God. The following are the parables related to the second coming of Jesus: the Weeds, the Net that is cast in the Sea, Fig Tree with tender Leaves, the Faithful Slave, the Thief in the Night, the Parable of the Talents, the Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids. The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids (Matthew 25:1-13) is related to the second coming of Jesus. At midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom'. This is the warning of the second coming of Jesus. The closing of the door against the five foolish bridesmaids is a part of the last judgement. Jesus teaches us through this parable that we should be always ready for the coming of Christ.

Jesus told many parables during his life. Each parable was to impart a message to the people. It is the realities of daily life that shone in the parables of Jesus. All parables are related to the kingdom of God. Jesus opens the door of the kingdom of God for us through each parable.

## Worship

Jesus taught the people through parables during his public life. The Church remembers the various parables of Jesus throughout the liturgy. We sing thus in the prayer of the Third Hour of Tuesday, relating to the Ten Bridesmaids, who went to receive the Bridegroom:

(Drishtanthangal upamakalil...)

"The Lord has instructed us in symbols and in parables

The kingdom of heaven is like the virgins waiting for the groom;

They were sleeping at night and they heard  
A shout that woke them

'The bride groom has come' and the five  
wise virgins

Rose and received him;

The foolish five virgins cried aloud behind  
closed doors

Their wailing is in such words,  
Which are inexplicable".

## Life Witness

Jesus taught through the parables the messages necessary for the daily life. Let us be witnesses to Jesus imbibing the messages of his parables.

### Memorise

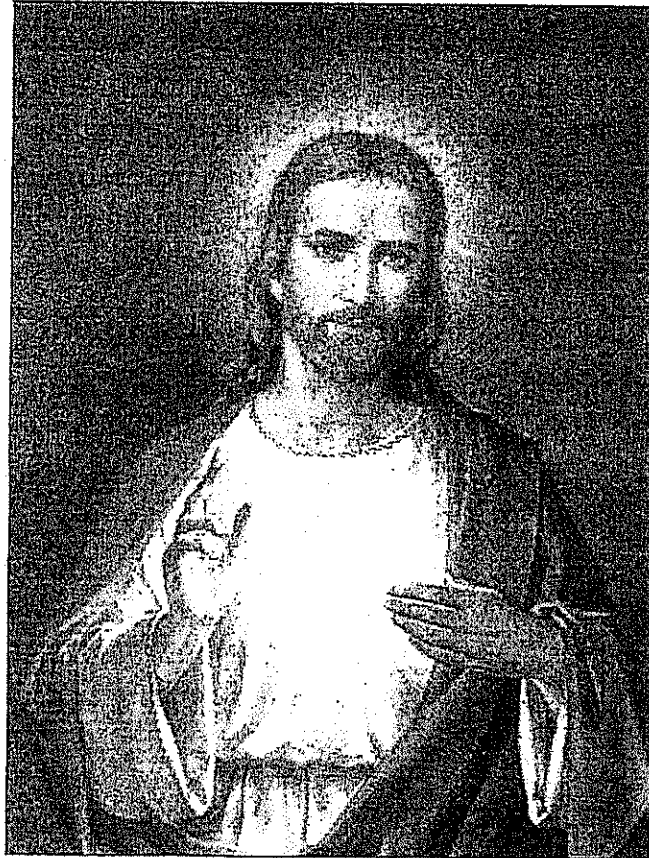
I am the way, and the truth,  
and the life. No one comes to the  
Father except through me.  
(John 14:6)

## Questions

1. How can we group the parables of Jesus? Which are they?
2. The parable of the mustard seed signifies the beginning of the kingdom of God. Explain.
3. What did Jesus teach regarding how a disciple of Christ should be?

# JESUS, THE MESSIAH

The people of Israel waited hopefully for the coming of the Messiah for a long time. With the birth of Jesus, the Son of God, this waiting was fulfilled. The meaning of the word 'Jesus' is 'Saviour'. The meaning of the word 'Messiah' is 'the anointed one'. The word 'Messiah' is taken from the Hebrew word '*Meshiah*'. The word '*Christos*' is used in Greek to denote 'Messiah'. The word 'Christ' took its form from that. Hence the words Messiah, Christ have the same meaning. The very word 'Jesus the Messiah' signifies the whole mystery of the incarnation. The use of the word 'Messiah' is commonly used in the Oriental Churches.



## **Messiah - in the Hope of the Old Testament**

The Old Testament means by the word Messiah, the king, who was to be sent by God in the fullness of time. It is also used to mean 'the anointed one'. There is a deep relationship between God and the Anointed One. It is because of that David said that the one, who works against the anointed one of the Lord, is to be killed (2 Samuel 1:14-15). The Old Testament bears witness that the life-giving power of God dwells in the anointed one (Lamentations 4:20).

The kings were called in Israel and Judea as the anointed ones of the Lord. So also the priests and prophets were considered as anointed. Hence they believed that the Messiah to come, would be prophet, priest and king. The Jews had believed that the mission of the Messiah, who was to be born in the family of David, would be to save Israel and redeem Jerusalem. The hope about the Messiah reflected in the prophecies of the prophets also. The people of Israel hopefully waited that 'at the coming of the Messiah the powers of the nations would be destroyed and that the Lord would rule with Jerusalem as his centre'. This hope of the people of Israel was fulfilled with the birth of Jesus.

### **The Messiah in the New Testament**

The New Testament introduces Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus himself accepts at the end of his public life that he is the Christ (Mark 14:26). Jesus is not the Messiah, who would liberate Israel politically. But, Jesus gave the picture of a suffering Messiah, contrary to the expectation of the Jews. The Evangelists allude to that Jesus is called the Messiah (Christ) (Matthew 27:17). The miracles Jesus wrought and his authoritative teachings make it clear that he was the Messiah. Peter, the head of the apostles, said this about Jesus: **"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God"** (Matthew 16:16).

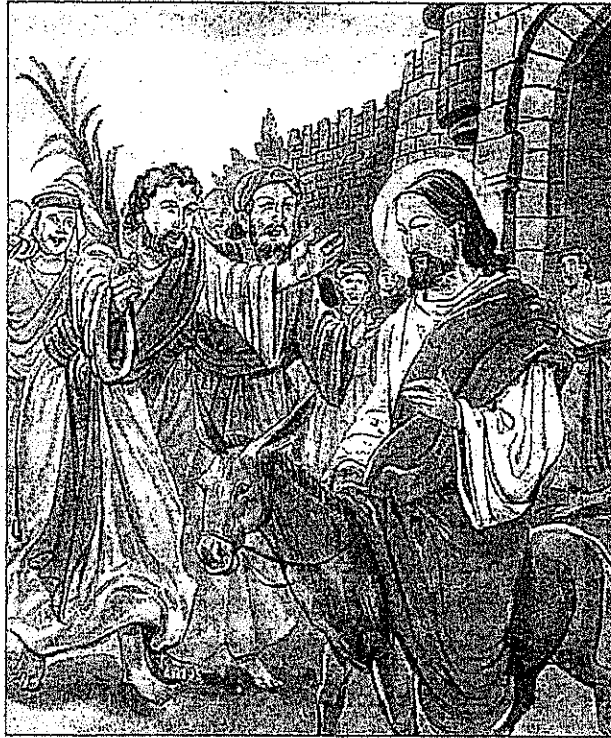
### **The Kingship of the Messiah**

The people had deeply believed that Jesus was the one who would deliver Israel. The effort, which the people made to make Jesus king after the miracle of the multiplication of the bread, was to confirm that he was the Messiah (John 6:14-15). The royal entry of Jesus into the city and the cleansing of the temple (Mark 11:1-9) revealed that Jesus was the promised Messiah. The Evangelists introduced these events as the fulfilment of the prophecies about the Messiah.

The majority of the Jews believed that the Messiah would be a powerful king. They dreamt of a king, who would establish a new kingdom in the world and would rule it with pomp and prosperity. They considered that the kingdom, the Messiah establishes would be in this world itself. But, God

did not send his only Begotten Son into the world, to establish a kingdom on this earth and to rule, but for reconciling men with God. Jesus realized this by offering his own life. Jesus is depicted as king during his trial, in order to show the glory of suffering. Jesus said thus about his kingship: **“My kingdom is not from this world”** (John 18:36). Jesus revealed that his kingship is not of this world, but it is of service and of self-dedication.

### **The Prophetical Role of the Messiah**



The people recognized from his works that Jesus was a prophet. Those who witnessed the raising to life of the son of the widow of Nain, were seized with fear and they glorified God and said: **“A great prophet has risen among us; and God has looked favourably on his people”** (Luke 7:16). John the Baptist, who came to know about the miracles of Jesus, sent his disciples to Jesus. The disciples of John the Baptist asked Jesus: **“Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another”**. Jesus replied thus: **“Go and tell John what you have seen and heard”** (Luke 7:22). Jesus revealed through these words that he was the real prophet and the Messiah to come.

### **The Priesthood of the Messiah**

Since Jesus was the Messiah, he is also priest. He sanctified the people throughout his public life through his words and deeds. Jesus is the only mediator between God the Father and men. Jesus gave to men the love, compassion of the Father and the absolution of sin. He fulfilled his mission

as priest forever by offering himself completely to the Father on Calvary. The self-oblation, which began at the incarnation, became perfect in the sacrifice of Calvary. Thus, Jesus fulfilled the service of priesthood also. The Epistle to the Hebrews testifies that Jesus is priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek (Hebrew 7:11-25).

Being the Messiah, he is also the prophet, priest and king. It is the mission of Jesus, to teach, to sanctify and to lead. Jesus did this triple mission during his public life.

### **Messiah, the Saviour of the World**

The incarnation of Jesus was for the salvation of the whole mankind. The angel of the Lord told the shepherds thus about the birth of Jesus: **"To you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord"** (Luke 2:11). On the occasion when Jesus was presented in the temple Simeon confessed the fact 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).

The word 'Salvation' means that man who is reconciled with God by the remission of his sins is with God in eternal bliss. This salvation is obtained through Jesus. Since men are in the state of sin, it is impossible to be saved by themselves and to reach the presence of God. That is why Jesus, the sinless, endured sufferings, died on the cross and resurrected on the third day. Thus, Jesus saved mankind.

During his public life Jesus saved the people from sin, death, sickness, Satan and hunger. He absolved the sinful woman and the paralytic and invited them to eternal life. Jesus gave salvation to the people through his passion, death on the cross and resurrection. The just, the sinners, the chosen ones, the discarded ones, the Jews and the gentiles alike share in the salvific work of Jesus. It is through Jesus that the entire mankind is saved. Hence Jesus is the sole Saviour, the Saviour of the world.



## Worship

We have in our liturgy many hymns and prayers, which introduce Jesus as the Messiah. It is the foundation of our faith that Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem and grew up in Nazareth, is in truth the Messiah, whom the Jewish people expected. Whenever Jesus is introduced in worship, the Church prays adding the word Messiah to the name of Jesus. Thus, the Church confesses Jesus as Messiah through the service of Christmas:

(Mahitan nibi Aesayah..)

“The glorious prophet Isaiah  
Has called the Messiah, ‘The Strong’.  
Through his wonderful birth  
He is said to be ‘Miracle’.  
He is the strong, and wonderful  
As Isaiah has told early;  
The angel called the Messiah  
And greeted him as his own ‘Lord’  
There is no son of man  
Who lords over heavenly angels;  
He is the God and Son of God  
Hence, he is the Lord of Gabriel”.

## Life Witness

The scheme of God the Father was realized with the coming of Jesus, the Messiah. Let us share in that salvation confessing Jesus as the Messiah.

### Memorise

“To you is born this day in the  
city of David a Saviour who is the  
Messiah, the Lord  
(Luke 2:11)

## Questions

1. What are the expectations found in the Old Testament about the Messiah?
2. How is the Messiah introduced in the New Testament?
3. Which is the triple mission of the Messiah? Describe.
4. Describe the fact that the Messiah is the Saviour of the World.

# JESUS AND GOD THE FATHER

Jesus is the only Begotten Son of the heavenly Father. Jesus said that he came to this world in order to reveal the Father and to fulfil the will of God. Jesus was always in contact with the Father.

## Jesus prayed to the Father

Jesus was in continuous communion with the Father in prayer. Jesus spent forty days in prayer in preparation for his public life. Jesus prayed to the Father at the time of receiving baptism and on occasions when he worked miracles. Jesus, who continuously prayed, taught his disciples to pray. The prayer he taught them is the "Our Father...." During the days of his passion, Jesus prayed thus to the Father in Gethsemane: **"Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done"** (Luke 22:42). Jesus prayed to the Father even when he was crucified: **"Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing"** (Luke 23:34). Jesus prayed to the Father in the last minutes of his earthly life: **"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit"** (Luke 23:46). Jesus died praying thus. Jesus continuously related himself with the Father in prayer.



## **Jesus and the Father are one**

Jesus revealed that he and the Father are one. Once the apostle Philip told Jesus thus: **“Lord, show us the Father”**. Jesus replied to Philip: **“Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?”** (John 14:6-10). Jesus told that the works he does are the works of the Father. Jesus showed that he liked whatever the Father liked. At the time of the baptism of Jesus, God the Father revealed the Son: **“This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased”** (Matthew 3:17). The Father revealed the Son at the time of the transfiguration of Jesus also (Matthew 17:5).

Jesus had addressed God the Father as ‘Aba’. The meaning of the word ‘Aba’ is ‘father’. When he was a boy, the parents of Jesus came in search of him to the temple, Jesus asked them: **“Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?”** (Luke 2:49). All the works of Jesus were to show the glory of God, the Father. Jesus and the Father are one. For that reason Jesus prayed for his disciples thus: **“As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one”** (John 17:21-22). Thus, in all works, Jesus continuously related himself with the Father.

## **God, Our Father**

Since God is the father of all of us, Jesus taught thus: **“Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect”** (Matthew 5:48). The Lord Jesus told that whatever we ask the heavenly Father, he would give us (Matthew 7:7-11). Jesus taught that just as the heavenly Father is merciful, we should also be merciful.

God the Father is the creator of all of us. He loves everyone. The love of the Father is unbounded. ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life’ (John 3:16). The incarnation of Jesus was an expression of the love of God, the Father for us.

Jesus taught through the parable of the Prodigal Son that the Father loves all and that there is no limit to his forgiveness. God, the Father created everything in this universe for our good. It is through Jesus that we could experience the love of the Father most. Therefore, he who knows Jesus knows the Father. The Father and the Son are two Persons of the Holy Trinity. Hence, let us glorify God, the Father and God, the Son.

## Worship

In the Malankara Liturgy, especially in the Holy Qurbano, the majority of the prayers are addressed to the Father. Almost all the prayers of the Holy Qurbano end with the doxology, "We offer praise and thanksgiving to you and to your Only Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and always and forever". Thus, we remember God the Father throughout the prayers. We remember God the Father thus in the Prayer of the Third Hour of Monday, in *S'himo*:

(Sorgathil vazhum thata...)

"Father, who dwells in heaven  
We, servants, plead you;  
There is no other father, who  
Pities and helps us.

You created us out of nothing  
In your anger, let us not again

Be turned into nothingness, for we keep your laws

And will please you by means of our deeds of justice;

Halleluiah – Have mercy on us".

## Life Witness

Jesus continuously kept contact with the Father. It was Jesus who revealed the Father to us. Let us glorify and worship Jesus who revealed the Father to us.

## Memorise

"No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known"

(John 1:18)

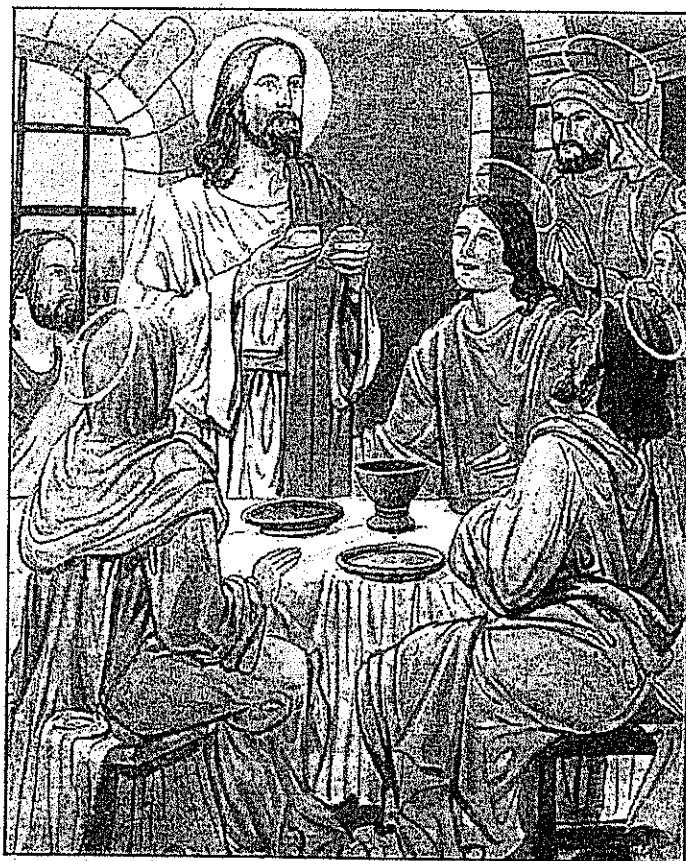
## Questions

1. Describe the events when Jesus related himself with the Father through prayer.
2. Prove that Jesus and the Father are one.

# JESUS, OBSERVING THE PASCH

Pasch was one of the important festivals observed by the people of Israel every year. After the building of the temple in Jerusalem, the festivals of the Israelites were celebrated centred on the temple. Therefore all the Jews used to come to Jerusalem for the observance of the Pasch. Jesus set out to Jerusalem as usual for the observance of the Pasch towards the end of his public life.

## The Royal Entrance of Jesus



Jesus arrived at Bethany, near the mountain of Olives, on his way to Jerusalem. Jesus sent two disciples to the nearby village. Jesus sent them to bring a colt, which they would find as they entered into the village. That colt has never been ridden. The disciples did as Jesus had instructed them. They spread their cloaks on the colt. Jesus sat on it. Many people spread their cloaks on the road. Some others spread leafy branches, which they cut from trees. Still others took branches of palm trees and received him. People, who walked in front and behind shouted joyfully: **“Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven”**. Jesus, the King of Peace royally entered into Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-40).

It is with a special intention that Jesus chose an ass to carry him. According to the custom of that age, the king riding on an ass was to establish peace. The very meaning of the word 'Jerusalem' is 'the city of peace'. Hence, the royal entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem is very meaningful. The meaning of the Hebrew word 'Hosanna' is 'save us'.

### **The Cleansing of the Temple**

Jesus, who reached Jerusalem, entered the temple. He drove out all who were selling and buying there. Jesus overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who sold doves. Then, he told the people, who gathered there: **"It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer'; but you are making it a den of robbers"** (Matthew 21:13). We can see Jesus here, as one who raised his voice against the injustices that reigned there in the temple of Jerusalem.

### **Observance of Pasch**

The Jewish Pasch is the commemoration of God miraculously saving the people of Israel from the slavery of Egypt. The meaning of the word 'Pasch' is 'to pass by'. In order to commemorate the deliverance from Egypt, Israel used to observe Pasch every year. This was also called the 'Feast of the Unleavened Bread'. Jesus arrived in Jerusalem in order to observe the Pasch.

Jesus entrusted Peter and John to make necessary arrangements for the Paschal meal. According to his instructions the disciples arranged the Pasch in the cenacle of Zion. When it was evening Jesus sat for the meal along with his disciples.

### **Jesus Washes the Feet**

During supper, Jesus got up and removed his outer robe and tied a towel around his waist. Then, he took water in a basin and washed the feet of the disciples and kissed and wiped them with the towel that was tied around him. Jesus did this in advance of his leaving this world and going to the Father. Through washing the feet of the disciples, Jesus gave the example of love and service. Having washed the feet of the disciples Jesus spoke to

them thus: **"So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you"** (John 13:14-15). Thus, Jesus taught to live humble before all.

### **Eating the Passover Meal**

Later on, while all were eating Jesus took bread and blessed, broke it, and gave to his disciples and said: **"Take, eat; this is my body"**. Then he took the cup, gave thanks and gave to his disciples and said: **"Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins"** (Matthew 26:26-30). After that, Jesus commanded the disciples: **"Do this in remembrance of me"**.

Jesus broke the bread and poured and gave the wine as a sign of his sacrifice on Calvary. On this occasion, Jesus instituted the Holy Eucharist, the Sacrament, so that men might share his body and blood at all times. We share in each Holy Qurbano the body and blood of the Lord. Jesus broke the bread as a symbol of his body that would be broken on Calvary. He gave the wine as his blood as a symbol that his blood would be shed on Calvary. Jesus gave through the Pasch in advance the sign of his sacrifice, which he was to offer on Calvary.

### **The New Commandment**

Jesus told his disciples at the end of the observance of the Pasch: **"I give you a new commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another"** (John 13:34-35). It is this commandment of love that is the foundation of Christianity.

Israel got freedom from slavery through the observance of Pasch in the Old Testament. But the whole mankind was saved through the observance of the Pasch of Jesus in the New Testament. The Pasch of Jesus was the sign of the sacrifice of Calvary. Thus, Jesus established the Christian Pasch in the background of the Jewish Pasch.

## Worship

The Sunday preceding Easter is observed as Palm Sunday. We commemorate the royal entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. We conduct the service of the blessing of palms on that day. The Holy Week begins with Palm Sunday.

The Passover is observed on Thursday following Palm Sunday. The Church specially remembers on Maundy Thursday the observance of the Pasch of Jesus with his disciples. The Pasch is the preparation for the passion of the Lord.

We use special prayers and hymns in the liturgy proper for each day in the Holy Week. The worship and services of the Holy Week help the faithful to remember the events of Jesus from Palm Sunday up to the sacrifice of Calvary and to live in their spirit.

During the Holy Qurbano of Maundy Thursday, we sing remembering the Pasch of Jesus:

(Oorislem maha malikayil...)

"In the mansion of Zion

On the day of Pasch

Jesus, with his apostles

Ate the meal of Pasch;

He took body and was born a man

And he took the form like that of us

Human races, with great joy

Sing Halleluiah,

The Lord of the Pasch, which saves us

Indeed! is glorious

Halleluiah o Halleluiah".

## Life Witness

Jesus gave us on the Feast of the Pasch his body and blood as food and drink. Let us receive the holy body and blood of Jesus devoutly.

### Memorise

"As often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes".

(1 Corinthians 11:26)

## Questions

1. What was the intention of Jesus to choose the colt as his vehicle?
2. How did Jesus react against the injustice prevailing in the temple?
3. Describe how Jesus observed the Pasch.



# THE PASSION AND DEATH OF JESUS

After the observance of the Pasch, Jesus went to Gethsemane together with his disciples. Jesus knew in advance his passion and crucifixion. The High Priests and the leaders of the people had conspired to kill Jesus. The High Priests had bribed Judas, one of the apostles, with thirty pieces of silver, in order to catch Jesus deceitfully.

## Jesus in Gethsemane

Jesus, who entered Gethsemane with his disciples, went a short distance further, prostrated and began to pray: **“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me”** (Matthew 26:39). Even at these moments of severe suffering, Jesus dedicated himself to the will of the Father.

After the prayer, Jesus was speaking to his disciples. Then, Judas, the betrayer, came there with the people carrying weapons. Judas had given the sign of identification to the people: **“The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him”**. Judas approached Jesus and through kissing, betrayed him saying, **“Greetings Rabbi”**. Then the people came forward, laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. Then, they led him to Caiaphas, the High Priest (Matthew 26:47-56).



## **Trial and Judgement**

The scribes and the elders had assembled in the house of Caiaphas. The chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimonies against him. The whole council of judges attributed blasphemy on Jesus and decided that he deserved death. Then, they spat on his face and struck him. Thus, the priests found means to kill Jesus, who was a threat to them. The reason was that they had feared Jesus (Matthew 26:57-68).

Peter had also entered the courtyard of the house of the chief priest. He went there to know what would happen to Jesus. Peter denied Jesus to those who asked, "Are you not the disciple of Jesus?" and he said to them: "I do not know him". Peter denied Jesus three times. The disciples, whom Jesus loved most, rejected him in the last moments of his suffering. This grieved Jesus the more.

Although the council of judges decided that Jesus was deserving death, the Jewish law did not permit them to kill anyone. Therefore, they brought Jesus to Pilate, the Roman Governor. Pilate tried Jesus. But he could not find any fault in Jesus. Hence he decided to set him free. But the crowd shouted loudly and persistently to crucify Jesus. At last Pilate decided to sanction the demand of the people. Thus, the innocent Jesus was condemned to infamous crucifixion. Pilate handed over Jesus to the Jews to be crucified.

## **The Death on the Cross**

The punishment of killing through crucifixion started among the Persians and spread among the Romans. In general, the slaves, the thieves, the murderers, and traitors were judged for death by crucifixion. Those who were judged for death by crucifixion were subjected to cruel flogging. The guilty persons, after cruel torments, who were almost dead, were led to the place of execution, carrying their cross on their shoulders. This was considered to be the most despicable manner of punishment.

The soldiers had cruelly beaten Jesus, who was condemned to capital punishment. Jesus who was weak through thrashing was led to the mountain of Golgotha for crucifixion.

The weight of the cross was unbearable to Jesus, who was weak with flagellation. After reaching Golgotha, the soldiers gave Jesus wine mixed with myrrh. But, he did not drink it. Then they removed the clothes of Jesus. After that, they crucified him. After crucifying Jesus, the soldiers divided his garments among them. They took his tunic casting lot. Two criminals also were crucified along with Jesus, one on his right and the other on his left.

Hanging on the cross, Jesus prayed for those who had crucified him thus: **“Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing”**. Jesus was ready to forgive even those who crucified him. Pilate wrote an inscription in three languages and fixed on top of the cross of Jesus: **“Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews”** (Luke 23:32-43).

Jesus was crucified on a Friday. From noon till three in the afternoon (from the sixth to the ninth hour) darkness spread all over the earth. The sun was darkened. The curtain of the temple was torn into two. The rocks were split. Jesus who understood that everything was completed, cried in a loud voice and said, **“Father, into your hands I commend my spirit”**. Having said this, he breathed his last (Luke 23:46).

Jesus offered his life as sacrifice for the salvation of mankind. Jesus, who was sinless, died on the cross for us, sinners. Jesus was the Lamb of God, who carries the sins of the whole world. He carried the sins of the whole world and sacrificed himself for the salvation of mankind.

### **Jesus is Buried**

Joseph of Arimathea, the secret disciple of Jesus and Nicodemus, the leader of the Jews, got permission from Pilate to remove the body of Jesus from the cross. They came near Jesus bringing a mixture of aromatic spices of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They brought down the body of Jesus from the cross. According to the burial custom of the Jews, they wrapped the body with the spices in linen cloths. There was a new tomb in a garden near the place, where Jesus was crucified, in which no one had ever been laid. There, they buried Jesus (John 19:38-42).

## Worship

“Good Friday is the day on which the Church specially remembers the passion and death of Jesus on the cross. In the services of that day we remember the passion of Jesus and his journey carrying the cross, his death on the cross and his burial. On Good Friday we say prayers from morning up to the ninth hour; then, we conduct the services of the procession carrying the cross, the worship of the cross, and the burial. We remember the crucifixion of Jesus in the prayer of the Third Hour on Good Friday:

(Yajamanan varumannerth...)

“At Three O' clock on Friday, the Only Son of God

The Saviour left Zion and started his saving journey;

On his shoulders, he carried the cross

And was led to Calvary for crucifixion

Salvation for the whole world, he won by his death

Let us sing praises to the holy Son of God;  
Halleluiah o Halleluiah – Praise the Lord”.

## Life Witness

Through the passion and death of Jesus, mankind was saved forever. Let us devoutly take part in the Holy Week, which commemorates the passion and death of Jesus.

### Memorise

“Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done”  
(Luke 22:42)

## Questions

1. What did Jesus pray in Gethsemane?
2. Describe the death of Jesus on the Cross.
3. How was Jesus buried?

# THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

The greatest feast of Christians is the feast of the Resurrection of Jesus or Easter. The foundation of the Christian faith is the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day as he had said during his public life.

## The Apparition of Jesus

It was the custom of the Jews to embalm the dead body with spices. Since Saturday was the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene and the other women went to the tomb of Jesus on Sunday early morning to embalm his body. But, they saw the stone that covered the entrance of the tomb rolled out and the tomb, empty. Mary informed this to the apostles. Then Peter and John reached the tomb of Jesus and they entered into it and were convinced that the body of Jesus was not there.

Mary Magdalene stood outside the tomb weeping. When she looked back, she saw a man standing. She presumed him to be the gardener. That person asked her: **“Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?”** She replied: **“Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away”**. But that man was





Jesus. Jesus called her **"Mary"**. She turned and called him in Hebrew: **"Rabbouni"**, which means **"Teacher"**. Jesus then told her: **"Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to my Father..."** Mary returned and informed the disciples that Jesus had risen from among the dead (John 20:1-18).

## **Jesus Appears to the Disciples**

After he had appeared to Mary Magdalene, Jesus appeared to the two disciples, who were going to Emmaus. Later on when the disciples were together, he appeared in their midst. But, on this occasion Thomas was not with them. When Thomas came, the other disciples said to him: **"We have seen the Lord"**. Thomas replied thus: **"Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe"**. After eight days, his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed. Jesus came and stood among them and said to them: **"Peace be with you"**. Then he said to Thomas: **"Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt, but believe"**. Thomas confessed his faith in Jesus and said, **"My Lord and my God"**. Jesus said to him: **"Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe"** (John 20:19-29).

Jesus appeared to the apostles on several other occasions. Jesus appeared to them when the apostles went for fishing under the leadership of Peter. Jesus strengthened the apostles, who were perplexed by his passion and death on the cross. Jesus prepared the disciples to proclaim the message of the kingdom of God throughout the world.

## **The Ascension**

The Ascension is the event of the risen Jesus returning to his Father. The ascension took place on the Mount of Olives, near Bethany, on the 40<sup>th</sup> day after his resurrection. Jesus raised his hands and blessed the disciples, who stood around him. **"While he was blessing them, he withdrew from them and was carried up into heaven"** (Luke 24:51). Thus Jesus set out to his Father.

The ascension of Jesus was the completion of the scheme of salvation of God, the Father. There was prime importance to the resurrection of Jesus in the declarations of faith of the early Church. Through his resurrection, Jesus won victory over sin and death. Paul the apostle teaches that the one who is with the Risen Christ is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17-21). It is the resurrection of Jesus that is the foundation of the resurrection and eternal life of man.

## Worship

Through the observance of Sunday, we make the commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus. The feast of the resurrection is called in Syriac *Qyomtho*. The following are the special services of Easter Sunday: the proclamation of the good news of the resurrection, the procession and the service of peace. The faithful share in the joy of resurrection through these services.

All the prayers of *Qyomtho* recall the resurrection of Jesus. We sing thus, remembering the resurrection of Jesus, in the service of peace on the Feast of the Resurrection:

(Slomo, slomo...)

"Greetings of peace to all those, who are near and far,

The Messiah rose up from the tomb,  
gathered all dispersed;

Simon, made firm, Thomas has believed

Cry of wailing, from them was removed.  
Caiaphas was shamed and Jews lowered  
their heads,

Mary and children of Church sing  
thanksgiving-songs.

Halleluiah o Halleluiah".

## Life Witness

The resurrection of Jesus is the foundation of Christian belief. Let us confess the resurrection of Jesus and share in his resurrection.

### Memorise

"If Christ has not been raised, then  
our proclamation has been in vain  
and your faith has been in vain"

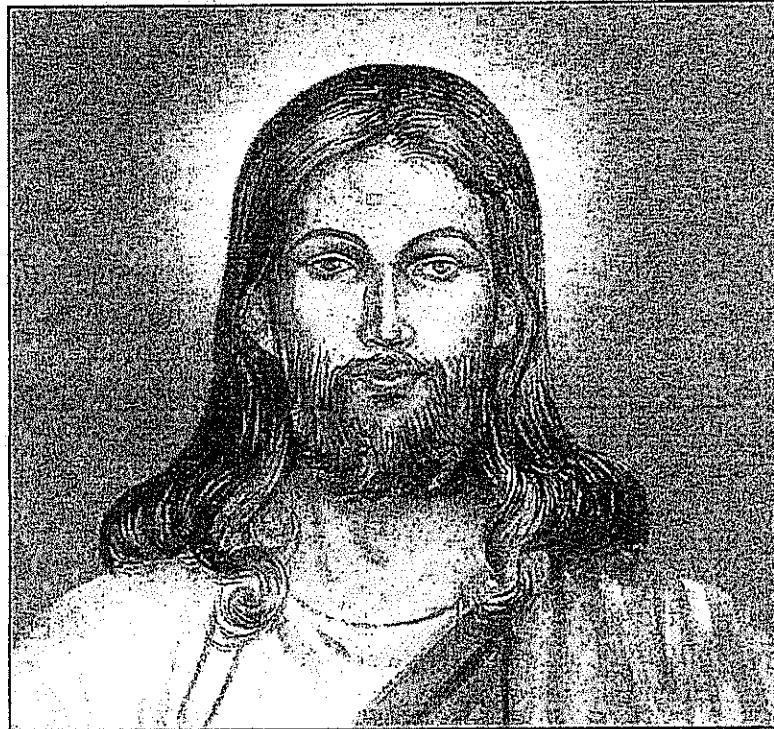
(1 Corinthians 15:14)

## Questions

1. Describe the event of Jesus appearing to Mary Magdalene.
2. Describe the Ascension of Jesus.
3. Explain the importance of the Resurrection of Jesus.

# JESUS, PERFECT GOD AND PERFECT MAN

Mary, the virgin of Nazareth conceived by the Holy Spirit and gave birth to a child. He was given the name Jesus. Jesus, who was born in Bethlehem and grew up in Nazareth, did his public service in Palestine and its suburbs. He taught the people and worked many miracles. He was called the Nazarene. Jesus



died on the cross at the end of his public service. On the third day he resurrected. Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, whom the Jews expected. The promise of God, the Father that a Saviour would be sent for the salvation of mankind, was fulfilled with the birth of Jesus. Jesus, who was born in the fullness of time, was the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. The Holy Scripture bears witness: **“The Word became flesh and lived among us”** (John 1:14). Thus the perfect God was born from the woman as perfect man with the name Jesus. The fact that Jesus is perfect God and perfect man is the fundamental truth of the Christian faith.

## Jesus, Perfect Man

Divinity and humanity are united in Jesus as one. He became man like us and was born in the world as our brother. At the same time he is God. Since he was born man, he was subjected to the limitations and sufferings of man.



It was to the poor and humble shepherds, who were given the blessing to see Jesus, the Son of God, as man for the first time. The mother of Jesus was Mary, who in the eyes of the world had no pomp or majesty. Joseph, his foster father was a poor carpenter. The Jews expected their Saviour as a king. His coming in humility was unbelievable to those, who expected the Saviour with earthly fortunes. They questioned his divinity asking the following questions: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?" (Matthew 13:55-56).

He was like man in everything except sin. He worked with his human hands like us. With the human intellect he thought. And he loved with his human heart. Jesus was man and not merely seen as man. Jesus also experienced the weaknesses, drawbacks and also the sufferings of the human body. 'But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his son, born of a woman, born under the law' (Galatians 4:4). Mary, the mother of Jesus took care of him like any other child. **"Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour"** (Luke 2:52).

Jesus had experienced the human tiredness, thirst and hunger. Once Jesus sat by the side of a well, tired of journey (John 4:6). He asked the Samaritan woman **"Give me a drink"**. Here, we see the human nature of God. Jesus drove out indignantly those who were buying and selling from the temple of Jerusalem. When Jesus saw Mary and who were with her, weep near the tomb of Lazarus, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and wept (John 11:33). Jesus wept looking at the city of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). In all these places the human feelings of Jesus were expressed.

The humanity of Christ is more evident during his passion. Jesus told with grief at Gethsemane to his disciples Peter, James and John: **"I am deeply grieved, even to death"** (Mark 14:34). Jesus experienced in his own body the horrible pain he suffered, when he was flogged, crowned with thorns, buffeted, and fixed to the cross.

The human nature attains perfection in Christ. He is also the perfect model of human personality. Jesus said: 'Learn from me; for I am gentle and

humble in heart' (Matthew 11:29). It is through his incarnation that Jesus merited salvation for us.

## **Jesus, Perfect God**

Jesus, who was born as man in Bethlehem, was the Son of God. There was the perfection of divinity in him. The events from the birth of Jesus till his resurrection express the divinity of Jesus.

The angel told the virgin about the birth of Jesus: **"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God"** (Luke 1:35). The angel made it clear that Jesus, who would be born from the Virgin Mary is the Son of God and that he is incarnated through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The old Simeon confessed the truth that Jesus was the Saviour, when on the 40<sup>th</sup> day after his birth, Jesus was presented in the temple of Jerusalem: **"For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples"** (Luke 2:30-31).

John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus, confessed Jesus as the Messiah to come. The Holy Trinity revealed itself when John the Baptist gave baptism to Jesus. God, the Father, confessed Jesus as his Son, saying: **"This is my Son, the Beloved"** (Matthew 3:17).

Jesus, through the various miracles he worked during his public life, showed his divinity. He showed his divinity by changing water into wine at Cana, and by multiplying bread on the seashore of Galilee. Only God has the power to absolve the sin of man. Jesus bore witness that he is God by absolving the sins of the paralytic and of the sinful woman. He raised to life the son of the widow of Nain, the daughter of Jairus, and Lazarus. Thus, Jesus showed that he was God, having authority also over death. Jesus expressed his divinity by controlling the storm and the sea and bringing the powers of the universe under his control. The transfiguration of Jesus on the high mountain, his resurrection from death, and ascension on the 40<sup>th</sup> day prove that he is God.

Peter, the head of the apostles, confessed the divinity of Jesus: **"You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God"** (Matthew 16:16). Thomas the

apostle, confessed Jesus after his resurrection as “**My Lord and my God**” (John 20:27-28). Jesus appeared several times after his resurrection to his disciples, and proved that he was God.

Thus the Holy Scripture bears witness that Jesus of Nazareth was not an ordinary man, but was the Messiah, whom the Jewish people had expected. The Son of God, in the fullness of time, became man and revealed himself through Jesus. Thus, being perfect God and perfect man, Jesus saved mankind.

## Worship

The fact that Jesus is perfect God and perfect man is the fundamental truth of the faith of the Church. The Malankara Church gives great importance to the divinity and glory of Jesus. When Jesus is introduced, his humanity together with his divinity and his suffering and passion connected with his glory are dealt with in the Malankara liturgy. We see throughout the prayers in the liturgy, names for Jesus such as: Lord Jesus, God Jesus, Jesus the Messiah; all of which give greater stress to the divinity and glory of Jesus. We commemorate this idea in the Evening Prayer of the Feast of ‘Yaldo’.

(Sisuvai kanappettavane...)

“He who is seen as a child, blessed are you,  
O wonderful Son,  
In order to save Adam, you came and took  
the form of man;  
Through gestures you guide the world  
And like a babe, you crawled on your knees.

You,-who- gave word to man, like a child,  
you kept your mouth shut,  
Your- meekness is glorious, and you left the  
glory of Cherubim.  
And you lowered your greatness- to the extent  
that- Mary might wrap  
You in swaddling cloths”.

## Life Witness

Let us glorify and worship Jesus confessing  
his divinity and humanity.

### Memorise

“In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God; and  
the Word was God”

(John 1:1)

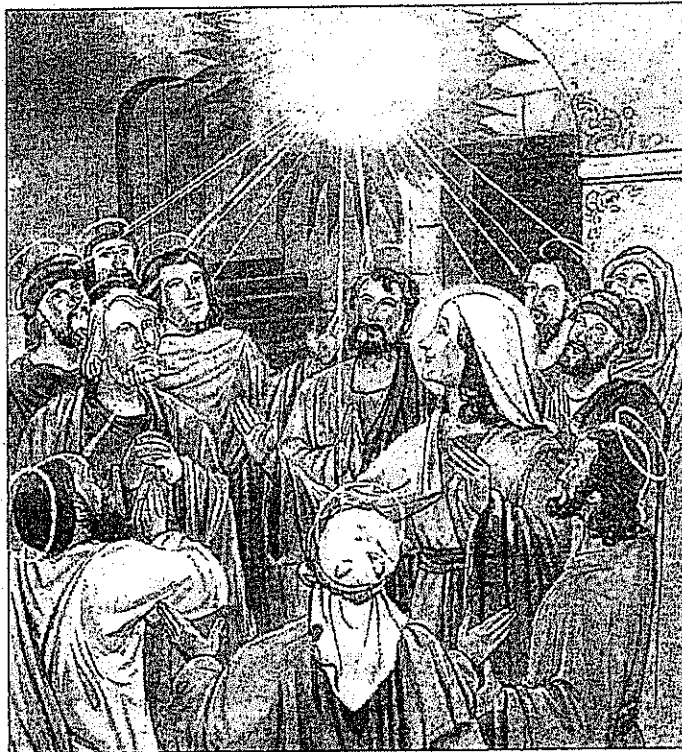
## Questions

1. Describe two occasions, which reveal the humanity of Jesus.
2. What is the reason why Jesus is said to be perfect God?

# JESUS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

The word *Rooha* is used in the Old Testament to denote the Holy Spirit. The meaning of this word is breath, wind, and spirit. In Malayalam, the following words are used: *Parisudha Rooha*, *Parisudhatmavu*, and *Parisudharoopi*.

'Spirit of God', is meant in the Old Testament, 'the Ever Active Energy of God'. The Spirit of God is to be understood as the sign of the presence of God (Isaiah 32:14-17).



God, the Father sent his Son to the world to save mankind. Jesus merited salvation for mankind through his salvific deeds from his birth to his ascension. Jesus continues his salvific works through God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles on the 50<sup>th</sup> day after Easter. Thus, the salvific works of the Holy Spirit authentically started. The Church was inaugurated with the coming of the Holy Spirit. From henceforth, it is the Holy Spirit, who leads the Church until the end of the world.

## **Jesus and the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit shared with Jesus from his birth all through his public life. At the time of the annunciation, the angel said to Mother Mary: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will

**overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called the Son of God"** (Luke 1:35). Jesus, at the age of thirty, before he started his public life, had received baptism in river Jordan. Then the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus and dwelt in him (Matthew 3:16-17). Jesus is called the 'Messiah' or 'Christ', because the Holy Spirit anointed him. The meaning of the word 'Messiah' is the 'anointed one'. Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, encountered the temptations in the wilderness victoriously (Matthew 4:1-11).

### **Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit**

Jesus taught his disciples about the Holy Spirit just as he taught about the Father. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to his disciples: **"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). Jesus continued: **"But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you"** (John 14:26). When the Spirit of truth comes, he will lead you in the path of truth.

Jesus taught his disciples that he would go to his Father after having completed his mission and the Holy Spirit would be the one, who would continue his mission,

After his resurrection he appeared to the disciples and confirmed again the sending of the Holy Spirit: **"I am sending upon you what my Father promised; so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high"** (Luke 24:49). In order to receive the Holy Spirit they engaged themselves in prayer and stayed in Jerusalem.

Just as Jesus revealed his Father to the disciples, he also revealed the Holy Spirit to them. Jesus taught that his mission was to fulfil the will of the Father and that the Son has been sent to reveal the Father. So also he instructed the disciples that the Holy Spirit is God's Spirit and that the Holy Spirit would come to continue the will of the Father.

God is a communion of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is Jesus who revealed to us that God is only One and that there are three

Persons in God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus revealed himself and the Father and the Holy Spirit.

### **The Coming of the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit, whom Jesus promised, descended upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost. The apostles and the holy Mother of God were praying in the mansion of Zion on the 50<sup>th</sup> day after the Jewish Pasch. The Holy Spirit came down and filled them in the form of fiery tongues. The apostles spoke in different languages with the spirit of tongues given by the Holy Spirit. Those who came from different countries heard the preaching of the apostles in their own languages. Peter said: 'Jesus of Nazareth, whom you crucified, is raised. The risen Lord has sent the Holy Spirit to us. It is the works of this Holy Spirit that you are seeing and hearing'. On that very day, three thousand people received baptism in the name of Jesus and they received the Holy Spirit. Thus, the Church was established with the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts of the Apostles 2:1-30). The Holy Spirit still continues the mission of Christ in the Church.

### **The Works of the Holy Spirit**

The foundation of the spiritual life of man is the Spirit. The intellect, willpower and the conscience are under the control of the Spirit. Bible has used the following symbols to signify the Holy Spirit: water, fire, dove, cloud, light and anointing.

The presence of the Holy Spirit is not static. He is always dynamic. The Holy Spirit dwells in a person and sanctifies and renovates him. One could grow in sanctity according as one subjects oneself to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit and obeys him. The Holy Spirit will control the course of our life when we fully dedicate ourselves to him. We will be able to live worthy of the life of the children of God. St. Paul says: **"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God"** (Romans 8:14). Then the gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit will be well expressed in our lives.

The fruits of the Spirit are: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. The Church teaches that the gifts of the Holy Spirit are seven: **"wisdom, intelligence, knowledge, thinking,**

**strength of spirit, devotion and fear of God".** The sum total of all these, is love. All others are the expressions of love. **"God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit"** (Romans 5:5). When our love flows into others we really become filled with the Spirit of God.

## **Worship**

The Church specially commemorates the Holy Spirit's descent upon the apostles on the feast of Pentecost. This commemoration is celebrated through three services held in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The chief service of Pentecost is the blessing of water and the sprinkling of the same over the people. The Church sings thus about the dwelling of the Holy Spirit:

(Roohkkudisha avaroham ...)

"On this holy day of the feast  
The Holy Spirit descended;  
And he did dwell among the men  
To make them children of heaven;

He gave the spirit of the tongue  
So that Trinity is proclaimed  
To one's own people and others;  
Blessed is he, who kept word  
By sending the comforter".

## **Life Witness**

Let us be docile to the Holy Spirit, who dwells with us daily, and sanctifies us and transforms us.

### **Memorise**

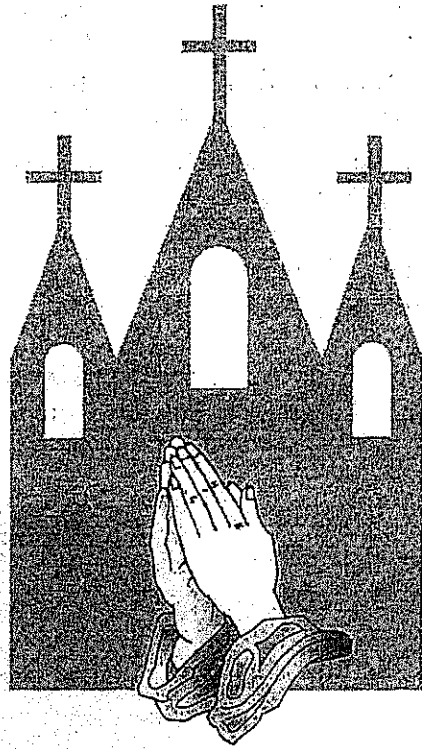
"But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you."

(John 14:26)

## **Questions**

1. How did Jesus promise the Holy Spirit?
2. Which are the symbols used to signify the Holy Spirit?
3. Which are the fruits of the Holy Spirit?
4. Explain the relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

**PART - II**



**LITURGY**



# THE FEASTS

Feasts and celebrations are as old as the history of man. All celebrations had religious nature in the ancient cultures. According to the Old Testament, the salutary works of God became the centre of the Jewish religion. The Malankara Church has seven feasts basing on the important events from the birth of Jesus to the coming of the Holy Spirit: **Christmas, Denha, Entrance of Jesus to the Temple, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, and Transfiguration.** These seven feasts are called the 'feasts of the Lord'.

Besides the feasts of the Lord, the Feasts of the Holy Mother of God, that of the Apostles, Martyrs and Saints are celebrated in the Church.

## 1. Christmas

Christmas is the feast commemorating the birth of the Son of God. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, when Herod was king in Judea and Augustus Caesar was the Roman Emperor. Christmas is celebrated all over the world on 25<sup>th</sup> December. This feast is known through the Syriac word 'Yaldo' (the birth of the Lord) in the Malankara Church.



The Service of Kindling the Light

Christmas is the feast of joy, peace and hope. Man lost supernatural grace through the sin of the first parents. Through that, there arose grief and lack of peace to man. God the Father sent his only Son to the world to save man. Thus, the Son of God was born as man from the Virgin Mary. He was known after the name Jesus. The relationship between God and man was re-established with the birth of Jesus. Men got joy, hope and peace. The angels sang joyously thus: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours" (Luke 2:14). The incarnation is the visible sign of the beginning of the scheme God started for the salvation of man.

The chief services of Christmas are the Prayers of the Christmas Night, the Procession, the Scripture Reading, the Service of Kindling the Light and the Holy Qurbono. Through these services, the event of the incarnation that took place in history is commemorated. The burning fire of the Service of Kindling the Light is the symbol of Jesus. Just as the shepherds worshipped Jesus and the wise men offered gold, frankincense and myrrh, the faithful worship the kingship, divinity and humanity of Jesus through putting frankincense in the burning fire. Through these means, the faithful are able even today to enjoy the feast of the birth of Jesus with those who enjoyed at the birth of Jesus and to specially receive the grace of God.

## 2. *Denha*

The Church celebrates the feast of *Denha* on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January. The meaning of the Syriac word '*Denho*' is 'the dawn'. This feast is called in Greek '*Epiphany*'. This word means 'the revelation of God'.



Procession of *Denha*

In the Malankara Church, *Denha* signifies the baptism of Jesus in river Jordan. When Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, the Holy Trinity revealed itself: the Father through his voice, the Son with his presence and the Holy Spirit in the form of the dove. Jesus, through his baptism, sanctified the race of man forever. The baptism of Jesus signifies the experience of salvation through water. In the Old Testament, the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea, was saved through water and entered into the Promised Land. So also the chosen people of the New Testament comes to the experience of salvation through baptism. The baptism of the Lord is the symbol of his death and resurrection. Jesus said, "I have to receive a baptism and until I receive it, I am troubled". This signifies his death.

The special service of *Denha* is the service of the blessing of water. By receiving the blessed baptismal water, the faithful come to the experience of baptism. The Malankara Church celebrates this feast on the 6<sup>th</sup> of January.

### **3. The Entrance of the Lord into the Temple (*Mayaltho*)**

The basis of this feast is the presentation of Jesus in the temple by his parents on the 40<sup>th</sup> day after birth (Luke 2:22-39). In Syriac language, this feast is called '*Mayaltho*'. This has the meanings such as: Entrance and Presentation.

According to the Jewish law, it is customary that every male child is to be presented in the temple on the 40<sup>th</sup> day after his birth and the female child on the 80<sup>th</sup> day. Thus, the parents of Jesus presented him in the temple on the 40<sup>th</sup> day. Similarly, this is also considered as the purification of the mother. This feast is celebrated in the Malankara Church on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February.

There are various meanings for the presentation of Jesus in the temple. By obeying the Mosaic Law, Jesus' total dedication and obedience to the Father is expressed. By his offering sacrifice for purification, Jesus fulfilled the purification of the whole mankind. He revealed in advance that he is the offering and the one who offers the sacrifice. Besides, the fact that Jesus is the Saviour of mankind also is made manifest.

#### 4. The Feast of the Resurrection (Easter)

The faithful of the early Church began to celebrate the feast of the resurrection of Jesus on the Sunday on which the Lord rose from the dead. Thus, Sunday was known as 'the day of the Lord', and 'the day of the Resurrection of the Lord'. After that the Christians began to celebrate the resurrection once a year only. This feast is known in English as 'Easter'. It is known in Syriac language as '*Qyomtho*'.

The feast of the resurrection is the centre of the liturgical year of the Eastern Churches. The foundation of the Christian faith is the resurrection of Jesus. St. Paul, the apostle says:



Proclamation of Resurrection

"If Christ has not been raised; then our proclamation has been in vain and your faith has been in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14). The scheme of salvation, which began in the incarnation, is completed in the resurrection. Hence, the Church considers the resurrection as 'the Feast of Feasts'. We see the resurrection as the victory over sin, evil and death. Easter is the feast of peace, unity and reconciliation. The feast of the resurrection gives us the thought that the basis of the resurrection of each Christian is the resurrection of Jesus.

The special services of Easter are: the Night Prayers of Easter, the Annunciation of Easter, the Exchange of Peace, the Procession, the Scripture Reading, the Celebration of the Sleebo, and the Kissing of the Sleebo. Raising the Sleebo, which was solemnly buried on Good Friday and covering it with a red cloth, the sign of victory, we proclaim the Resurrection. The chief theme of the service of the feast of resurrection is peace. It is through the resurrection that men got perfect peace and joy, lost to mankind through

the sin of the first parents. That is the reason why Christ greeted peace first, whenever he appeared to his disciples.

## 5. The Ascension

We commemorate in the feast of the ascension, the event that Jesus gloriously went up to the Father, on the 40<sup>th</sup> day after his resurrection. There are three realms of meaning for this event: Jesus bids good-bye to his disciples, Jesus passes beyond history, and Jesus is seated at the right hand of the Father forever.

The Son of God came down on earth from heaven in order to save man, who was in misery due to the sin of the first parents. The ascension is the event that Jesus,



Procession of the Feast of Ascension

the Son of God, after fulfilling the works of salvation enters back into the glory of the Father. The scheme of salvation, which began in the birth of Jesus, was completed in the ascension. Jesus opened through his ascension the door, which Adam had closed by his sin. Thus, he made the path to heaven easy. The themes of the feast of ascension are: the glorious entrance of Jesus into heaven and his glorious second coming. The chief services of ascension are the procession and the celebration of the Sleebo. The Sleebo decorated with the red cloth, is placed in the sanctuary for 40 days from Easter to the Ascension. This signifies the special presence of Jesus on earth from Easter to the Ascension.

## 6. The Pentecost

The Greek word 'Pentecost' means 'the 50<sup>th</sup> day'. The Jews celebrated the feast of Pentecost on the 50<sup>th</sup> day after Pasch. The Jews considered this

as the feast of the harvest and the commemoration of giving the commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai. On the 50<sup>th</sup> day after the resurrection of Jesus, on the day of the Pentecost of the Jews, the Holy Spirit came down on the apostles in the form of fiery tongues and they were filled with the Holy Spirit. This is the Christian Pentecost.

Due to the sin of the first parents man lost the grace of God or the Holy Spirit. Thus, God gave back in Pentecost, the Holy Spirit, whom man lost



Sprinkling of Water on Pentecost Day

in paradise. Therefore, the Holy Spirit, whom man received on Pentecost, is the fruit of the salvific works of Jesus. It is with the Pentecost that the work of the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, begins. Hence, Pentecost is the

feast of the Holy Spirit. Jesus continues his work of salvation through the Holy Spirit. The Church was formally inaugurated with the coming of the Holy Spirit. Pentecost has three special services after the names of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit respectively. The chief service of this feast is the sprinkling of water, the symbol of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

## 7. The Transfiguration

The basis of this feast is the transfiguration of Jesus. According to the description of the Gospels, Jesus took Peter, James and John to a high mountain. There, Jesus revealed his glory. The Church began to celebrate this feast from the 5<sup>th</sup> Century onwards. This feast is celebrated in the Malankara Church on 6<sup>th</sup> August.

The transfiguration revealed the glory and divinity of Jesus. The Church was able to confess the divinity of Jesus through this feast. The Church

commemorates the future glory of each Christian through the feast of transfiguration. This feast helps us to live in the hope of glory, accepting the crosses of daily life.

The Church celebrates the feasts of the holy Mother of God besides the feasts related to the salvific events of Jesus. The Church observes the feast of the Annunciation to the Mother of God on 25<sup>th</sup> March. The annunciation is the event of the conception of Jesus in the womb of his mother. The feast of the birth of Mary is on 8<sup>th</sup> September. The Church celebrates the feast of the Assumption of the Mother on 15<sup>th</sup> August. Besides these, there are other feasts such as: the feast of the Mother of Seeds, the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the feast of the Mother of the Harvest, etc.

Besides these, the Church specially celebrates the feasts of the Apostles. There are in the Church, many feasts of the Martyrs and the Saints.

The feasts of the Lord help us to live along with the salvific events of Jesus. Through these feasts the sanctification of the whole year takes place. Through the feasts of the Mother, the Apostles, the Martyrs, and the Saints, the faithful are enabled to identify themselves with them.

### Worship

The Church joyously celebrates on the feast of Christmas the holy Birth of Jesus:  
(Thalamurakal thorum...)

"The Feast of the Christmas is celebrated  
Through all generations, most solemnly.  
Behold! this Feast day is most blessed  
The only begotten, is born this day.  
The feast that has left us and went far off  
Has come once again to visit us".

### Life Witness

The celebrations of the feasts are moments of the blessings of God. Let us try to observe the feasts of the Lord with due preparation and thus to live in union with the events of Jesus.

#### Memorise

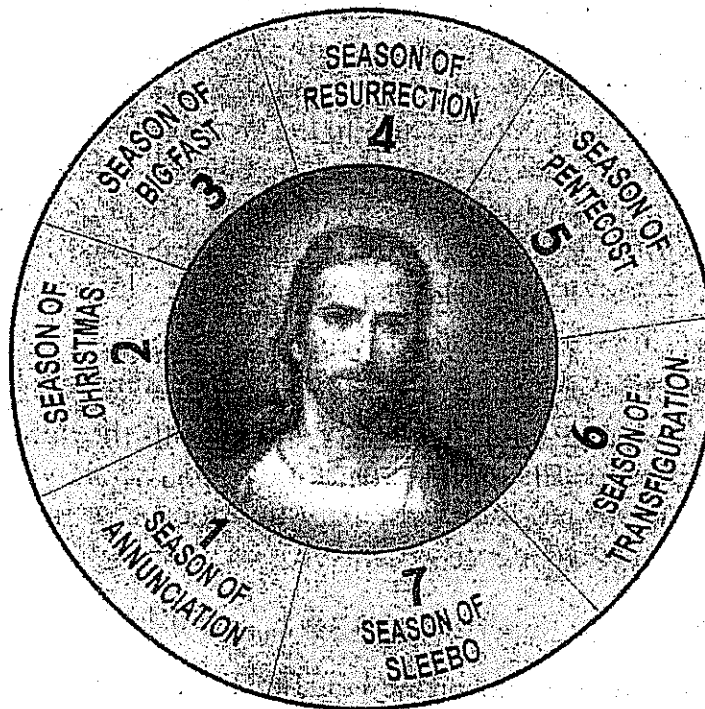
"Let us come into his presence with  
thanksgiving; let us make a joyful  
noise to him with songs of praise!"

(Psalm 95:2)

### Questions

1. What is the chief service of Christmas? Describe the meaning.
2. Which are the allusions, the feast of *Denha* gives?
3. What are the various meanings of the Entrance of Jesus to the Temple?
4. Describe the special services of the feast of the Resurrection.
5. Which are the main themes of the feast of Ascension?
6. What is the importance of the feast of Pentecost?

# THE LITURGICAL YEAR



The main events from birth of Jesus Christ to his ascension are commemorated in the feasts. The children of the Church remember all these salvific events during the course of a year and make them themes for prayer. Thus, the special remembrance of the salvific events of Jesus during the course of the year is called the liturgical year. This is said to be the Yearly Cycle. The remembrance of the events of Jesus during the course of a day is called the Daily Cycle and that of a week is called the Weekly Cycle.

## The Daily Cycle

The day is divided into seven Hours with the intention: to pray always and to be with the Lord always. Since 7 is the number of perfection, there is special importance for 7 in the Oriental Churches. That is why the day is divided into seven. The following are the seven hours: Evening, *Soutoro*, Night, Morning, Third Hour, Sixth Hour and the Ninth Hour. In the Morning,



the Church praises God for giving light. The Church remembers at the Third Hour, Jesus receiving punishment from Pilate, at the Sixth, the death on the cross of Jesus; and at the Ninth, the fury of nature at the crucifixion. In the Evening, the Church remembers the rest from labour, and at *Soutoro* and Night, going to sleep relying on the grace of God. The prayers of the Seven Hours are usually said in the Morning and in the Evening.

### **The Weekly Cycle**

The important day of the week is Sunday. That is the day of the resurrection of the Lord. In the experience of the resurrection of Jesus, from Sunday to Saturday, each day has its special theme. Monday and Tuesday are the days of repentance. On Wednesday, the Mother of God, and on Thursday, the Apostles, Prophets and Martyrs are specially remembered. Friday is the day of the crucifixion of the Lord. And Saturday is the day of the commemoration of all the departed, the second coming of Jesus and the general resurrection. The special prayers for each day of the week, is called the *S'himo*. The meaning of the word *S'himo* is 'common prayers'.

### **The Yearly Cycle**

The Church remembers all the salvific events from the birth of Jesus to his second coming in the liturgical year. The year is divided into seven seasons: (1) Annunciation, (*Suboro*), (2) *Yaldo* (Christmas) - *Denho*, (3) Big Fast, (4) Resurrection (*Qyomtho*), (5) Pentecost, (6) Transfiguration and (7) Sleebo. Since 7 is the perfect number, the liturgical year is arranged in relation to it. In the Malankara liturgy, the day is divided into 7 Hours, the week into 7 days, the year into 7 seasons of about 7 weeks' duration. Thus, the Malankara liturgy is inseparably related to number 7. The special prayers for the 7 seasons of the liturgical year and the prayers for Sundays and Feast days are known as the '*Penkiso* worship'.

#### **1. Season of Annunciation**

This is the first season of the liturgical year. The liturgical year begins in the Malankara Church with the Sunday, called, '*Qudos Eetho*', which means 'the Sanctification of the Church'. If any of the last two days of the month of October is a Sunday, that would be the beginning of the liturgical year.

Otherwise, it would be on the first Sunday of November. The second Sunday is known as '*Hudos Eetho*' (The Renovation of the Church). The Annunciation about the birth of Jesus would be on the following five weeks. Hence, this season is called the season of Annunciation. This is the season for the special preparation of the faithful for the birth of Jesus. 'The Twenty-five days' Fast' is in this season.

## **2. Season of *Yaldo* (Christmas) – *Denho***

This is the period of seven weeks beginning from the Sunday before Christmas to the Sunday marking the beginning of the Big Fast. This season includes the birth and baptism of Jesus. The theme of this season is the revelation of Jesus. This is the season when Jesus reveals himself publicly. The Church remembers during this season Jesus from his birth to the beginning of his public life.

## **3. Season of Big Fast**

This is the season of penance in preparation for the feast of the Resurrection of the Lord. This is the most blessed time of the liturgical year. The Church commemorates during this season: the Forty days' Abstinence of our Lord, His Public Life, Passion and Death. The Big Fast extends to 50 days, from the first Sunday of the Fast to the Easter. There are seven Sundays in this season before Easter. The miracles of Jesus, which reveal his divinity, are remembered during the first six Sundays of the Fast. On the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday after the commencement of Lent, the Mid Lent is observed. On that day the *Gogultha* is erected in the middle of the church. The Church commemorates the 40<sup>th</sup> day of Lent as 40<sup>th</sup> Friday and the following day as the Saturday of the raising of Lazarus. The 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Lent is known as Palm Sunday. The days from Palm Sunday to Easter are known by any of the following names: the Passion Week, the *Hasa* Week, or the Big Week. The Thursday of the Passion Week is known as: the Thursday of the Pasch or the Thursday of the Mysteries or Maundy Thursday. On this day the commemoration of the Lord's institution of the Holy Eucharist, is observed. On Good Friday, the death of the Lord on the cross and on Saturday, the Lord preaching the Gospel amidst the dead in Sheol, are commemorated.

#### **4. Season of Resurrection (*Qyomtho*)**

This season extends over 7 weeks from Easter Sunday to Pentecost. The resurrection is the most important among the salvific events of Jesus. Hence, Easter is the biggest feast of the Church. During these seven weeks, the Church remembers the events about the glory of the resurrection, and about the appearances of the risen Jesus to his disciples. The cross that is raised from the tomb is covered with the red cloth and it is erected in the sanctuary. This reminds the presence of the risen Lord among the disciples for forty days. The Church celebrates the feast of the Ascension on the 40<sup>th</sup> day after Easter. On that day the Sleebo is removed from the sanctuary. During these forty days there is no prostration and the prayers are said standing. This is to express the joy of the resurrection. The days from the 40<sup>th</sup> to the 50<sup>th</sup> are days of vigil for the coming of the Holy Spirit.

#### **5. Season of Pentecost (Season of Apostles)**

This extends from Pentecost to the feast of the Transfiguration (August 6). The Coming of the Holy Spirit and the Proclamation of the Gospel by the apostles are commemorated during this season. The Church observes during this season: the Fast of the Apostles, the Feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul, and the remembrance of St. Thomas, the apostle. Therefore this season is also called the Season of the Apostles.

#### **6. Season of Transfiguration**

The feast of the transfiguration of the Lord is celebrated on 6<sup>th</sup> August. The Season of transfiguration extends from 6<sup>th</sup> August to 14<sup>th</sup> September. The Lord took Peter, James and John to a high mountain and there, in their midst he was transfigured. The commemoration of this is the feast of the transfiguration and the season of transfiguration. By this feast we commemorate the divinity and glory of Jesus. This is the foreshadowing of the Lord's cross and resurrection. The transfiguration teaches us that the Old and the New Testaments are inseparable, that the cross and glory are one, and that the dead and the living are one in Christ. During this season we remember the birth and the assumption of the Mother of God. This gives the hope of the glorification to come, for each Christian. This season prepares the faithful to enter into the glory carrying the cross of every day life.

## 7. Season of Sleebo

The season of Sleebo starts from the feast of the Sleebo (September 14) and extends to the beginning of the next liturgical year, that is '*Qudos Eetho*'. This is the last season of the liturgical year. The feast of the Sleebo is the remembrance of the finding of the cross of our Lord by Helena, the empress, and erecting it in a church in Jerusalem. The themes of this season are: the second coming of the Lord with the sign of the cross, the consummation of the world, the resurrection of the dead, the general judgement, and life in heavenly Jerusalem.

Thus, the Church introduces the salvific events through the seven seasons from the preparation of the birth of Jesus to the second coming of the Lord. Through this, the liturgical year helps the faithful to remember the salvific events of Jesus and to lead a Christian life together with Jesus' events. Thus the faithful will be enabled to complete the pilgrimage on this earth aiming to reach heaven.

### Worship

The liturgical year begins with the Sunday of the *Qudos Eetho*. On that day the Church remembers in the hymn, sung after the Gospel in the Holy Qurbano, how God called Moses and how he gave him the power to perform priestly service to the people of Israel:

(Parisudhalayamullil...)

"The Supreme Lord called Moses  
From burning bush of thorns;  
And he had told him thus:  
Receive you, my power  
Over the divine tent  
And on all things in it.  
Am Halleluiah o Halleluiah,  
Perform you, the priest's duty".

### Life Witness

The Church commemorates all the salvific events of Jesus Christ through the liturgical year. Let us try to live together with Jesus and to bear witness to him through the observance of the liturgical year.

### Memorise

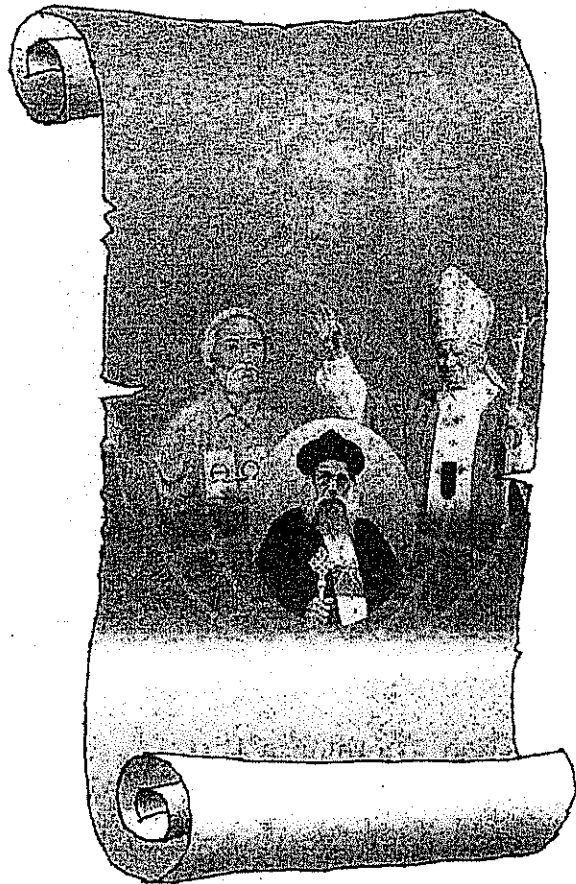
"One thing I asked of the Lord, that  
will I seek after: to live in the house  
of the Lord, all the days of my life,  
to behold the beauty of the Lord,  
and to inquire in his temple".

(Psalm 27:4)

### Questions

1. What is the Liturgical Year?
2. What do the Seven Hours mean?
3. Describe briefly the Seven Seasons of the liturgical year.

**PART - III**



**CHURCH HISTORY**

## THE SYNOD OF UDAYAMPEROOR (DIAMPER)

The Portuguese missionaries tried to bring the Malankara Church under the Western Church. The Synod of Udayamperoor, held in 1599 is one, which gave legal validity to such proceedings. The aim of this synod was to make the Portuguese supremacy and westernization, possible.



The Church at Udayamperoor, the Venue of the Synod

### Archdeacon Geevarghese

Mar Abraham desired to ordain a Bishop as his successor before his death. But it did not materialize because of the intervention of the Portuguese. Mar Abraham handed over the rule of the Church to Archdeacon Geevarghese before he died. The representatives of the people convened a meeting. The gathering decided to safeguard the Syrian tradition and to accept only Syrian Bishops.

### Menezis in Malankara

Menezis, the European Bishop came to Malankara availing the occasion when there was no bishop here. He came to Kochi from Goa in 1599. He had the following aims: to remedy the putative defects of the Malankara Church, to protect the churches, to bring the Malankara Church under the influence of the Latin Church, to force to accept the European bishops, to

remove Syriac and to introduce Latin instead in the liturgy, to destroy the liturgical books, which he supposed to have false doctrines and to bring the Bishop of the Malankara Church as suffragan to the Goan Hierarchy. He visited the churches of Malankara, administered sacraments and ordained many priests. Menezis brought forward many suggestions ignoring the oppositions of Archdeacon Geevarghese. The Archdeacon was forced to accept many instructions of Menezis on account of the influence of the local leaders and kings.

### **The Preparation for the Synod**

Bishop Menezis decided to convene a synod. He gave orders that the Archdeacon, the Vicars and the Deacons of all the Malankara churches, and four representatives of each parish, selected by the parish committee, should attend the synod. He stated in the orders that the absentees would be excommunicated ipso facto.

### **The Proceedings of the Synod**

The synod started in the church at Udayamperoor on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1599. 153 priests and 660 lay representatives took part in it. The synod, which extended for seven days ended on 26<sup>th</sup> June. According as Bishop Menezis desired, he got approved the things regarding faith and sacraments. The Malankara Church was divided into 75 parishes and new Vicars were appointed. Thus, the custom of appointing Vicars was formally introduced in Malankara.

Bishop Menezis tried to get the approval for this synod from Rome. But, he did not get the approval due to lack of proper procedure and form. This synod, which diverted the very path of the Malankara Church, had far-reaching effects in the Church of Kerala

### **After the Synod**

After the synod, Bishop Menezis visited many churches and removed the Syriac Texts from the churches. He forced upon the churches Latin systems and exercise of power. Francis Roz, the Jesuit priest was appointed as the first Latin Bishop over the Malankara Nazranies on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1599. The Diocese of Angamali was brought under the Padroado of the Portuguese and it was reduced as suffragan to the Latin Diocese of Goa.

## **The Synod of Udayamperoor and the Transformations of the Malankara Church**

Many western customs and practices were made compulsory for the Malankara Church with the synod of Udayamperoor. The Portuguese did not understand well the Malankara Church having the Syrian traditions. The synod of Udayamperoor and its decisions were on that account.

There were some changes in the Church due to the decisions of the synod. The Portuguese authorities appointed Latin Bishops instead of the Syrian Bishops. They, who were ignorant of the Malankara Church and ecclesiastical traditions, came at the head of the Church. Instead of the Archdeacon, who managed the temporalities of the Church, the Vicar General was appointed as in the Latin Church. The priests of the parish were doing the service of the parish. This was removed and the system of appointing Vicars was introduced in its place. Priestly celibacy was made compulsory. Malpanate was in vogue here for the formation of candidates for priesthood. It was abolished and Seminaries were established instead. Changes were made in the liturgy. Many things were made as in Latin liturgy. The Ecclesiastical Calendar was abolished and new Calendar as in the Latin Rite, giving importance to the feasts of the Saints, was introduced. Crucifixes were erected in the churches. The custom of administering the Sacrament of Confirmation along with Baptism and the Holy Communion was stopped. The use of the unleavened bread for the Holy Qurbano was introduced. Change was made in the observance of Fast and Abstinence. The beginning of the lent was shifted from Monday to the subsequent Wednesday. The practice of fast and abstinence was modified according to the Latin custom.

We have seen above the renovation made by the western missionaries, who did not sufficiently understand the tradition and history of the Malankara Church. In this the whole Church here, felt uneasy. But the missionaries did all these with good intention. But, these renovations did create problems in the Malankara Church. Through this, enmity and hatred against the Portuguese missionaries strengthened in the members of the Malankara Church. This led to the division, which torments the Malankara Church even today.

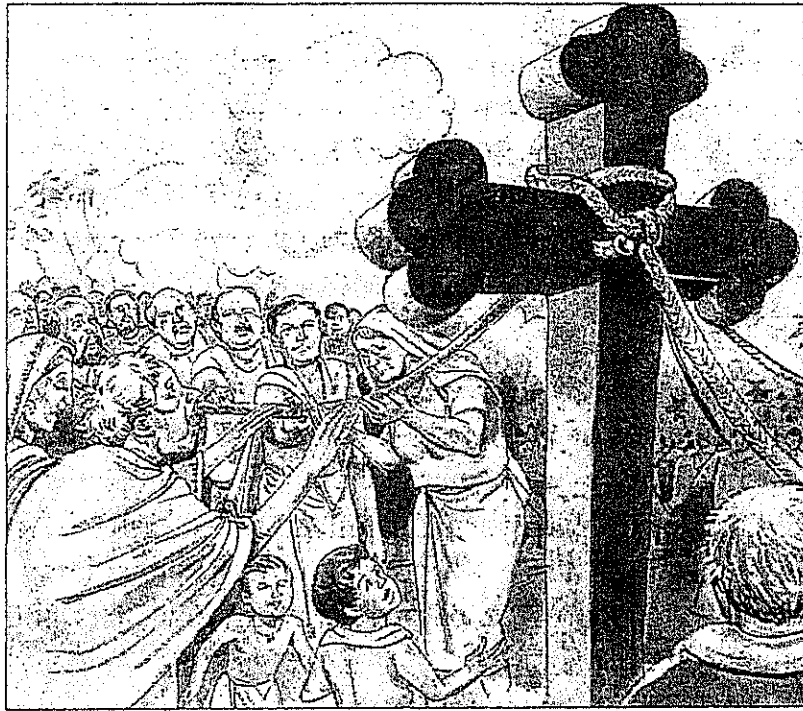
### **Questions**

1. What was the aim of the Udayamperoor Synod?
2. What were the decisions of the Synod of Udayamperoor?



# THE SLANTING CROSS OATH

The Malankara Church was a local Church with the perfection of apostolicity. The disciples of Jesus preached the Gospel in different places. Thus, local Churches were formed in different places. These Churches were in communion with the Pope, the head of the Church and



the successor of Peter, the apostle. The Malankara Church too was like that. Various types of liturgies took shape when various local Churches were formed. In the western part of the Roman Empire, the Latin liturgy; in the eastern part, the Greek liturgy; and in Persia and India, the Syrian liturgy, were formed. The Portuguese Missionaries, who were accustomed with Latin liturgy alone, when they came to India, did not fully understand the Church and the Syrian liturgy here. Hence, they started to make the local Church a part of the Latin Church. The Synod of Udayamperoor was a result of that. With this synod, the Latin rite was made compulsory instead of the Syrian rite. Thus the efforts of the missionaries to make the Malankara Church part of the Latin Church brought uneasiness in the children of the Malankara Church. In the course of time that led to the Slanting Cross Oath and the split of the Church.

## **Bishop Francis Roz (1599-1624)**

Bishop Menezis appointed Bishop Francis Roz as the first Latin prelate over the Malankara Christians in 1599. He made the Diocese of Angamali as suffragan Diocese to the Latin Archdiocese of Goa. And the Bishop of the Diocese of Angamali was brought under the power of the Bishop of Goa. The headquarters of the Diocese of Angamali was later on transferred to Kodungalloor. The Diocese of Kodungalloor was established as Padroado Diocese, proclaiming that the king of Portugal had the authority and custodianship over the Malankara Church. Thus, the Portuguese established authority over the Malankara Church, which they never had for the past 1600 years.

Bishop Roz centralized all authority on himself. He completely abolished the authority of the Archdeacon. The Dioceses under the Padroado were the following: Goa, Kochi, Mylapore and Kodungalloor. The Malankara Bishop, who had jurisdiction all over India, became the Bishop of Kodungalloor alone. Kodungalloor was considered as part of the Latin Diocese. Bishop Roz passed away in 1624. His body was buried in the church at Paravoor.

## **Britto (1624-1641) and Garcia (1641-1659)**

Stephen Britto became the Bishop of the Malankara Christians after Francis Roz. During that period, Archdeacon Geevarghese passed away and Thomas became the Archdeacon. After Britto, Francis Garcia became Bishop. During that period the cleavage between the Malankara Church and the Portuguese missionaries widened. The strife between Archdeacon Thomas and Bishop Garcia became very strong. The ancient Malankara Church stood united under the Archdeacon Thomas to safeguard her traditions and administration. The faithful did not bow their heads before the Portuguese authority. That led to the Slanting Cross Oath.

## **The Slanting Cross Oath**

The Slanting Cross Oath is the vow taken together on January 3, 1653, by the Malankara Christians, agitated at the works of the Portuguese

missionaries. The Malankara Christians, as a Church, stood united and took this oath: "Throughout generations we will never be under the Portuguese missionaries". The priests, who were standing within the church with lighted candles in hand and the faithful outside, holding on ropes tied on all sides of the stone cross, made this oath. This is what is known as the Slanting Cross Oath. The crowd was numbered about 25,000.

A special reason propped up for the slanting cross oath. The Archdeacon received a message that Ahathalla, a Syrian Bishop from Persia would come by ship and land at Kochi. Knowing this the people gathered together. But the Portuguese did not allow him to land. They sent him back. In the mean time, a false message spread that the Bishop passed away. The people were provoked at this. The Slanting Cross Oath was the after-effect of this.

### **The Subsequent Procedure**

After the Slanting Cross a meeting of the church representatives was held in the church at Edappally. They took the decision that they did not want the Jesuit Portuguese Bishops and that they should get an Indigenous Bishop ordained. They also agreed to send the decisions of the meeting to Rome and to hold another meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1653 in the church at Alangatt to discuss and decide upon further matters.

### **The Ordaining of a Bishop by Twelve Priests**

Itty Thomman, a priest spread a false document to the effect that Bishop Ahathalla had permitted to ordain a Bishop by twelve priests together. Accordingly, twelve priests together placed their hands on the head of Archdeacon Thomas in the church at Alangatt on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1653 and ordained him Bishop. And they appointed four advisors as well.

### **Joseph Sebastiani**

Rome received a lot of letters about the problems of the Malankara Church. In order to solve the problems, Rome sent to Kerala two Carmelite priests, Joseph Sebastiani and Hiasinth. Though they consulted with the Archdeacon, no reconciliation took place. Later, Sebastiani went to Rome, got ordained Bishop and came back. Meanwhile, the Dutch defeated the Portuguese and

captured Kodungalloor and Kochi. Sebestiani was informed to quit the place forthwith. Sebestiani was not prepared to validly ordain Archdeacon Thomas, who was invalidly ordained. Besides, Archdeacon Thomas was excommunicated. In his stead, Sebestiani ordained Parambil Chandy Kathariar, Bishop in the church at Kaduthuruthy. The majority of those who made the Slanting Cross Oath accepted Bishop Chandy, being an indigenous Bishop.

Archdeacon Thomas tried to get sanctioned his pseudo bishopric. Mar Jacob, a Jacobite Bishop came to Kerala from Jerusalem in 1665. Archdeacon and his allies received the Jacobite Bishop. Mar Jacob introduced here the Antiochene liturgy. Thus, those who accepted the Jacobite Bishop were called the *Puthenkoottukar*. Those who accepted Bishop Chandy, who followed the prevalent East Syrian Liturgy, and who maintained relationship with the See of Rome, were known as the *Pazhayakoottukar*. Thus, the Malankara Christians of Kerala were split into two groups. The Puthenkoottukar were known as the Jacobites, who used the Antiochene liturgy and the Pazhayakoottukar, who used the East Syrian liturgy as the Syrian Catholics respectively.

We have to consider these sorrowful splits in the history of the Church as part of the human weakness and the lack of ability to understand various cultures. But God desires that those who have gone astray from the Church of Christ return to unity and reconciliation. We have to try and pray for that incessantly.

## Questions

1. What were the events that led the Malankara Church to the Slanting Cross Oath?
2. What was the immediate reason for the Slanting Cross Oath?
3. Describe the Slanting Cross Oath.

# THE HISTORY OF THE PUTHENKOOR COMMUNITY

After the Slanting Cross Oath, the indigenous Parambil Chandy Kathanar became the Bishop. Those who accepted Bishop Parambil Chandy, who followed the East Syrian liturgy used by the Malankara Church, and who continued allegiance to the Pope of Rome began to be known as the Pazhayakoottukar. Those who stood firm behind Archdeacon Thoma, accepted the Jacobite Bishop of Antioch, followed the



Mar Joseph Kariattil  
Fervent Promoter of Christian unity

Antiochean liturgy, and cut off the relationship with the Pope of Rome. These were known as the Puthenkoottukar. In course of time, they began to be known as 'Jacobites'. We learn in this lesson about the Puthenkoottukar.

## **From the First to the Fifth Mar Thoma (1653-1765)**

After the Slanting Cross Oath, twelve priests together ordained Archdeacon Thoma, Bishop. Thus the Archdeacon, who became Bishop, was known after the name Mar Thoma I. All were convinced that the ordination of Mar Thoma I was not valid. In order to set right the ordination, contact was made with Antioch and Mar Gregorios, a Jacobite Bishop arrived in Kerala in 1665 for the first time. Mar Gregorios did not attempt to

introduce the Antiochean liturgy in Malankara, nor did he propagate Jacobite faith here. Mar Gregorios worked only to reinstate the customs abolished by the synod of Udayamperoor. Mar Thoma I expired in 1670 and was entombed in the church at Angamali.

After Mar Thoma I, five Mar Thomas ruled the Puthenkoor community till 1765. The Antiochean Jacobite Bishops, Mar Baselios, Mar Gregorios, Mar Ivanios, who came to Kerala during the time of Mar Thoma V, were the strong propagators of the Antiochean liturgy in Malankara. After the Slanting Cross Oath, for about 100 years, both the Puthenkoottukar and the Pazhayakoottukar followed the East Syrian liturgy, which Bishop Francis Roz had renewed. Instead of the East Syrian liturgy, which the Malankara Christians used from the very beginning, the Antiochean liturgy, which the Jacobite Bishops brought, gained publicity among the Puthenkoottukar after 1765. Thus, there came into being three different liturgies and communities of worship in the Malankara Church. The first was the East Syrian liturgy, which was in vogue here, the second the Latin liturgy, which the Portuguese missionaries brought here, and the third the Antiochean liturgy, which the Jacobite Bishops brought from Antioch.

### **The Sixth Mar Thoma (1761-1808)**

Mar Thoma VI received all the orders from Mar Gregorios, the Jacobite Bishop, who came from Antioch. He adopted the name Mar Divannasios I.

### **The Efforts for Reunion**

Mar Thoma VI was the one who relentlessly tried for the reunion of the groups of Puthenkoor and Pazhayakoor. Thachil Mathan Tharakan, the then leader of the Pazhayakoor and Kariyatty Youseph Malpan, the chief of the priests and the other members of the community also tried untiringly for the reunion. Paremakal Thoma Kathanar and Kariyatty Youseph Malpan together went to Rome and Portugal with the petitions for reunion of Mar Thoma VI. They obtained the documents and permission from Rome and Kariyatty became Archbishop in 1782. He returned up to Goa in 1786. He passed away in 1786 and was buried there. Negotiations for reunion were held when Paremakal Thoma Kathanar was the leader of the Pazhayakoor

Church. As a result of which Mar Thoma VI was reunited to the Catholic Church on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1799. He took his residence at Thathampally, Alleppy. But the missionaries were not prepared to hand over the rule of the Church to Mar Thoma VI. Since he did not get the rule, after six months, he returned to the Puthenkoor community. He passed away in 1808.

### **From Mar Thoma VI to Mar Thoma IX**

Mar Thoma VI installed as his successor Mar Thoma VII in 1796. Mar Thoma VIII and Mar Thoma IX were installed as successors. Though Mar Thoma IX was installed in 1815, he was not able to rule.

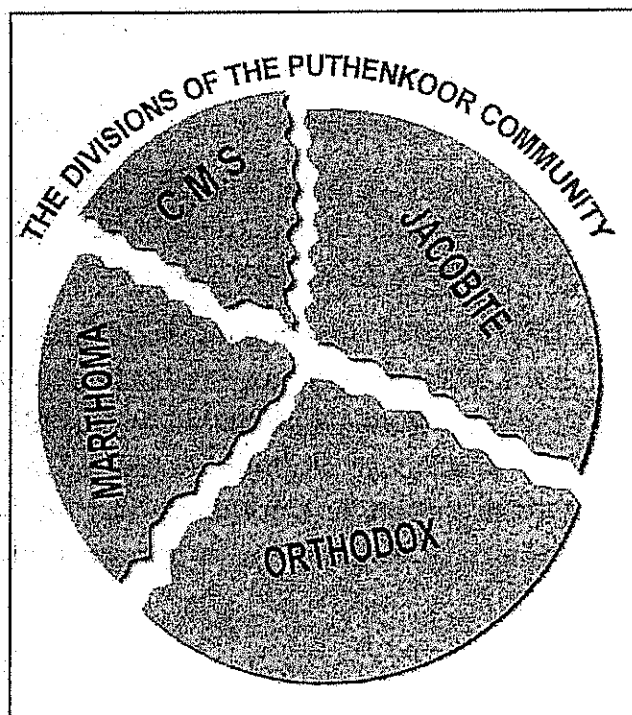
During the period from 1653 to 1815, the Puthenkoor Church did not keep aloof from the Pazhayakoor. Though they were under two leaderships, liturgy was conducted together in several churches. They used the East Syrian liturgy in good many churches. Nobody considered that the Antiochean Patriarch had any jurisdiction here at that period. Efforts were taken during this period to bring the Puthenkoor community under one leadership.

### **Questions**

1. Describe the Pazhyakoottukar and the Puthenkoottukar.
2. Describe the efforts for Reunion of Mar Thoma VI.

# THE DIVISIONS OF THE PUTHENKOOR COMMUNITY

The close of the 18<sup>th</sup> century marked the beginning of changes in the Kerala Church. British dominion was established here from 1792. English (Anglican) missionaries began to learn more about the Malankara Puthenkoor community. The Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.), which was formed in 1799, started work in 1816 with Alleppy as centre. It was colonel Mantro, who was the then Resident of Travancore, who invited the C.M.S. to this place.



## The Puthenkoor Community and their Relationship with the C.M.S.

Colonel Mantro helped Malankara Nazranies in several ways. He started an English Medium School for imparting English education to the members of the Puthenkoor community at Kottayam. He also gave helps to start the clerical Seminary at Kottayam. The churches that were used both by the Pazhayakoottukar and the Puthenkoottukar were given solely to the latter. Thus, in many ways the English missionaries helped the Puthenkoor community. Thus, the influence of the English missionaries increased among the members of the Puthenkoor community. The missionaries were permitted to preach in the Puthenkoor churches, as they willed. Thus, the missionaries disseminated Protestant ideas and ideas of Reformation in the Puthenkoor churches. The missionaries put many new proposals such as: to remove the intercessory prayers to the Mother of God and to the Saints, to compel



the priests to marry, to make changes in the liturgy according to the thinking of Reformation, to vernacularize the liturgy, etc.

The missionaries began to work against the rites and rituals of the Puthenloor community. Since the works of the missionaries were detrimental to the Church, a synod was convened at Mavelikara in 1836. There, the synod decided to stop all relationship with the English missionaries. As a result of which about 6000 members of Puthenloor left the Church and joined the C.M.S.

### **The Synod of Mulamthuruthy and the Starting of the Marthoma Church**

Even though the Puthenloor community severed the relationship with the C.M.S. missionaries, many priests and people continued to foster the ideas of the Church reformation. Palakkunnathu Abraham Malpan gave the leadership to this. Since they went forward with these ideas, Cheppat Mar Divannasios, the then reigning Bishop, excommunicated Abraham Malpan and his followers from the Church. Abraham Malpan understood that there was the need of a Bishop to patronize the ideas of reformation and sent deacon Mathan to Antioch. Mathan was ordained as Bishop by the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, Mar Elias and returned to Kerala in 1842. He was known as Matthews Mar Athanasios. He tried for the reformation of the Puthenloor community. Patriarch Peter III came to Kerala in 1875 under the compulsion of the then Archbishop Pulikkottil Mar Divannasios.

### **The Synod of Mulamthuruthy**

A synod was held at Mulamthuruthy in 1876. The Puthenloor parishes were divided among seven Dioceses: Kollam, Thumpamon, Kottayam, Angamali, Kandanad, Kochi and Niranam. Matthews Mar Athanasios, who propagated the ideas of Reformation, and his followers were excommunicated from the Church. Pulikkottil Mar Divannasios was appointed as the Malankara Archbishop. Matthews Mar Athanasios ordained Bishop Thomas, the son of Abraham Malpan after the name Thomas Mar Athanasios and entrusted with the care of the reformed community. Matthews Mar Athanasios passed away in 1877. There was a court verdict against the Reformation group. Thus Thomas Mar Athanasios and followers came to Maramon and settled down there. The Reformation community later on adopted the name Marthomites. The headquarters of the Marthomites is now at Tiruvalla.

## **The Puthenloor Community is transformed into the Jacobite Church**

After the Reformation Movement became strong among the Puthenloor community, a synod was held in 1876 at Mulamthuruthy under the leadership of the Jacobite Patriarch Mar Peter III. They had decided at the synod held at Mavelikara that the teachings and the faith of the Syrian Jacobite Church are theirs and that none other than that was acceptable. The Puthenloor community came under the Antiochean Jacobite Patriarch and became a part of the Jacobite Church at the synod of Mulamthuruthy. With this synod, the Puthenloor community accepted the name 'Jacobites'. Mar Divannasios contested in the court that they were the genuine Jacobites. Thus, the Antiochean Patriarch was accepted as the head of the Puthenloor community. The Antiochean practices and teachings were enforced here. He tried to separate the Puthenloor community from the Pazhayakoor and gave instructions in order to generate enmity towards the Pope of Rome. Thus, the Puthenloor community, which resisted the Portuguese foreign rule, had to accept the Antiochean foreign rule.

## **The Establishment of the Catholicate and the Jacobite Church (1912)**

With the separation of the Marthomites from the Puthenloor community, the Puthenkoottukar were known as Jacobites. Pulikkottil Mar Divannasios was the Archbishop of the then Jacobite Church. During that period, the leaders of the local Church submitted a memorandum to the Patriarch that the Jacobites of Kerala needed a Catholicate (a *sui iuris* arrangement) and a Catholicos (person with *sui iuris* power). But the Patriarch was against such a demand.

Archbishop Pulikkottil Mar Divannasios sent Geevarghese Malpan and Paulos Malpan to Antioch. Patriarch Abdulla ordained both as Bishops and gave the names Vattasseril Geevarghese Mar Divannasios and Paulos Mar Koorilos, respectively.

After the demise of Pulikkottil Mar Divannasios, Vattasseril Mar Divannasios became the Malankara Archbishop in 1909. During that period Patriarch Abdulla of Antioch visited Malankara. He declared that the Patriarch had all the spiritual and temporal authorities among the Jacobites of Malankara. But, Vattasseril Mar Divannasios and a group of the Jacobites opposed that. Hence, the Patriarch excommunicated Vattasseril Mar Divannasios and appointed Paulos Mar Koorilos instead, as the Malankara Metropolitan.

Thus a group, which fully accepted the Patriarch, came into existence. This is known as the Patriarch Party. Those who accepted the Patriarch only spiritually were known as the Metropolitan Party. Thus, the Jacobite community was divided into Patriarch Party and Metropolitan Party.

### **Establishment of the Catholicate (1912)**

After the excommunication of Vattasseril Mar Divannasios, the Metropolitan Party contacted another Patriarch in Antioch, named Abded M'siha. Abded M'siha came to Kerala in 1912 and he annulled the excommunication of Vattasseril Mar Divannasios and established a Catholicate in Malankara. Along with that he installed a Catholicos, by name Paulos Mar Baselios. The meaning of the Word Catholicos is 'Head of the Church'.

### **Jacobite Church and the Orthodox Church**

The Metropolitan party, belonging to the Jacobite Church, which was divided into two in 1911, accepted the title 'Malankara Orthodox Church', and the Patriarch Party, 'Jacobites'. Each group has its own Metropolitan and administration. Today these groups continue as two Churches with Moovattupuzha as the centre of the Jacobites and Kottayam as the centre of the Orthodox.

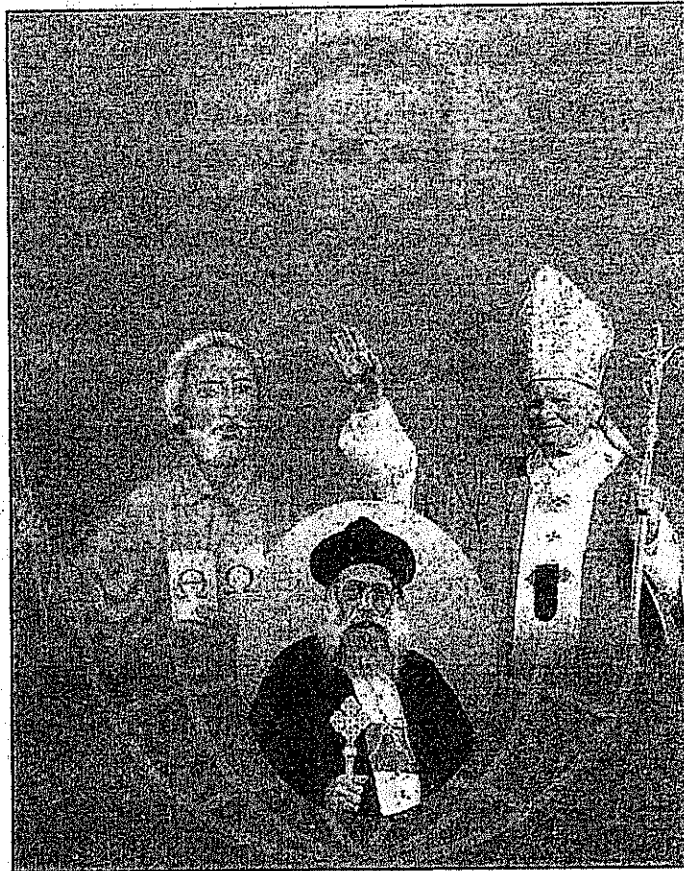
Whenever the foreigners related with our Church, it led to the division of the Church. With the coming of the Portuguese there was the divisions of Puthenloor and Pazhayakoor; with the arrival of the English, the C.M.S. and the Marthomites and through the Antiochean relationship, the Jacobite and the Orthodox. Various splits occurred within the Puthenloor community after the Slanting Cross Oath in 1653. All these splits of the Church are to be considered due to the weakness of human nature and due to the special circumstances that prevailed in each period. The only remedy for that is to come back from split to unity. If split is due to human weakness, unity is a gift of the Holy Spirit. The desire of the Puthenloor for reunion is to be considered as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit.

### **Questions**

1. Describe the relationship of the Puthenloor community with the C.M.S.
2. Describe the beginning of the Marthomite Church.
3. How was the Puthenloor community divided into Jacobite and Orthodox Churches?

## PUTHENKOOR COMMUNITY AGAIN IN COMMUNION WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Schism started in the Kerala Church with the Slanting Cross Oath that took place in 1653. From that very time, efforts for reunion also started. For about 300 years the efforts for reunion went on. To a certain extent this was realized with the reunion under the leadership of Mar Ivanios, Metropolitan. In all the efforts for reunion from Mar Thoma I to Mar Ivanios in 1930, there was the special attention to safeguard the individuality and the spiritual patrimony of



the Malankara Church. We see in the efforts of reunion the desire to revive the union with the Catholic Church. Serious efforts for reunion took place during the reign of Vattasseril Mar Divannasios (1909-1934).

### **Effort for Reunion - under the leadership of Malankara Synod**

Vattasseril Mar Divannasios went to Mardin after 1912 in order to hold conciliatory talks with the Patriarch. On his way, he visited the Syrian Catholic Metropolitan of Bagdad. The aim of the visit was to seek the possibility of reunion with the Catholic Church. After his return home, he received a letter from Ephrem Rehmani, the Syrian Catholic Patriarch. In continuation to

that Vattasseril Mar Divannasios invited to Parumala, Mar Baselios Geevarghese Catholicos, Geevarghese Mar Gregorios, and Mar Ivanios of Bethany. He entrusted them to discuss and decide on further matters.

The synod held at Parumala deputed Mar Ivanios to negotiate matters related with reunion. Mar Ivanios made correspondence with the Patriarch Rehmani.

### **The Leadership of Mar Ivanios**

The leadership of Mar Ivanios was very helpful to the efforts for reunion. He was convinced that the reunion with the Catholic Church, the communion, which the Malankara Church already had, was necessary to restore real peace to a Church, which was going through splits and litigations.

Mar Ivanios submitted the first memorandum to the Apostolic See of Rome with the approval of the Synod of the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church in November, 1926. There were two conditions proposed in it, namely: (1) to safeguard their ancient liturgy (rite) and religious practices, (2) to receive them, giving jurisdiction to the Bishops over all the Syrian Jacobites who got reunited. After this also, Mar Ivanios was continuously in contact with Rome.

### **The Sanction for Reunion**

There was a favourable decision from Rome for reunion in July 1930. The matter was intimated to Mar Ivanios from Rome on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1930. Rome gave assurance that according to the petition, the Antiochean Liturgy (Rite), would be sanctioned and that Bishops would be received into the Catholic Church with their official status. Thus, there arose a favourable situation for reunion.

Many changes happened in the Malankara Church after submitting the petition for reunion in 1926. The amount that was deposited in the bank for the Puthenloor community was the Vattippanam (Deposit for interest). The court, which decreed the Vattippanam litigation against the Metropolitan Party in 1923, decreed in favour of it in 1928. With that many of those who stood in favour of reunion retracted. But Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos

stood firm in their decision, accepting the call of God for the union of the Church.

The preparations for the reunion went on centring on the Bethany Ashram, Perunad. Mar Ivanios and Mar Theophilos, along with 20 other professed, left the Bethany hills on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1930 and came to Vennikkulam and stayed there. The epoch-making reunion took place on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1930. Mar Ivanios, Mar Theophilos, Fr. John O.I.C., Deacon Alexander, and Kililathu Chacko, made their profession of faith before Rt. Rev. Dr. Benzigar, the Bishop of Quilon, as representatives. Thus, the efforts for reunion began from Mar Thoma I, fructified.

### **The Erection of the Malankara Catholic Hierarchy**

Metroplitan Mar Ivanios visited Pope Pius XI in 1932 and submitted to him the memorandum for the growth and development of the new movement. The formal proclamation instituting the Malankara Hierarchy took place on 11<sup>th</sup> June 1932 through the decree '*Christo Pastorum Principi*'. The Archdiocese of Trivandrum and the Diocese of Tiruvalla were formally established. Mar Ivanios was appointed Metropolitan of the Archdiocese of Trivandrum and Mar Theophilos as the Bishop of Tiruvalla. Thus, the desire of the Malankara Church to come in communion with the Catholic Church, preserving the Antiochean liturgy and the common traditions of the Malankara Church, fructified.

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

The Reunion is the event by which a part of the Puthenkoor community, which was severed from the Catholic communion with the Slanting Cross Oath in 1653, regained Catholic communion. The members of the Church, who regained this communion, are known as the Malankara Catholics. The Malankara Church of India established by Mar Thoma, the apostle, was in communion with the Catholic Church and the Pope in Rome till the year 1653. After that until 1930, the Puthenkoor community of the Malankara Church lost its Catholic communion. The Malankara Catholics are those who regained the Church union in 1930. The Malankara Catholic Church began to grow after the reunion. Today the Malankara Catholic Church has

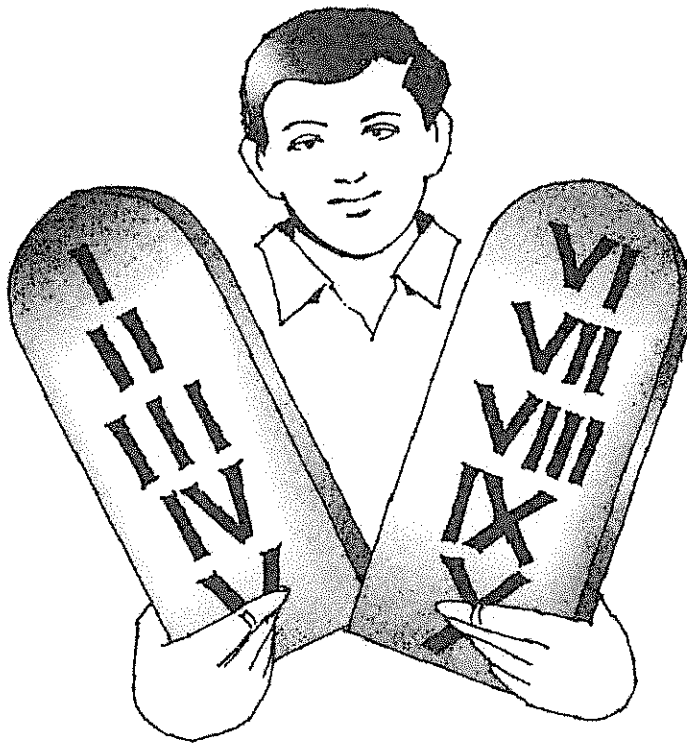
on its rolls, 5 Dioceses, 8 Bishops, about 850 parishes, many priests and religious, both men and women, very many educational institutions and hospitals and nursing homes, and about 5 lakhs of faithful.

The reunion facilitated to come to unity with the special grace of the Holy Spirit, removing split and difference, and to bring joy, peace and prosperity in the Church. Let us, the children of the Reunion Movement, thank God, who made it possible for us. At the same time let us pray for the reunion of the children of the Malankara Church, who still live separated from the communion of the universal Church (through the slanting cross oath).

### **Questions**

1. Explain the leadership, Mar Ivanios gave for the reunion.
2. Describe the establishment of the Malankara Catholic Hierarchy.

**PART - IV**



**CHRISTIAN LIFE**



# THE VARIOUS STATES OF LIFE

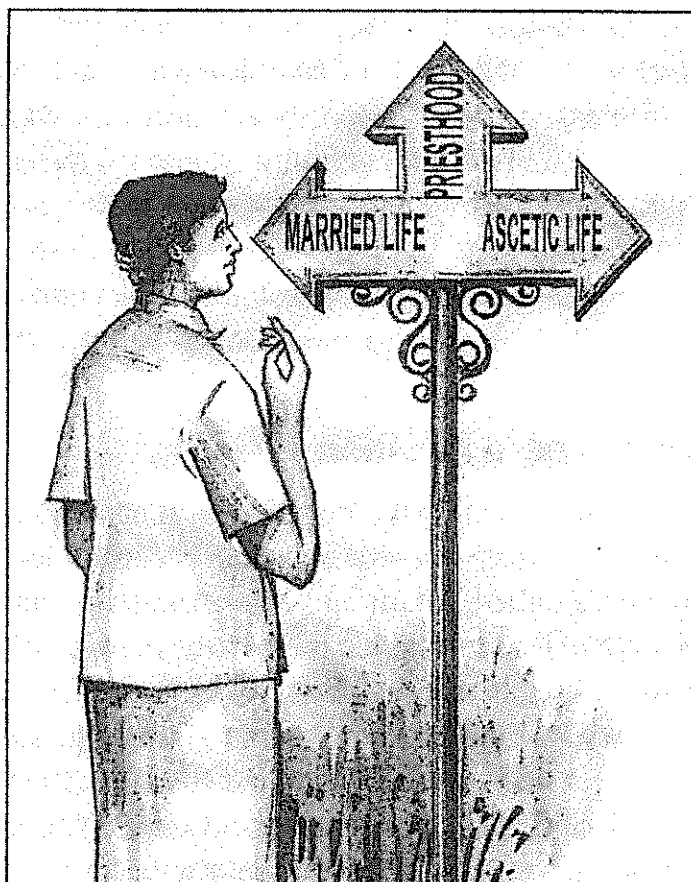
We can see in our community people who have chosen various states of life. There are three states of life prevalent in the Catholic Church at present.

The majority are those who marry and live as family. Each one of us is born and brought up in a family consisting of father, mother and children. Marriage is a state of life and style of life.

Priesthood is another style of life we see in the Church. There are priests in all religions. Priests are those, who do service as intermediaries between God and man. Priests, in the Catholic Church dedicate themselves for the service of God completely without getting married. There are priests, married and unmarried in other religions also.

Asceticism is a style of life, we see, in all religions. Ascetics are those who dedicate themselves to God completely. Asceticism is a state of life as well as a life-style.

We deal with in this lesson about the three states of life: Marriage, Priesthood and Asceticism.



## **Married Life**

In the beginning God created Adam and made him dwell in the Garden of Eden. "It is not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). God, who understood this, created Eve as a helpmate to Adam. God made Adam and Eve dwell in the Garden of Eden and laid foundation for the first family. God blessed thus the family relationship, which began through the first parents: "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28). God again said thus: "A man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Thus, God blessed the married life and established its unity and its aim. The family life, which God blessed in paradise, is being continued even today through generations.

## **Marriage - a Vocation of God**

It is not casual that a man and woman, who reached adulthood, come for marriage. They become married because God specially calls them. God specially called Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel and led them to the married life. Even today God specially calls and sets apart each one, who marries. It is because of the plan of God, that man and woman are drawn to other and accept each other. That is how marriage is understood as a divine vocation. The Church teaches that marriage is a call of God, like priesthood and asceticism. Through the call for marriage, it is understood that husband and wife love each other and share in God's work of creation and glorify him. Thus, one could acquire salvation through the married life.

## **The Sacrament of Marriage**

Though marriage could be thought of as a social custom of permitting man and woman, who reached adulthood, to live together, it is a Sacrament. Marriage is a service in which God specially calls man and woman, setting them apart and bestowing divine grace on them and unites them. Thus, marriage is a mystery by which through the intervention of God, divine grace is showered upon the couple and they become one. In order that man and woman love each other, share each other, and become sanctified, human

abilities alone are not enough, but the grace of God is necessary. The couple gets this grace of God through the Sacrament of Marriage.

## **The State of Life of the Priesthood**

God had specially called several people in the Old Testament for service. We see the prophets, priests and kings being called, separated and specially chosen by God. When the Lord asked who would go to speak to the people for God's sake, Isaiah replied: "Here am I, send me" (Isaiah 6:8-9). This voice of God continues through generations. The priests and the religious are called by God to serve him. These are the people, who specially receive the call of God and dedicate themselves for his service.

## **Who is a Priest?**

The priests are those who are specially set apart for God and for divine service. A priest is one, who stands as intermediary between God and man and does service. Jesus Christ, who served, as the only intercessor between God, the Father and mankind, is the supreme priest. Jesus desired to continue his priestly service till the end of the world. Thus, priesthood is the sacrament Jesus instituted in order to share his priesthood. Jesus continues his priestly service through the priests till the end of the world. God calls a person specially and sets him apart and prepares him for divine service. God gives infinite divine grace to a person through the sacrament of priesthood. In this manner a weak person, through the grace of God, stands as intermediary between God and man and performs the priestly service. A priest has fundamentally three services: to teach, to sanctify and to lead. God himself does these three services. The priest stands as a delegate of God and preaches the Word of God in his name, administers the



sacraments and gives spiritual leadership.

The meaning of the word 'priest' is 'one who is placed in front'. The duty of the priest is to fulfil among men the salvation merited by God. We call the priest 'Father'. Priests or Fathers are our spiritual fathers, who beget us spiritually and bring us up and protect us. They are the representatives of God.

## **The Ascetic Life**

Ascetics are those, who fully dedicate themselves through the threefold vow of obedience, poverty and chastity. They are specially called by God to attain Christian perfection through these three vows.

In the married life, the love of a person is fully given to one's life-partner. But a person, for the love of God, tries to give his love to the whole world. Asceticism means to love all people, to love God above all, to love the universe, thereby to identify oneself with him, who is love itself. Through the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, we mean: to seek the pleasure and joy of others without seeking one's own pleasure and joy; and for that to renounce one's own pleasure and joy.

An ascetic gives everything to others without possessing anything for self. That is poverty. Chastity is meant to render love to all, not restricting it to one person alone through entering into marriage. Obedience is, to dedicate oneself to serve others, renouncing one's own desire and liking for the love of God.

Many religious priests serve in the Church, now a days, because there are not enough diocesan priests to work in the mission areas. Both women and men could embrace religious life. Men are known as religious men and women, as religious women or sisters.



## My Vocation

God calls specially each person to continue his mission: this call is for married life or for priesthood or for religious life. When we are of age, we should embrace any one of these. I should myself decide which state of life I should embrace. In order to make this choice, my ability alone would not suffice. For that the help of God, and of the elders and of the parents are needed. I should ask God and understand through prayer, what state of life he intends me to choose. I should try to understand the will of God regarding me from childhood. Let us be attentive to the call of God. Let us pray to God to reveal to us what we should become; a married man, a married woman, a priest, or a religious man or a religious woman.

### Worship

The Church prays in the *Kukkilion* of the Departed Priests thus: 'O Lord, remit the debts and shortcomings of the priests, who accomplished priestly service throughout their lives in churches and monasteries'.

(O Lord, deign to shower your grace Halleluiah.)

"Recall all the priests and the deacons, who served you

In your churches and monasteries during their life time;

In their hands did they celebrate your body and blood

Within the holy sanctuary to blot out all debts;

Your body shall remit all their faults

And your precious blood, all their sins

They shall sing your glory Lord, at your right hand side".

### Life Witness

God has a plan for each individual. Let us try to understand God's plan for our life and live accordingly.

### Memorise

"If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me".  
(Matthew 16:24)

## Questions

1. Why is marriage said to be a call of God?
2. Who is a priest?
3. What is meant by asceticism?

# SHOW COMPASSION TO THE POOR

One of the Pharisees asked a question in order to test Jesus 'Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?' He said to him: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind'. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second commandment is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Jesus taught that the love



of God and love of man are the two important commandments. We see in the Epistle of St. John that the measure of the love of God is in the love of man: "Those who do not love a brother or sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen". The Holy Bible explains the love of God only in relation with the love of man (1 John 4:20).

## **Jesus, Lover of Man**

We can see throughout the New Testament Jesus' love for man. Jesus summoned people, in his public life through his words and deeds, to love man. Jesus gave special consideration to those who are disregarded in society. Jesus loved those who were hated by society. He gave deliverance to those

who were bound by the chain of sin. Jesus cured many sick people. He touched the leper and cured and brought him to the mainstream of society. The blind, the dumb, the paralytic and those possessed by evil spirits were all discarded in society and were unacceptable. Jesus cured them all. Thus, he gave the love and compassion of God.

Jesus multiplied bread for the hungry and satisfied their hunger. He gave compassion and brought back to good life the woman, whom society had condemned to be stoned to death. Jesus raised to life the son of the widow of Nain, the daughter of Jairus and Lazarus and gave the joy of a new life to the members of their families who were in pain and grief.

Jesus taught the people during his public life to love man. Through the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus taught what was fraternal love and who was one's neighbour. Jesus made it clear that all those who needed my help are my neighbours. Jesus taught that love of neighbour dwells in the one, who loves others in their need, like the Good Samaritan.

Jesus loved the tax collectors and sinners, whom society hated. Thus, he delivered them from sin and brought them back to the mainstream of society.

Jesus taught the worth of a person to the synagogue authorities, who were dissatisfied with Jesus curing the crippled woman on a Sabbath. Jesus clearly taught that the life of the crippled woman was more valuable than the life of the bulls and the asses they have in their house.

Jesus taught that one should not get angry against one's neighbour and that one should forgive one's neighbour if he offends him and that one should give alms secretly; so saying Jesus taught about fraternal charity and about the glory of man.

## **Meet God in the Lowly**

Jesus instructed what would be the measure of the Last Judgement. Jesus said: "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me..." Jesus continued and said: "I tell you, just as

you did it to one of the least of these, who are members of my family, you did it to me. And when you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me. Jesus told that those who served the least of the brethren would enter into eternal life and those who did not serve into eternal punishment" (Matthew 25:31-46). Thus, Jesus made clear that a person would experience eternal salvation on the basis of fraternal charity and that the sign of the love of God is the love of the neighbour. It is the sum total of the public life of Jesus that one should deal with the least and the despised of society, with love

### **The Humble of our Society**

In our society there are many poor and humble people. These are the people, who experience several kinds of disregard. Since there existed caste system in our country, there was the division of high and low castes among the people. Our brothers belonging to the low caste had experienced great disregard in the name of caste. This disregard continues even now in our society. If any one from among those who learn with us or who live near our house experiences this disregard in the name of caste or religion, colour or faith, that is sin. We are obliged to give to each person due respect and recognition. We are all children of God; hence are brothers. This is the Christian viewpoint. If we refuse love and recognition to any one, it is against the love of God and the love of man.

There are people around us, who have no home and who sleep by the roadside or on verandahs of shops. There are also around us many poor people, who have not even a meal for a day, who are blind, lame and sick. There are many living in our society, who are ignorant, illiterate and are hated by the society. We should be able to give to these, love and recognition. Jesus had taught that when we love and help these, we love God. When we disregard these lowly ones, we disregard God. Hence, we should be able to render to these poorest of society all possible love and help and show them compassion, considering them as brothers. We have the obligation to deal with love and to serve the beggars, sick and the suffering, who come to our house.



## **The Witness of the Saints**

Mother Theresa is one, who, through the commandment of Jesus loved in a special manner the poor, the suffering and those, who were disregarded by society. Mother Theresa understood the Gospel of love of Jesus in its perfect sense. Mother gave the loving touch of Jesus to the thousands in the streets of Calcutta, who did not receive love from any one. She looked after lot of lepers, bandaged their wounds and started special houses for them. She also looked after lot of poor people, who were orphans, sick and who had no one to take care of them in their old age. She picked up abandoned infants from the streets and brought them up. Thus, Mother Theresa put into practice the Gospel of Jesus by perfectly loving those who were forsaken by society. Hence, Mother Theresa was known as a saint even when she was alive. Mother Theresa's great merit is that she demonstrated in daily practice the proper love of God and of fellow beings. We see in Mother Theresa the life witness, which roused human conscience by giving the love of Jesus to the poorest of society. There are many saints in the Church, who thus loved the poor and rendered special service to them. Vincent de Paul, Fr. Damian, etc., belong to this group.

## Worship

The Church commemorates in the prayer of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Hour of Tuesday the rich man, not helping the poor Lazarus in the Parable of the Rich man and Lazarus, and for that reason how he made himself condemnable to the fiery hell:

(Thathan vachanam ekasuthan...)

“Word of God, the only Son  
Spoke in parables to us:  
He said, when a rich man was  
Living in pomp and pleasure;  
Lazarus, poor as he had  
No food to quench his hunger;  
He died and the messenger took him  
To Abraham’s bosom.  
The rich - man, who had no me-rcy in heart,  
Was thrown into the fiery hell,  
Where he received  
Sorrow and torture”.

## Life Witness

Loving a man is the visible sign for our love towards God. It could be said that as much as we love man, so much we love God. Therefore, let us love all men. We are especially obliged to give love to the poor, sick, orphans, and those who are despised by the society. Let us try to help them and to show compassion to them. Thus let us be true Disciples of Christ.

### Memorise

“Just as you did it to one of the  
least of these who are members of  
my family, you did it to me”.  
(Matthew 25:40)

## Questions

1. ‘Jesus is a lover of man’. Explain.
2. Why should we love and recognize the least of the society?
3. Explain the life witness of Mother Theresa.

# PRAYERS

## Psalm 63

O God, you are my God, I seek you, my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land, where there is no water.

So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory.

Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

So I will bless you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast, and my mouth praises you with joyful lips.

When I think of you on my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night;

For you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I sing for joy.

My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.

But those who seek to destroy my life shall go down into the depths of the earth;

They shall be given over to the power of the sword; they shall be prey for the jackals.

But the king shall rejoice in God, all who swear by him shall exult, for the mouths of the liars will be stopped.

Praise is due to you, O God. Barekmoor.

## Psalm 19

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

Day to day pours forth speech, and night-to-night declares knowledge.

There is no speech nor are there words; their voice is not heard.

Yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

In the heavens he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom from his wedding canopy, and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them; and nothing is hid from its heat.

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple;

The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is clear, enlightening the eyes;

The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever; the ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired than gold even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.

Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.

But who can detect their errors? Clear me from hidden faults.  
Keep back your servant also from the insolent; do not let them have dominion over me. Then  
I shall be blameless, and innocent of great transgression.  
Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you; O Lord, my  
rock and my redeemer.  
Praise is due to you, O God Barekmor.

### **Isaiah 42:10-13, 45:8**

Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the end of the earth! Let the sea roar and all that  
fills it; the coastland and their inhabitants.  
Let the desert and its towns lift up their voice, the villages that Kedar inhabits; let the inhabitants  
of Sela sing for joy; let them shout from the tops of the mountains.  
Let them give glory to the Lord and declare his praise in the coastlands.  
The Lord goes forth like a soldier, like a warrior he stirs up his fury; he cries out, he shouts  
aloud, he shows himself mighty against his foes.  
Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the skies rain down righteousness, let the earth open,  
that salvation may spring up, and let it cause righteousness to sprout up also; I the Lord has  
created it.  
Praise is due to O God. Barekmor.

### **Psalms 113:1-9**

Praise the Lord! Praise O servants of the Lord; praise the name of the Lord.  
Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time on and forevermore.  
From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised.  
The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.  
Who is like the Lord our God, who is seated on high.  
Who looks far down on the heavens and the earth?  
He raises the poor from the dust, and lifts the needy from the ash heap. To make them sit with  
the princes of the people.  
He gives the barren woman a home, making her the joyous mother of children.  
Praise is due to you O God. Barekmor.



CATECHISM  
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MALANKARA  
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