

## CHAPTER ONE

### St. Thomas Church in India

#### Introduction

The Church in India is proud of its Thomistic apostolic heritage and patrimony. She is considered the progeny of the apostolate of St Thomas. This tradition is supported by historical references and the community consciousness of the faithful. Thanks to the serious scientific studies of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>th</sup> centuries, most of the scholars are at a point to admit the apostolate of St Thomas as certitude.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. Missionary Mandate from Christ

Jesus commanded his apostles to preach gospel to all the nations. “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mt 28,19). They were asked to be witnesses to the ends of the world. “And you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1,8). Empowered by the Holy Spirit, apostles witnessed to Christ in Jerusalem, Samaria (Galilee) and Rome (ends of the world). According to their concept, Rome was the greatest empire of the world and if gospel could be reached in Rome, it would symbolically represent that Jesus would be proclaimed to the ends of the world. Therefore, Acts of Apostles ends when St Paul reaches in Rome. Later Sts. Peter and Paul witnessed to Christ in Rome through their heroic death. Gospel was proclaimed east of the Roman Empire also. It moved towards Persian Empire and to India.

#### 2. St Thomas’ Mission in India

St Thomas was commissioned to proclaim gospel in India. According to South Indian tradition, St Thomas came to Malyankara and preached gospel. Southern end of Indian Peninsula, south of the Krishna River, was divided into three kingdoms: Chola, Pandya and Chera (Kerala)<sup>2</sup>. Chola or Cholamadam (Coromandal) was the northeast part; *Pandya nadu* was south west region; Chera (Kerala) which was famous for pepper was west and north of Pandya kingdom. A few of the scholars raise doubt about the identity of India where St Thomas preached the good news.

Those who oppose the possibility of the apostolic presence of St Thomas in India raise their arguments such as: India was far away for St Thomas, the claim of some Malabar Christians that they were Brahmin converts is challengeable, as there was no presence of Brahmins in Kerala in the 1<sup>st</sup> century; there was not a single primary source regarding his arrival in India. Claims and boasting of the Christians of India about St Thomas apostolate are some wishful desires masqueraded by emotions according to them.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The Sources of Syro-Malabar Law*, S. Kokkaravalel, ed., Kottayam 2015, 40.

<sup>2</sup> Kerala was formerly called Malayalam; Mala means mountain and Alam is habitation. Paulino da San Bartolomeo, *A Voyage to the East Indies*, W. Johnston tran. London 1800, 102. For better understanding about the ancient India, it is recommended to read the works of RS Sharma, *Ancient India*, Romila Thapar, *The Past as Present*, John Key, *A History of India*, RC Manjumdar, *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, 11 vols etc.

### 3. Arguments in favour of Thomistic Apostolate

Indeed, no primary document regarding the apostolate of St Thomas in India was found until now. Absence of any primary document does not invalidate the possibility of the apostolate, rather it would help one ponder over references and secondary documents to substantiate the already existing presuppositions. Presuppositions are certain premises which already exist or it is a statement tacitly assumed beforehand by some grounds. Regarding St Thomas mission, there is a tradition which is supported by arguments and possibilities of his entry in India. In the first centuries of Christian era, people were neither chronologists nor writers who would mark the course of actions with a sense of historicity. They were simply living their faith. Therefore, one has to go through secondary sources and references in favour of Thomistic apostolate.

#### 3.1. Trade Connection between India and Middle East

Extensive trade routes connected India and West Asia (Middle East); maritime connection with the help of monsoon winds was a favourable fact for the mission of St Thomas. “The main maritime trade routes in ancient times, as in the present day, lay through the Arabian coast and the Red Sea, and through them the trade of Malabar flowed into Europe.”<sup>3</sup> Naturally this connection might have helped the origin and growth of Christianity in India. Even Roman Empire had trade relation with South India. Muziris (Kodungalloor) was the main sea port<sup>4</sup> of that time. This fact supports the tradition of the arrival of St Thomas as he may have used the same routes to India.

#### 3.2. Local Tradition of the St Thomas Christians

According to a South Indian tradition, St. Thomas came to India and landed in Cranganore or Kodunglloor in AD 52 with a merchant called Haban and started his mission from there. Tradition says that the apostle converted many from local families, and started communities or churches in Kerala, in places such as Kodungalloor, Palayur, Quilon (Kollam), Niranam, Chayal, Kokkamanglam and Kottakkavu (Parur).<sup>5</sup> They are called the seven churches founded by St. Thomas. After his mission he went to Tamilnadu and continued his apostolate there; he effected many conversions there also. He suffered martyrdom on or near *Chinna Mala* – the Little Mount (Mylapore)<sup>6</sup> in about AD 72, pierced with a lance.

Local tradition holds an opinion that St Thomas converted Brahmins in Malabar and they formed first Christian communities. Some secular historians object this view saying that there was no Brahmin presence in Kerala especially in the first centuries and therefore, the claim of Brahmin conversion would be false. Thus, they conclude that the presence and mission of St Thomas could be a story or false claim.

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<sup>3</sup> K.M. Panikkar, *Malabar and the Portuguese: Being a History of the Relations of the Portuguese with Malabar from 1500 to 1663*, Bombay 1929, 1.

<sup>4</sup> K. M. Panikkar, *Malabar and the Portuguese: Being a History of the Relations of the Portuguese with Malabar from 1500 to 1663*, 4.

<sup>5</sup> J. Kurikilamkatt, *The Apostle Thomas at Taxila: Historical Investigation of the Mission of Thomas to North India with Special Reference to the Acts of Thomas, Excerpta ex dissertatione ad Doctoratum in Gregoriana*, Romae 2002, 14-14.

<sup>6</sup> A. M. Mundadan, “Origins of Christianity in India (1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century)”, in H.C. Perumalil and E.R. Hamby ed., *Christianity in India*, Alleppey 1972, 18.

It is to be noted that until the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, many accounts which prevailed in Malabar claimed that the first Christian converts were from Brahmin communities. The source of such claims is not known to us. They can be considered as a later addition to existing history when caste system developed in Kerala. Though there was no Brahminic settlements in colonisation in South India that time (which took place only around 9<sup>th</sup> cent), their sporadic presence in Malabar cannot be denied. It is important to note that first Christian centres were some of the Jewish colonies in Malabar at that time. It is also possible that first Christian converts were from Jewish communities.<sup>7</sup> Local people were also supposed to be converted to Christianity and they also formed first Christian community in India.

Lack of written documents cannot be considered as a reason for simply denying a living tradition of a community. Tradition of the apostolate of St Thomas does not fall under the categories of myth and legend. Therefore, historical persons, places, monuments etc of such tradition can be critically analysed and scientifically verified to understand the possibilities of such traditions.

### 3.3. *Acts of Thomas*

An ancient document that testifies to the apostolate of Thomas in India is *The Acts of Judas Thomas*.<sup>8</sup> It is a Syriac Apocryphal work of the third century which presents the life and activities of Thomas. Though it is not an officially recognised work by the Church, it contains certain facts regarding St Thomas especially about his works in India and Edessa. Though it is written in legendary style, its nucleus is an oral tradition in Edessa which was embellished with gnostic ideas. It contains 13 acts or chapters in 170 paragraphs.<sup>9</sup>

According to this gnostic work, St. Thomas preached the gospel in the land of Gundaphar and from there he moved to other parts. “The name of King Gondophares appears in the Syriac text of the *Acts* as *Gudnaphar*; in the Greek version as *ΓουδαΦορος*.”<sup>10</sup> About the missions of Thomas in the regions outside the kingdom of Gundaphar, there are certain indications in *The Acts of Thomas*.<sup>11</sup> But “the Indian Christians never attempted to implant locally any of the personages or events borrowed from *The Acts of Thomas* into their own Indian environment.”<sup>12</sup> After his mission works in the Kingdom of Gundaphar, he moved to the Kingdom of Mazdei where he died as a martyr. This work ends with an elaborate description of the martyrdom of St Thomas. *Doctrine of Apostles* is another apocryphal work which gives indications to the apostolate of St Thomas in India. Exact place of his martyrdom cannot be traced out from this work.

### 3.4. *Traditional folk songs*

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<sup>7</sup> T. Puthiakunnel, “Jewish Colonies of India Paved the Way for St. Thomas” in J. Vellian, ed., *The Malabar Church Symposium in Honour of Rev. Placid J. Podipara C.M.I., OCA* (186), Roma 1970, 187-191, p. 189.

<sup>8</sup> A.F.J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas: Introduction, Text and Commentary*, Boston 2003, 17-205. E. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India: a History of the Syro-Malabar Church from the Earliest time to the Present Day*, London 1957, 2. Hereafter this work will be cited as E. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India*.

<sup>9</sup> J. Puliurumpil, *The Acts of Thomas A Theological Source for St Thomas Christians*, Kottayam 2019, 88.

<sup>10</sup> A.E. Medlycott, *India and the Apostle Thomas an Inquiry with a Critical Analysis of the Acta Thomae*, London 1905, 2.

<sup>11</sup> A.F.J. Klijn, *The Acts of Thomas: Introduction, Text and Commentary*, 167-205.

<sup>12</sup> B. Vadakkekara, “Significance and Role of Tradition in the Historiography on St Thomas Christians” in K.S. Mathew et al. ed., *St. Thomas and India*, Minneapolis 2020, pp. 69-87 at 78-79.

Traditional songs like *Margamkali Pattu*, *Rabban Pattu* and *Mar Thoma Parvam* contain a lot of historical accounts. Exact time of their composition cannot be assumed from the works, but they are accounts of ancient events, that existed orally among St. Thomas Christians.

*Margamkali Pattu* is a male dance based on Acts of Thomas, and it highlights his mission in South India. This dance is solemnly performed on the occasion of feasts, meetings (reception of bishops) and weddings. It contains 14 strophes with a prayer song. It describes that after his arrival in India, St Thomas preached gospel, converted many, and moved to Mylapore where he was pierced with a lance. *Mar Thoma Parvam* is a song in *manipravala* language. Its content is almost same as that of Acts of Thomas but with some differences.<sup>13</sup>

*Ramban Pattu* is believed to be an ancient song but it might be re-edited in course of time. The present version is believed to be written by Ramban Thomas Maliekal in 1601. It describes the arrival of Thomas in Maliamkara (Malankara), his mission in India and his martyrdom.

### 3.5. *Testimonies of the Church Fathers*

Many Eastern and Western Fathers bear witness to the missionary work of St Thomas in India. Eastern Fathers like Origen, St Ephrem, St John Chrysostom, Clement of Alexandria (3<sup>rd</sup> Cen), Doctrine of the Apostle, St Gregory Nazianzen, St Gregory the Great, Jacob of Sarug, Eusebius of Cesarea and Western Fathers like St Ambros, St Gaudentius of Brescia, St Paulinus of Nola, St Jerome and St Gregory of Tours are some of them.<sup>14</sup> Though they were not direct witnesses of the mission of St Thomas in India, there was a consensus among a good number of Church fathers regarding apostolate of St Thomas in India. Their witness shows that the tradition is very ancient and that it was uninterruptedly transmitted.

### 3.6. *Tomb of St Thomas in India*

Tomb of St Thomas at Mylapore is one of the important monuments which testify to the apostolate of St Thomas in India.<sup>15</sup> No other place in the world claims the tomb of St Thomas. Christians would go to Mylapore from the time immemorial in pilgrimage. Syrian Christians would bring the soil from the tomb for blessing of the water and other sacramental practices. Western missionaries, taking note of the already existing veneration of this tomb, made more studies about the tomb. In the middle ages, the Portuguese tried to verify the presence of the tomb of Thomas the apostle in India, and Europeans like Marco Polo, Blessed Oderico and many others testify to it.<sup>16</sup> St Ephrem (Carmina Nisibena 42), John Chrysostom (Martyrologium Hieronymianum), Passio Thomae (6<sup>th</sup> cent), Psuedo Sophronius (7<sup>th</sup> cent), Isidore of Seville (636), Anglo Saxon Chronicle (884), Arab writers like Amr ibn Matta (1340) and Mufazzal ibn Abil Fazail (1358), Marignoli (1349) and Bl Oderic (1325) are other important writers who referred to the tomb of St Thomas in India.

## 4. Contact of the Indian Church before the Portuguese arrival

<sup>13</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The Sources of Syro-Malabar Law*, 75-77.

<sup>14</sup> A.C. Perumalil, *The Apostles in India fact or fiction?*, Patna 1952, 43-51. J. Kollaparambil, *The Sources of Syro-Malabar Law*, 63-69.

<sup>15</sup> B. Vadakkekara, *Origin of Christianity in India: a Historiographical Critique*, Delhi 2007, 242-250. Also, A.C. Perumalil, *The Apostles in India fact or fiction?*, 58-64.

<sup>16</sup> G. Sorge, *L'India di S. Tommaso: Ricerche Storiche sulla Chiesa Malabarica*, Bologna 1983, 17.

India was well known to the west and Mediteranean regions in the first millennium. There are references regarding the visit of Panthenus to India, Theophilus (4<sup>th</sup> cent) who is said to have visited India (Aryan Philostorzius, Ecclestical History), an embassy sent by King Alfred of England (883), etc. Muslim Arabs came to Malabar in 7<sup>th</sup> cent.

## Conclusion

Arguments in favour of St Thomas' arrival in India could serve as confirmation of his mission there in the first century. Though one cannot categorically ascertain his apostolate there according to modern historical tools or primary sources, supportive sources and references regarding his mission in India confirm the local tradition of his apostolate. In other words, circumstantial evidences, indigenou and foreign sources, and references regarding the mission of the apostle support the tradition. The absence of primary sources does not invalidate the tradition of St Thomas Christians. Discripencies which had crept into tradition and dramatic narrations about his mission can be considered as certain additions to local tradition. A critical study of documents and inferences is always welcome for the sharpening of arguments and theories. St Thomas Christians of India always believed that they were the fruit of the mission of Apostle Thomas. The very presence of Christians from the first century especially around the said seven centres of Malabar supports the reasonability of the argument of the apostolate of St. Thomas in South India. Those Christians were also called Mar Thoma Nazranis – St. Thomas Christians. The migrant Christians of all time and missionaries – both Syrian and Latin – accepted the claim of the apostolic tradition of Christianity in India.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 1. Socio-Political and Religious life of St Thomas Christians

St Thomas Christians had hierarchical relation with Seleucian Church till the end of the XVI century. Thus, Syrian Liturgy and rites were introduced and practiced by St Thomas Christians. Along with these factors, they developed individuality in the socio-political environment of the land; adapted and incultured individuality.

#### 1.1. *Socio-political life*

St Thomas Christians had agriculture, trade and military service as their occupations.<sup>17</sup> When men were engaged in outdoor works or military service, women remained at home with household works. The dress of men was similar to that of Nairs and the Christian women were modestly dressed.

Immediately after the birth, babies were fed with powdered gold mixed with honey. A child would begin to learn alphabet from the childhood. Society and families were patriarchal. All most all, (except those who were celibates and those who had gone to tomb of St Thomas on pilgrimage) kept their hair long, tied up into a bundle into which a metal cross

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<sup>17</sup> A.M. Mundadan, *Sixteenth Century Traditions of St Thomas Christians*, Bangalore 1970, 119.

was inserted. Touch of a St Thomas Christian was sufficient to purify articles defiled in the then caste driven society.<sup>18</sup>

Disputes among them were settled by bishop or archdeacon and only criminal cases were brought before the kings. St Thomas Christians enjoyed several privileges in the society because they were granted by the kings in different times. Privileges given to the community, individual or churches were engraved in copper plates. They are called Knaithomman copper plate (which do not exist now except their translations), Iravikorthan plate, Tharisa palli cheppedu (Quilon church) I and II. St Thomas Christians were called mapilas (maha pillas or noble ones) or nazrani mapilas. According to some narrations, they had a king till about the end of XVth century (Villarvattam raja) whose territory was later annexed to the king of Perumpadappil (Kochi).

## 1.2. Manner of worship

St Thomas Christians followed the East Syrian rite of worship as they had dependence to that Church till XVI century. There were East Syrian bishops to guide in their manner of worship.

**Churches** were like Hindu temples or non-Christian pagodas externally but with a special distinction which was the crosses put up on the roofs (façade) or in the open air. Floor was painted with cowdung. There were places to keep arms called *ayudhappura* (sometimes porches at the door were used to keep arms). Churches had rectangular hall divided into into Hykala, Kestroma, and Madbeha which was separated with a veil or curtain. Processions were like that of Hindu temples. Every church had a copy of the Holy Bible decorated with gold or silver. Only very rarely it was taken out of sanctuary. Clergy recited the East Syrian divine offices in churches in choir and the lay people who knew East Syrian responded to the choral recitation.

**Sacraments:** Sacraments were administered in East Syrian rite with some adaptations. Children were baptised immediately after their birth and were given Christian names especially of their (paternal or maternal) grandfather or grandmother. *Chrismation* (Confirmation) was also given with baptism. *Eucharist:* At elevation during Holy Qurbana, St Thomas Christians would rise up and bend their heads down to the floor and say they were not worthy of seeing it. They used leavened bread freshly baked and brought to the priest during offertory (covered with lotus leaves). Eucharistic wine was prepared from dry grapes. *Auricular Confession* was very rare (Joseph the Indian reported that they had such practice also) and there were many ways of receiving absolution like hitting penitents slightly with a bundle of sticks. *Anointing of the sick* with blessed oil was also practiced. Priest would bless the sick, read the Gospel placing over them or place a piece of palm leaf or paper wick contained verses from scripture. Soil from the tomb of St Thomas was mixed with water and it was given as a drink. *Priesthood:* priests were ordained for parishes (*desathupattam*). They were married clergy. Assembly of the parish would present candidate to archdeacon (*desakkuri*) and through him, they were brought to bishop for ordination. Learned priests were called malpans who trained candidates to priesthood. Their special costume consisted of long white trousers and loose white gown with wide sleeves and a cap on the head. They had beard. *Marriage:* Child marriage was common then. There were several functions like ceremonial baths, feeding the boy and girl with sweets before marriage (in respective houses). East Syrian rite of marriage was followed in the church and boy would tie golden

<sup>18</sup> T.K. Joseph, "Rajasimha Inscription at Talakad", *Indian Antiquary* 58 (1929), 24-31 at p.29.

*tali* (in which there was a cross of 21 beads) round the neck of the girl. Thread to tie tali would be taken out from the *manthrakodi*.

*Sacramentals*: There was no distinction between sacraments and sacramental in the oriental Churches. The prayerful actions of priests which confer grace were called sacraments by them. Divine office, funeral service, blessing of a house etc were sacraments then and they are considered sacramental now.

### 1.3. *Spiritual life*

Fasts and feasts were part of their spiritual life. Their fasts consisted of 25 fast or *nomb*, 3 day fast, fast before Easter, before August 15, before September 8 (*Ettunomb*), Fridays etc. On Fridays and Wednesdays they would abstain from meat, fish, milk, tobacco and also conjugal acts. Holy Week was observed in a special way by keeping vigils, prayers and also giving alms. On Maundy Thursday father of the house would break the unleavened bread; on Good Friday, even children would taste bitter water. Feasts which consisted of Deneha (rakkuli -night bath), Dukhrana etc were special to St Thomas Christians.

### 1.4. *Church administration*

Though the St Thomas Church had hierarchical subordination to East Syrian Church in course of time, it had its own unique way of administration. Though there were East Syrian bishops in Malabar (Gate and Metropalian of all India), there existed a System under Archdeacon or *Jathikku Karthavyan* in the Church to do administration of the Church with the bishops. He had authority not only in ecclesiastical field but in civil and social realms also (the archdeacon of all India). He was considered the head of the faithful of India. Archdeacon was a celibate priest, normally from Pakalomattam family. There was general assembly of the parishioners consisting of adult males and local priests to do the administration of each parish. For common purposes, there were *mahayogam* consisting of the representatives from each parish.

## 2. Faith and Communion

### 2.1. *Faith*

The Council of Ephesus in 431 anathemised the heresy of nestorianism. Church in East Syria was believed to be influenced by Nestorianism. There was a misunderstanding that Nestorius denied the divinity of Jesus Christ because the expression the term mother of God (teotokos) was avoided because the word God used without qualification may signify the trinity. But St Thomas Christians were out of the sphere of Christological controversies. They did not determine their faith. St Thomas Christians treated the Portuguese as brothers in faith entering into *communicatio in sacris*. In course of time, European missionaries branded St Thomas Christians nestorians. Syriac books were considered heretical and they tried to oust Syrian priests from Malabar. There were many differences in the ways of St Thomas Christians such as: celebrating Lent (Ash-Monday), use of unleavened bread, strict abstinence in Lent etc. These were new to the Portuguese. Though missionaries branded them Nestorians, St Thomas Christians had a clear knowledge of the articles of faith. Roman curia examined the faith of their bishops like Mar Joseph and Abraham and testified that they had true Catholic faith.

## 2.2. Communion

Communion between St Thomas Christians and Rome was not practical because of the geographical distance. They had communication to Seleucia–Ctesiphon. Books from that Church contained explicit statements about the primacy of Rome over the whole Christendom. Mar John Sulaka was made Patriarch by Rome in 1552. Bishops who reached in Malabar professed Catholic faith. After the arrival of Portuguese missionaries, there was constant communication with Rome. About the mentality of the Thomas Christians, Dionysio SJ wrote “About the pope, they consider him as the Vicar of Christ, our Redeemer, on earth; (they consider) the Patriarch as subject to the Pope from whom he receives his power.”

## CHAPTER THREE

### Church of St Thomas till Portuguese Period

#### Introduction

With regard to the situation of St Thomas Church after the death of St Thomas also, no solid primary document is found until now. But one has to rely on tradition, secondary documents and references found in historical accounts of later date. Local tradition and references indicate that the Church in India received spiritual support and pastoral care from Syrian Church of the East. Recent scholars opine that there were relations with the Church of East from the apostolic times itself. Trade relation through Erythraean Sea from time immemorial would support that possibility.

#### 1. Thomas Kynai and migration in 345

Though we cannot pinpoint the exact date of the East Syrian relation of the Indian Church, immigration of a Christian community under Thomas Kynai in AD 345 according to tradition took place and it shows an East Syrian Connection in history. Summary of that tradition is as following: When Catholicos of the East – Seleucia-Ctesiphon – understood the plight of the Church of India, he decided to send a community to reinvigorate the Church.<sup>19</sup> Catholicos directed Thomas Kynai and a bishop (Mar Joseph of Uraha) to conduct a missionary endeavor to Cranganor in Malabar with a small Christian Community.<sup>20</sup> Thus, Thomas Kynai and the bishop, together with four priests (*katthanars*) and many deacons came to India. Their descendants kept up a practice of endogamy.

#### 2. Indian Church to Metropolitan Status

Since the Church of India became part of the metropolitan province of Riv-ardushir or Fars, the affairs of India were entrusted to the metropolitan of that see (Riv-ardushir or Fars) on the eastern side of the Persian Gulf. The see of Riv-ardushir was reluctant to acknowledge the primacy of the see of Seleucia-Ctesiphon founded by Mar Mari, the disciple of St Thomas whereas the former was claiming the patrimony of St Thomas himself. When the conflict

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<sup>19</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The Babylonian Origin of the Southists among the St. Thomas Christians*, OCA (241) Rome 1992, XXIV.

<sup>20</sup> J. Vellian, *Knanite Community History and Culture*, Kottayam 2001, 2.

became acute, Patriarch Isoyab III (650-658), separated Indian Church from Metropolitan Simon of Riv-ardushir and raised it to the status of metropolitan Church and he brought the Indian Church directly under the patriarch.<sup>21</sup> Indian Metropolitan thus began to exercise jurisdiction all over India.<sup>22</sup> Patriarch Timothy I (780-823) confirmed the decision of Mar Isoyab III and reserved the right to appoint metropolitan to India to the patriarch alone.<sup>23</sup> The Indian Church was, therefore, under the direct care of the Patriarch of the East as he reserved the right to appoint metropolitan in India to his office.

### 3. Migration to Quilon in AD 825

According to tradition, two Bishops named Sapor and Proth disembarked in Quilon in AD 825. There was a group of Christians with them under the leadership of a merchant called Sabarisho. King granted them privileges and a church was built for them with his permission. In addition, they were granted *cheppeds* or copper plates in which privileges were engraved. When the bishops died, they were buried in that church. Those bishops were venerated as saints (*Qandisa* in Syriac) or *Qandisangal*. Later there were churches of *Qandisangal* in Malabar. When Portuguese missionaries started their administration in Malabar, they re-dedicated those churches to Ss. Gervasis and Prothasis, two twin saints familiar to Latins. Unlike the Southist community, this migrated Syrian Christian community in 825 merged with native Christians. They were also given a copper plate and it was called Quilon or Tharisa Church copperplates.<sup>24</sup>

### 4. Deacon Zacharias of Kodungalloor

Zacharias was a deacon in the church of St. Kuriakose at Kodungalloor. An old Syrian manuscript from the Church of Malabar preserved even today was written by Deacon Zacharias in 1301 when he was only 14 years old. Mar Joseph who died in 1569 in Rome had taken with him this manuscript when he was asked to go to Rome for inquisition. This manuscript contains lexionary of readings in Holy Qurbana.

### 5. Joseph, the Indian

Joseph the Indian, born in 1461, was ordained priest in Mesopotamia by the Patriarch of Babylon in ca.1490 while he went to get a bishop for the Malabar Church from Persia. Patriarch Simon ordained Joseph and his companion Geevarghese priests and sent with them two bishops named Mar Thoma and Mar John, to India. Bishops and priests disembarked in Kodungalloor and the whole community received them with great joy and acclamation. After two years, he accompanied Mar Thoma to Mesopotamia. Fr. Joseph returned to India. He made another voyage with Pedro Alvaro Cabral to Europe in 1501. He reached in Lisbon with his brother (a priest) Mathias who died unfortunately in Europe. Joseph visited Lisbon, Rome and Venice. When he was solemnly received in Portugal as a royal guest in 1501 and

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<sup>21</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The Sources of Syro-Malabar Law*, 111.

<sup>22</sup> J. Kollaparambil, "Sources on the Hierarchical Structure of the St Thomas Christian Church in the Pre-Diamper Period", B. Puthur ed., *The Life and Nature of the St.Thomas Christian Church in the Pre-Diamper Period*, Kochi 2000, 168.

<sup>23</sup> P. Pallath, *The Catholic Church in India*, Kottayam 2010, 17.

<sup>24</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The Sources of Syro-Malabar Law*, 161-163. On the Kurson copy of this copperplate, a reference to the Knayithomman grants is found.

in Rome, he reported the socio-religious situations in Malabar and the state of Christians there. Those narrations of Joseph the Indian were published in 16th century itself.<sup>25</sup>

After his audience with Pope Alexander VI<sup>26</sup> and visit to Venice, he returned to Malabar. He was the parish priest (vicar) of Kodungalloor Church in 1516 and he opposed Fr. Penteadó, a Latin missionary who tried to introduce Latin rite while Fr. Joseph went in pilgrimage to Mylapore. Joseph was trying to defend the Syrian identity of the St Thomas Christians.

## 6. List of Syrian Bishops in Malabar

Though a complete lifeline of Syrian bishops who administered the Church in Malabar was not found, a good list of Syrian bishops is available now.<sup>27</sup> The names of the Syrian bishops who were in Malabar towards the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and in 16<sup>th</sup> century are given below: Mar John (1490-1517), Mar Thomas (1490-92; 1503-ff), Mar Yaballaha (1503-) Mar Jacob (1503-1552), Mar Denha (1503-ca.1552), Mar Abraham (1555-1558; 1570-1597), Mar Joseph (1557-1563; 1564-<sup>+</sup>1569); Mar Elias (1557-1558) and Mar Simeon (1578-1584).<sup>28</sup>

## 7. Villarvattam Dynasty

According to tradition and later historical references, there was a 'king of the Christians' of St Thomas in Malabar. It was called Villarvattam dynasty which was extinct before the arrival of Portuguese in India.<sup>29</sup> Villarvattam was considered to be a vessel of Chera kings. Neither any historical document regarding geographical boundaries of the principality nor any numismatic evidence about its kings is discovered until now. Its boundary was believed to be from Chennamangalam to Diamper. It was called *Beliarte* in Portuguese documents.<sup>30</sup> However, Gouvea writes

Christians claimed to elect among themselves their own king, who should govern them all, ... who should defend them and protect them from the violences and tyrannies of the infidels; and acting upon their resolution, they chose as their first King one called Beliarte, whose title was King of the Christians of Saint Thomas, and for some years they were in this power of having a distinct King, until the death of the last who had no successor;..<sup>31</sup>

Here Gouvea and T.K. Joseph consider Villiarvattam dynasty as a Christian dynasty. Villarvattam kings were special protectors of the Christians but not themselves Christians.<sup>32</sup> Diamper was the latterly the seat of the Malabar Christian King.<sup>33</sup> What happened to the dynasty of Villarvattam? Cochin Census report gives a piece of information.

The [Paliyat] Acchan was originally a petty vassal of the Raja of Villarvattat, who was himself a Kshatriya feudatory of Cochin. What the extent of this principality was is not known, but it

<sup>25</sup> G. Karotemprel, "Joseph the Indian", in *Builders of Syro-Malabar Church III*, Rajkot 2018, 1-13 at 2.

<sup>26</sup> A. Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD The Narratives of Joseph the Indian*, Mannanam 1984, 98.

<sup>27</sup> W. Germann, *Die Kirche der Thomaschristen ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Orientalischen Kirchen*, 94.

<sup>28</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The Sources of Syro-Malabar Law*, 274.

<sup>29</sup> T.K. Joseph, *Malabar Christians and their Ancient Document*, 7.

<sup>30</sup> A.M. Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India* vol I, Bangalore 1984, 163.

<sup>31</sup> A. Gouvea, *Iornada do Arcebispo de Goa*, 5<sup>r-v</sup>. Translation is from T. K. Joseph, *Malabar Christians and their Ancient Document*, 6-7.

<sup>32</sup> J. Puliyurumpil, *Muziris Turned Kodungalloor Capital City and Metropolitan See*, 135.

<sup>33</sup> T.K. Joseph, *Malabar Christians and their Ancient Document*, 8.

certainly comprised Chennamangalam and some territory to the north and south of it. The family of Villarvattat was about to become extinct towards the close of the sixteenth century, when the last chief, instead of making an adoption from a Kshatriya family to continue the line, made his son the Paliyat Acchan his heir.<sup>34</sup>

When the Christian dynasty became extinct, Christians of Malabar entrusted the sceptre of their royal family to Da Gama whom (and whose successors) they considered as their protectors, according to W. Logan.<sup>35</sup>

## Conclusion

When the Church of India was raised to a metropolitan status, it was brought directly under the authority of the Patriarch of Persia. Syrian bishops were continuously sent to India so that the legacy and hierarchical-liturgical connection of the Church would not be broken. Unfortunately, a complete list of the bishops sent to India is not available. Letter of Deacon Zacharias of Kodungalloor and the voyage of Joseph the Indian to Middle East show that the St Thomas Church was in continuous relationship with the Persian Church.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Portuguese Presence in India

#### Introduction

Portuguese presence in Malabar Coast has a special impact on the history of the Church in India. Their colonial agenda along with religious and economic motives could change the pace of the oriental ties of the St Thomas Church. Missionaries who accompanied imperial ships were driven by Roman Catholic religious zeal. Their concept of oneness of the Catholic Church was limited to external uniformity.

#### 1. Portuguese ships in Kerala

According to general history of the Church in Malabar, the Portuguese presence in India began with the arrival of Vasco da Gama in Kappad (Kozhikode or Calicut) in South India. It does not mean that people who came with him were the first missionaries in India. Missionaries like John of Monte Corvino, Nicolas of Pistoia (13<sup>th</sup> Century), Jordan of Severac who was bishop of Quilon (1329),<sup>36</sup> John de Marignoli who came to Quilon in 1348, etc were some of the pioneers in this field.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> C. Achyuta Menon, *The Cochin State Manual*, Ernakulam 1911, 96.

<sup>35</sup> W. Logan, *Malabar Manual* vol. I, Madras 1887, 205. Also, accessed on 06 November 2019 <https://archive.org/details/malabarmanual0000loga/page/204>. Also, P.J. Podipara, *The Canonical Sources of the Syro-Malabar Church*, ed. X. Koodappuzha, Kottayam 1986, 56.

<sup>36</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The Sources of Syro-Malabar Law*, 245.

<sup>37</sup> S. Neill, *A History of Christianity in India: The Beginning to AD 1707*, Cambridge 1984, 71-86.

Landing of the ship of Vasco da Gama in Calicut was in 1498; he visited the king of Calicut (*Zamudiri*) and then went to Cranganore. He left for Lisbon in 1499. Gama was followed by Pedro Alvares Cabral and his people along with Franciscan missionaries and other clergy in 1500.<sup>38</sup> It was with this Cabral that Father Joseph (Joseph the Indian) went to Europe.<sup>39</sup> Missionaries who came with Cabral started their missionary work in Malabar. Then came Joao do Nova in 1501 with Franciscan missionaries. The second arrival of Vasco da Gama was in 1502 and he was followed by Francesco Albuquerque in 1503.

## 2. Portuguese strongholds in Kerala

First Portuguese fort in Kerala was in Cochin in 1503 and it later became a centre of their administration until they transferred their headquarters to Goa. In course of time, they concentrated their strength in Cranganore, Calicut and Quilon. Goa became their centre in 1530<sup>40</sup> and other stations in South India including Cannonore, Cranganore, Cochin and Quilon became its suffragans when Goa became an archdiocese.

## 3. Religious attitudes of Portuguese Missionaries

When the Portuguese landed in Malabar, St Thomas Christians welcomed them calling them brothers. They sought protection from the Europeans against the attacks of Muslims. Portuguese were generous and amicable to their requests. Their missionaries were accepted in St Thomas Christian churches.<sup>41</sup> But later, there were confusions in their relationships. Attitude of the Portuguese missionaries was of superiority. They considered “those Christians who differed from them in anything ecclesiastical, ritual, or theological were at best imperfect Christians, and at worst schismatics and heretics.”<sup>42</sup> They misconstrued that theirs was the true form of Christianity, to which all Christians had to conform to be true Christians.<sup>43</sup> It was Fr. Alvarez Penteado who began a definite and systematic Latinisation work among Syrian Christians.<sup>44</sup> He was a Portuguese missionary who came to Goa in 1511 and started to work among the St Thomas Christians in 1516.

The attempt to bring the Syrian Christians under Portuguese administration was backed with a temporal motive also, for they could get spices from St Thomas Christians who cultivated them at large scale. Main obstacle which they faced in realising their goal was the relation of the St Thomas Christians with Chaldean Church.<sup>45</sup> In order to break up this ecclesiastical tie, European missionaries raised religious monopoly of the Portuguese Patronage (*Padroado*) in India. As they considered India as a *Padroado* territory, they hoped to keep the Syrian bishops' presence aloof.<sup>46</sup>

### 3.1. Sporadic presence

<sup>38</sup> G.M. Moraes, *A History of Christianity in India*, Bombay, 1964, 126.

<sup>39</sup> A. Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD The Narratives of Joseph the Indian*, 94.

<sup>40</sup> C. Thevarmannil, *Mar Abraham, the Archbishop of St. Thomas Christians in Malabar*, K.S. Mathew ed., Kottayam 2016, 15.

<sup>41</sup> C. Thevarmannil, *Mar Abraham, the Archbishop of St. Thomas Christians in Malabar*, 15.

<sup>42</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, Kottayam 1981, 12.

<sup>43</sup> A.M. Mundadan, *Indian Christians Search for Identity and Struggle for Autonomy*, Bangalore 1984, 33.

<sup>44</sup> C. Thevarmannil, *Mar Abraham, the Archbishop of St. Thomas Christians in Malabar*, 16.

<sup>45</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, 12.

<sup>46</sup> P. Pallath, *The Catholic Church in India*, 52.

Not all missionaries were dubious about the faith of the St Thomas Christians. Portuguese missionaries had no doubt about the orthodoxy of faith of Mar Jacob who was in India (1504-1550). Joao Caro, a missionary of that time, took Mar Jacob as his spiritual advisor.<sup>47</sup> Missionaries like Francis Xavier had high appreciation for St Thomas Christians and their bishop.<sup>48</sup> Fathers of St. Francis at Cochin also loved and respected Mar Jacob.<sup>49</sup>

#### 4. Padroado Jurisdiction

Portuguese padroado had its origin when Pope Nicholas V bestowed the king of Portugal authority to conquer and subdue the lands of the pagans (infidels) through the bull of *Dum diversas* in 1452. In 1454, the same pope through another bull *Romanus Pontifex* extended patronage to ecclesiastical affairs also. It means the king of Portugal was given ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the conquered lands; so he could erect churches and other institutions and could appoint clerics there including bishops. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Portugal and Spain were the important European imperial powers. Therefore, Pope Alexander VI gave a clear direction for the missions to those imperial powers through a document *ineffabilis* (1497). Therefore, they could conquer lands of the infidels without any confusion. Countries in Eastern world were assigned to Portugal and Western world was to Spain. This provision to conquer land and give protection to the missions there was called *Padroado* in Portuguese language. Its meaning was Patronage or protection. Later, the kings of Spain and Portugal enjoyed the *ius patronatus*.

In order to exercise right of patronage (padroado), diocese of Funchal on the island of Madeira in Portugal was erected under the Archdiocese of Lisbon in 1514. The whole of India was placed under the jurisdiction of Funchal without considering the jurisdiction of the East Syrian Church in India.<sup>50</sup>

#### 5. Frictions and Confusions

In order to bring St Thomas to the Latin practices, missionaries especially Franciscans started a college/seminary in Kodungalloor. St Thomas Christians were asked to begin Lent on Ash-Wednesday, to eat fish and drink wine in Lent and to use unleavened bread in the Holy Qurbana which was not the practice of the East Syrian Church. Married priests were forbidden to celebrate Holy Qurbana because to missionaries everything that was not Latin was heretical. Therefore, Mar Jacob left Kodungalloor around 1543. There were around hundred St Thomas Christian seminarians in Kodungalloor. But when they were ordained priests, they were not allowed to celebrate Holy Qurbana in St Thomas churches. According to the Jesuit report of 1592, no St Thomas Christian ordained in the Latin rite was working among the St Thomas Christians. Francis Ros also shared same opinion in his report on the Serra (1604).

#### Conclusion

Portuguese people who came at the first decades of 16<sup>th</sup> century had a good relationship with St Thomas Christians. Native Christians sought their help from the attack of the Muslims. When the attitudes of the political and religious leaders turned against the good of

<sup>47</sup> C. Thevarmannil, *Mar Abraham, the Archbishop of St. Thomas Christians in Malabar*, xii (editorial note).

<sup>48</sup> X. Koodapuzha, *Thirusabhacharithram*, 1012.

<sup>49</sup> C. Thevarmannil, *Mar Abraham, the Archbishop of St. Thomas Christians in Malabar*, xv (editorial note).

<sup>50</sup> P. Pallath, *The Catholic Church in India*, 56.

the native people, Syrians did not trust them. Since Portuguese missionaries wanted to establish their authority and jurisdiction over the St Thomas Christians, they tried to keep Syrian bishops away from Indian soil. In order to implement their project in Malabar, they claimed that Indian Territory was given to Portuguese imperial powers according to the right of padroado. Missionaries believed that theirs were the only true forms of Christianity and were not cognizant about the orthodoxy of the faith and theology of the East Syrian Church.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Syrian Church in Malabar in the First Half of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century

#### Introduction

General understanding of the European missionaries of 16<sup>th</sup> century was that bishops and people in India were Nestorians and it was through the missionary endeavor of the Europeans that the St. Thomas Christians became Catholics. It is correct that bishops from Assyrian or East Syrian Church were sent to India.

#### 1. Patriarchs who sent bishops to India in the 15<sup>th</sup> century

The East Syrian Church was an independent Church and we have only scanty documents to prove its communion with the Catholic Church, especially between fourth and sixteenth centuries. The following factors might have limited the contact of the East Syrian Church with other Churches: The East Syrian Church was branded Nestorian in course of history. Territory of the Church was mainly in the Islamic Kingdom.

There are reports about the patriarchs in the second half of 15<sup>th</sup> century. Sources regarding the voyage of Joseph the Indian to Persia in 1490 to bring bishops to Malabar gives information that he was welcomed by patriarch Mar Simon IV (1437-1497)<sup>51</sup> who was in communion with Rome.<sup>52</sup> Mar Simon ordained Joseph priest and sent the delegation to the dayara (monastery) of Mar Augin. From dayara, they chose two monks. They were ordained bishops for India by the patriarch with new names: Mar Thomas and Mar John. Mar Thomas was in India only two years but Mar John continued in Malabar till 1517. Patriarch Simeon IV was succeeded by Mar Simeon V (1497-1501/2). Successor of Mar Simeon V was Mar Elias V (1502-1503) and he ordained Mar Yaballaha, Mar Jacob and Mar Denha bishops.<sup>53</sup> They were sent to India by the same patriarch along with Mar Thomas who had been in Malabar till 1492. Of these bishops, we have rather detailed information about Mar Jacob. He wrote to Mar Elias thus:

In the year of Alexander 1801 (1490) there came three trustworthy Christian men [delegation under Joseph the Indian] from the remote regions of India to Mar Simeon, the Catholic Patriarch of the Orient, to ask for Fathers (abahata) and take them with them.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>51</sup> G. Schurhammer, "Three Letters of Mar Jacob, Bishop of Malabar," in *Orientalia, Bibliotheca Instituti Historici*, Rome XXI, (1963), 334. A. Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD The Narratives of Joseph the Indian*, 58.

<sup>52</sup> C. Thevarmannil, *Mar Abraham, the Archbishop of St. Thomas Christians in Malabar*, x (editorial note).

<sup>53</sup> P.U. Lukas, *Purathanapattukal*, 224.

<sup>54</sup> G. Schurhammer, "Three Letters of Mar Jacob, Bishop of Malabar," in *Orientalia, Bibliotheca Instituti Historici*, Rome XXI, (1963), 334. A. Vallavanthara, *India in 1500 AD The Narratives of Joseph the Indian*, 58.

Since this letter was written by Mar Jacob to Patriarch Elias V in which Mar Jacob reported that those delegates approached Catholic Patriarch Mar Simon, it should be deduced that Mar Simeon and his successor Mar Elias V were also Catholics. Mar Elias V was succeeded by Mar Simeon VI. List of the Patriarchs from Simeon IV is given below:

Mar Simeon IV (1437-1497)

Mar Simeon V (1497-1501/2)

Mar Elias V (1502-1503)

Mar Simeon VI (1504-1538)

East Syrian Church had communion and communication with the Church of Rome till 1504 (1490-1504). But their relation was cut off because of the blockade of Turks.<sup>55</sup> If those patriarchs had communion with Rome, the faithful under their jurisdiction were also in communion with Rome.

## 2. Syrian Prelates in Malabar in the first half of 16<sup>th</sup> century

Since the patriarchs in East Syrian Church at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of 16<sup>th</sup> century were in communion with the See of Rome, it should be reasonable to think that the bishops sent by them had certainly followed Catholic faith. Mar John who reached in Malabar in 1490 continued his ministry till his death in 1517.<sup>56</sup>

### 2.1. Mar Jacob

Mar Jacob who was ordained by Mar Elias V ministered his flock in Malabar zealously. Francis Xavier who came to India was a friend of Mar Jacob. Francis Xavier had high appreciation about him. Portuguese were not dubious about his orthodoxy. He had a cordial relation with them. Therefore, he helped them as the spiritual guide or chaplain of the Portuguese in Cranganore fort.<sup>57</sup> Though he was a Syrian prelate, he celebrated Latin Qurbana for them and heard their confessions. He took Portuguese priests to the parishes so that they would preach to the people. Mar Jacob had correspondence with even with the king of Portugal Joao III (letter on 26 January 1549).<sup>58</sup> In 1541 a college was founded at Cranganore. Mar Jacob died of old age around AD 1552.

### 2.2. Mar Denha

Mar Denha was ordained bishop in 1503 and was sent to India. According to the reports of Penteado, he was called junior abuna (bishop).<sup>59</sup> Portuguese tried to deport him from Malabar. Mar Denha was detained in Goa in 1535 for a year but he escaped from there and reached in Kerala by land route. Finally he agreed to Portuguese missionaries and accepted their rites and subsidy until his death in (ca.) 1552.

### 2.3. Orthodoxy of the faith of the Syrian Prelates

<sup>55</sup> C. Thevarmannil, *Mar Abraham, the Archbishop of St. Thomas Christians in Malabar*, x.

<sup>56</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The Sources of Syro-Malabar Law*, 275.

<sup>57</sup> X. Koodapuzha, *Thirusabhacharithram*, 903.

<sup>58</sup> C. Thevarmannil, *Mar Abraham, the Archbishop of St. Thomas Christians in Malabar*, K.S. Mathew ed., xv.

<sup>59</sup> M. Mundadan, *The arrival of the Portuguese in India and the St Thomas Christians under Mar Jacob 1498-1552*, Bangalore 1967, 14. Also, J. Kollaparambil, *The Sources of Syro-Malabar Law*, 276.

Patriarchs of the East Syrian Church at this period were also called Patriarch of the Assyrian Church. But it was clear that patriarch Simon IV (1437-1497) of that Church and his successors had relation with the See of Rome. Bishops who came to India had Catholic faith according to most of the missionaries except Penteado. In Malabar, priests and people were not concerned about the tenets of Nestorianism in their teaching.<sup>60</sup> But Portuguese missionaries “wanted to purge the Malabar Christians of what they (the Portuguese) considered were non-Christian [Nestorian] practices.”<sup>61</sup> As the above mentioned Syrian bishops were sent by Patriarchs who had contact with Rome, claim of the European missionaries that they made St Thomas Christians of Malabar Catholics was incorrect. Bishops and patriarchs of that time had communion with Rome though the relation was not as profound as the present understanding.

## Conclusion

East Syrian Patriarchs in the 15<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of 16<sup>th</sup> century had contact with the See of Rome. Bishops who were sent to India by Patriarchs therefore had same communion. First European missionaries had no doubt about the orthodoxy of the faith of the bishops except some missionaries like Penteado. For such missionaries, everything other than Latin rite and theology was non-Christian. For them, the Church in India was Nestorian. But Mar Jacob had good relation with Portuguese and therefore, he took initiative in effecting contact with Portuguese factory in Cochin. When the city of Cranganore was attacked, Portuguese helped for the restoration accepting the request of Mar Jacob. In short, even before the arrival of Portuguese in India and after, St Thomas Christians in Malabar had Catholic communion and faith. “The claim of the Portuguese missionaries that they had ‘reduced’ the St Thomas Christians to the obedience of the Roman Pontiff is false and misleading.”<sup>62</sup>

## CHAPTER SIX

### Situation of the Church in Malabar in the Second Half of 16<sup>th</sup> Century

#### Introduction

Second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century of the Church in Malabar was comprised of political and religious turmoil. Portuguese people who became a considerable political force in South India tried to subdue St Thomas Church in India under Portuguese *Padroado*. Though they tried their best to block Syrian bishops’ entry into Malabar, bishops from Middle East came to India. They had to face inquisition to prove orthodoxy of their faith.

#### 1. Patriarchs in the Church of the East-Chaldean Church

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<sup>60</sup> The common Christological declaration between Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Dinkha IV dated 11 November 1994 attested that these Churches had common faith in the mystery of incarnation. [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1994/november/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19941111\\_dichiarazione-cristologica.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1994/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19941111_dichiarazione-cristologica.html) accessed on 09 March 2020.

<sup>61</sup> A. Arackal, “The Synod of Diamper and the Historians” in *Synod of Diamper: Its Impact and Contributions*, Journal Thomas Christian Heritage, LRC X (November 2017) 19, 113-124 at 114.

<sup>62</sup> P. Pallath, *The Catholic Church in India*, 43.

There was a great split in the Church of the East (Assyrian/Chaldean Church of the East) because of the nepotism of the Patriarch Mar Simon VII bar Mama in 1551. After his death, his nephew Simon VIII succeeded him as it was considered a right of hereditary succession.<sup>63</sup> But a group of clerics and people elected a monk called John Simon Sulaka as their patriarch; Mar John Sulaka went to Rome and made his profession of faith before Pope Julius III on 15 February 1553. Pope Julius confirmed him as the patriarch<sup>64</sup> and gave him pallium on 28 April 1553. He remained as the Patriarch in the Catholic line while Simon VIII continued in the Nestorian line. Mar Sulaka became a martyr in 1555. Mar Sulaka was succeeded by Mar Abdiso IV (1555-1570), Mar Ahatalah (1578-1580) and Mar Simon IX (1581-1600). In the Nestorian Succession, Patriarchs who succeeded Mar Simon VIII (1551-1559) were Mar Elias VI (1559-1576), Mar Elias VII (1576-1591) and Mar Elias VIII (1591-1617).<sup>65</sup>

East Syrian Patriarchs claimed that India should be placed under his jurisdiction. In the profession of faith sent to the Council of Trent, Patriarch Abdiso raised his claim in India but the Portuguese advocate objected that India should be subjected to the prelate of Goa who was *totus Indiae Primas*.

## 2. Bishops who came to Malabar after 1550

As it is already seen, Mar Jacob was the bishop in Malabar until 1552. After the death of the Syrian prelate, Church in Malabar was in need of a bishop. People from Malabar sent request for a bishop to Syrian Church in Persia unaware of the divisions which took place there.<sup>66</sup> Both Chaldean Church (Catholic) and Assyrian Church (traditional/Nestorian) considered Malabar as their missionary territory and decided to send bishops from their lines.

### 2.1. Mar Abraham as Nestorian (1556-1558)

Mar Simon VIII of traditional line (commonly called Nestorian line, in course of time) sent Mar Abraham to Malabar around 1556. Though Portuguese tried to ward Syrian prelates off from Malabar, he managed to the land in Malabar.<sup>67</sup> Latin missionaries tried to instigate local rulers to oust him from their land but Syrian Christians risked their lives to protect him; they took Mar Abraham from one kingdom to another.

### 2.2. Mar Joseph (1557-1563; 1564-1569)

Chaldean Church in line of John Sulaka also sent bishops to India. Mar Abdiso IV who succeeded Mar John Sulaka sent his brother Mar Joseph Sulaka to Malabar. Bishop Mar Joseph Sulaka came to India with Mar Elias<sup>68</sup> two Dominican monks and Bishop Ambrosius Butigeg OP<sup>69</sup> and his secretary Antonius Zahara.<sup>70</sup> Though they reached in Goa at the end of 1555, they were detained in Bassein for about 18 months. After verifying Mar Joseph's

<sup>63</sup> C. Thevarmannil, *Mar Abraham, the Archbishop of St. Thomas Christians in Malabar*, xvi.

<sup>64</sup> X. Koodapuzha, *Thirusabhacharithram*, 441.

<sup>65</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The Sources of Syro-Malabar Law*, 273.

<sup>66</sup> J. Wicki ed., *Documenta Indica* XI, 137-138. See <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015078388348&view=1up&seq=228> (accessed on 03 October 2019).

<sup>67</sup> P.U. Lukas, *Purathanapattukal*, 227.

<sup>68</sup> Mar Elias returned to the homeland after a short period.

<sup>69</sup> He was the apostolic nuncio to Chaldean nation. He died in 1558 in Cochin.

<sup>70</sup> J. Wicki ed., *Documenta Indica* XI, 138.

orthodoxy in faith and morals, Missionaries released them later to oppose Mar Abraham who had landed in Malabar (in 1557).<sup>71</sup> Bishop Ambros died in Cochin in January 1558. Mar Joseph and Mar Elias could convince Mar Abraham to recant Nestorianism and profess Catholic faith in 1558.

Though Mar Joseph was Catholic Chaldean, he was twice sent to Europe because of the pressure of the bishop of Cochin, George Temudo OP. In 1563, when he was first sent to Lisbon to prove his orthodoxy, he returned with papal endorsement (in 1564). When he returned to Malabar, there were two bishops, Mar Joseph and Mar Abraham. But Mar Joseph was accused of simony and heresy again and was sent to Rome in 1567. He was judged blameless in Rome but died there in 1569.<sup>72</sup>

### 2.3. *Mar Abraham as Catholic (1558-1597)*

Though Mar Abraham professed Catholic faith in August 1558, he was deported to Portugal. But he escaped from Portuguese custody and went to Patriarch Mar Abdiso of the Chaldean Catholic Church. He sent Mar Abraham to Pope Pius IV who confirmed him as bishop.<sup>73</sup> At the direction of pope, Patriarch Mar Abdiso divided the Church of India between Mar Abraham and Mar Joseph. Mar Abraham was nominated the head of all metropolitans and Angamaly was his see. Thus Mar Abraham was conferred a Super Metropolitan jurisdiction and autonomy.<sup>74</sup> He reached in Goa in 1568 but unfortunately he was detained in a Dominican Monastery there by Portuguese authorities. Mar Abraham jumped into the sea with an inflated leather bag<sup>75</sup> at night on Maundy Thursday of 1568 and reached Malabar.<sup>76</sup>

When Mar Abraham started his episcopal ministry in Angamaly, Portuguese missionaries invited him to attend the second provincial synod in Goa in 1575 but he did not go there. Synod decided that St Thomas Christians should be governed by bishops appointed by padroado authorities.<sup>77</sup> In order to familiarise Latin rite, free spiritual ministry and free education of priests should be made available in Malabar. They started a residence at Vaippincotta in 1577. As Pope Gregory XIII (1572-1585) instructed, Mar Abraham attended the third provincial synod in Goa in 1585<sup>78</sup> which compelled him to “reform” St Thomas Church according to Latin rite. A Jesuit priest, Francis Ros was assigned as helper to Mar Abraham to introduce those reforms and to examine Syriac books.<sup>79</sup> Later he repented of this as archbishop was reluctant to introduce those reforms in the Church.

Missionaries reported against Archbishop Mar Abraham at that juncture, and Rome issued a letter in 1595 to investigate into the life and doctrine of Mar Abraham. Since both parties were in good relations when the apostolic brief reached India, the decision was not

<sup>71</sup> C. Thevarmannil, *Mar Abraham, the Archbishop of St. Thomas Christians in Malabar*, xviii.

<sup>72</sup> J. Kollaparambil, “Sources on the Hierarchical Structure of the St Thomas Christian Church in Pre-Diamper Period”, in G. Karukaparambil ed., *Marganitha Kynanaita*, 268.

<sup>73</sup> C. Thevarmannil, *Mar Abraham, the Archbishop of St. Thomas Christians in Malabar*, 51.

<sup>74</sup> J. Kollaparambil, “Sources on the Hierarchical Structure of the St Thomas Christian Church in Pre-Diamper Period”, in G. Karukaparambil ed., *Marganitha Kynanaita*, 267.

<sup>75</sup> J. Chazhikadan, *The Syrian Colonization of Malabar alias History of the Southist Community*, 237.

<sup>76</sup> P.U. Lukas, *Purathanapattukal*, 228-229. C. Thevarmannil, *Mar Abraham, the Archbishop of St. Thomas Christians in Malabar*, 53.

<sup>77</sup> P. Pallath, *The Catholic Church in India*, 87.

<sup>78</sup> C. Thevarmannil, *Mar Abraham, the Archbishop of St. Thomas Christians in Malabar*, 57.

<sup>79</sup> J. Puliurumpil, *Jurisdiction of the Syro-Malabar Church A historical Perspective*, Kottayam 2018, 160.

implemented. When Mar Abraham died in 1597 though missionaries tried to take charge of the See, Archdeacon George of the Cross became the administrator according to tradition.

#### 2.4. *Mar Simon (1576-1583; +1599)*

Mar Simon was a bishop sent by the traditional Patriarchal line and he reached Malabar in 1576 and left Malabar in 1583 professing Catholic faith. He went to Rome and from there he was sent to Lisbon where he died in 1599.<sup>80</sup>

### 3. Goan Councils

Mar Abraham was invited to Goan Provincial councils; since Mar Abraham was not a Latin bishop under Padroado jurisdiction, he was not obliged to attend it. When he was invited to the council in 1575, he sent his profession of faith to the pope and informed that he would attend the future councils only if the pope could assure his safety. In his absence, the council decreed that St Thomas Christians were to be ruled by the bishop sent by Portuguese king. Pope directed Mar Abraham to attend the future councils as he had no suffragan and was unable to attend the Synod of his Church. In addition, pope directed the prelate of Goa to treat Mar Abraham befittingly.

Mar Abraham invited Jesuits to Malabar and he desired to deign episcopal ordination to Archdeacon George of Christ which did not take place. (Presence of Mar Simon was at this juncture). Mar Abraham conducted a synod at Angamaly with the help of Jesuits and corrected books and forbade priests to marry.

Mar Abraham attended the Goan council in 1585 as guided by the pope. It decreed that no prelate should be received to Malabar (Angamaly) unless he presented his credentials to archbishop of Goa. Council ordered to translate Roman Ritual and Pontifical into Syriac. Francis Ros was appointed for the same. Goan inquisition was extended to Angamale. Mar Abraham did not attend other councils. Later the archbishop was accused of heresy. On 27 January 1595 Pope Clement VIII directed archbishop of Goa to start a process against Mar Abraham but Goan See was vacant at that time. Menezes was nominated archbishop of Goa. Since the relation of Mar Abraham with Jesuits improved, the instruction of the pope was not implemented. Mar Abraham wanted to get his archdeacon George of Cross appointed as coadjutor but he did not get any reply. Mar Abraham died in 1597.

### 4. Archdeacons in the 16<sup>th</sup> century

Archdeacon was an important ecclesial office in the Malabar Church after bishop. He was a celibate priest elected by the general assembly called *yogam*. Traditionally, archdeacons were from Pakalomattam family, as it had prestige of being converted by St Thomas the Apostle, according to tradition. He would be doing the administrative affairs of the Church and assisting the Syrian bishops in other matters.

Dr Jacob Kollaparambil who did an applaudable research on the office of the Archdeacons presents a brief list of archdeacons in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. They are Ittikuriyath (ca.1509), George of Christ (1563-1585), John (1585-?), George of the Cross (1593-1640), Thomas Parambil (1640-1653 until he declared himself bishop Mar Thoma I), Kunjumathai

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<sup>80</sup> J. Kollaparambil, "Sources on the Hierarchical Structure of the St Thomas Christian Church in Pre-Diamper Period", in G. Karukaparambil ed., *Marganitha Kynanaita*, 268.

(1656) and Mathew Pallil (1678-1706).<sup>81</sup> Among them, George of Christ and George of cross are important in the history of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

#### 4.1. Archdeacon George of Christ (1563-1585)

Archdeacon George of Christ assisted Mar Abraham as ‘provisor.’ As Mar Abraham proved his orthodoxy in Rome, Patriarch Abdiso instructed to divide the Church in Malabar for Mar Abraham and Mar Joseph. The Patriarchal synod (document of 25 August 1566)<sup>82</sup> during the time of Mar Abdiso IV elected archdeacon George of Christ as bishop of Palayur and suffragan to Mar Abraham.<sup>83</sup> Pope confirmed him as the bishop of Palayur on 04<sup>th</sup> March 1580.<sup>84</sup> But George of Christ did not receive episcopal ordination out of humility. Dionysio, a European missionary states about the archdeacon:

There is in this Christianity a priest of Malabar approved for his virtues, instructed by doctors and having experience in ecclesiastical matters.... He is a man of confidence and he merits the episcopal dignity for he was capable. But he will not accept this dignity since he is satisfied with serving the Archbishop and since he is humble.<sup>85</sup>

#### 4.2. Archdeacon George of Cross (1593-1640)

George of the Cross became archdeacon in 1593. Mar Abraham requested pope to appoint him as his successor. By virtue of authority entrusted on him by Patriarch, he could ordain George of the Cross bishop but Jesuit missionaries prevented him from doing so. Metropolitan Mar Abraham died in 1597 without a successor. Immediately after the death of Mar Abraham, Dom Menezese, the archbishop of Goa appointed Francis Ros SJ as the vicar apostolic which was not implemented as the archdeacon assumed the office of the administrator.<sup>86</sup>

## Conclusion

Second half of 16<sup>th</sup> century was a period of trouble for Malabar Church. Attitude of the European missionaries was against the will of the Church and they tried to hinder the entry of the Syrian prelates. The Persian Church was also undergoing a religious confusion. Since the Church of the East was divided between the traditional line of the Patriarch and the line of Patriarch Sulaka who received pallium from pope, both parties began to perform as independent heads. Both groups sent bishops to India but those who came to Malabar had to profess their Catholic faith. Those bishops were sent to Rome and the Roman See found them orthodox in faith and morals (there was no error in their doctrines). Though Portuguese authorities tried to put Mar Abraham under custody, he managed to escape their eyes. Mar Abraham administered the Church as the Metropolitan of Angamaly.

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<sup>81</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The Sources of Syro-Malabar Law*, 274-275.

<sup>82</sup> J. Wicki, *Documenta Indica* VII, Rome 1962, 703. Also, J. Puliurumpil, *Jurisdiction of the Syro-Malabar Church*, 157.

<sup>83</sup> ARSI, *Gallia 95-I*, f. 197. J. Kollaparambil, *The Sources of Syro-Malabar Law*, 279.

<sup>84</sup> J. Puliurumpil, *Jurisdiction of the Syro-Malabar Church A historical Perspective*, 157.

<sup>85</sup> ARSI, *Goa-Mal* 12, ff. 357-358 as quoted in C. Thevarmannil, *Mar Abraham, the Archbishop of St. Thomas Christians in Malabar*, 61.

<sup>86</sup> J. Kollaparambil, “Sources on the Hierarchical Structure of the St Thomas Christian Church in Pre-Diamper Period”, in G. Karukaparambil ed., *Marganitha Kynanaita*, 268.

Answer to the question whether Syrian Christians in general were in Catholic communion before the Synod of Diamper in 1599 can be seen in the history of the period. Mar Joseph and Mar Abraham were recognized by the Roman See as bishops of Syrian Christians in Malabar. Rome confirmed Mar Abraham as the archbishop of Angamaly. Archdeacons of the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century accepted these prelates confirmed by the Roman See. Therefore, one has to naturally conclude that Syrian Christians until the Synod of Diamper were in the Catholic Communion.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### Synod of Diamper in 1599

#### Introduction

Portuguese missionaries were vigilant to get an occasion to intervene in the affairs of the Malabar Church, by appointing a Latin bishop, and they waited until the death of Mar Abraham in 1597. Immediately after the death of Mar Abraham, Archdeacon George of Cross took charge as the administrator of Angamaly. Considering Malabar as the province under padroado jurisdiction, Alexis Dom Menezes, Archbishop of Goa, visited Malabar.<sup>87</sup> Making use of his political and religious power, he made archdeacon agree for a synod in Malabar. Synod at Church of Diamper was a historical event by which the St Thomas Church was subdued under Portuguese padroado authority.

When George of Cross started his ministry as the administrator of Angamaly, Dom Menezes directed him to take Francis Ros and George Castro (the rector of Vaipin Jesuit seminary) as his councillors but archdeacon retorted saying that he was not in need of advisors. Archdeacon had prior knowledge about the conflicts and confusion between Jesuits and Mar Abraham. Therefore, archdeacon fostered good relation with Dominicans and Franciscans. When he was asked to do profession of faith, he avoided Jesuit presence when he made the profession.<sup>88</sup>

#### 1. Visit of Dom Menezes to Malabar

Menezes reached Malabar in February 1599<sup>89</sup> and ordered Archdeacon George of the Cross to visit him. Menezes began to visit parishes as legitimate bishop. Archdeacon George of the Cross prohibited him from doing so, since he was only guest bishop. Menezes went ahead conferring sacrament of confirmation in parishes. He pleased the King of Cochin by honouring the king with the title “brother in arms”. Menezis ordained 38 candidates priests at the church of Diamper on 27 March 1599 against the opposition of the archdeacon. On Palm Sunday (02 April 1599) he came to Kaduthuruthy valiyapally and celebrated Holy Week ceremonies in Latin there. He brought choir from Cochin. Blessed Sacrament was exposed on

<sup>87</sup> G. Sorge, *L'India di S. Tommaso: Ricerche Storiche sulla Chiesa Malabarica*, 63.

<sup>88</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, 38.

<sup>89</sup> J. Puliurumpil, *Jurisdiction of the Syro-Malabar Church A historical Perspective*, 107.

Maundy Thursday and people were edified. When he washed the feet of priests and kissed the feet, faithful were moved; many of the priests wept.

On Holy Saturday he gave ordinations to many. On Easter Sunday (11 April 1599) he blessed the stone cross there. Then he moved to Kaduthuruthy thazhathupally and Muttuchira church. Later churches of Mulanthuruthy and Diamper were ready to accept him. He declared that he would depose Archdeacon George from the office and appoint Fr Thomas Kurian of Angamaly as archdeacon. Archdeacon George was compelled to come to an agreement with Menezes.

Both Archdeacon and Archbishop met at Vaippincotta and archbishop placed ten conditions before archdeacon: 1. to condemn the teachings of the Nestorian heresy, 2. Do not confess that Law of Thomas as equal to Law of Peter, 3. Make a profession of faith before Dom Menezes according to his formula, 4. hand over all books for correction or for burning, 5. Accept the supremacy of pope, 6. condemn Chaldean Patriarch as heretic, 7. Promise that they would receive bishops sent from Rome through Goa only, 8. Obey Dom Menezes as superior, 9. convoke a Synod in a place approved by archbishop and 10. Accompany archbishop in his parish visits.<sup>90</sup>

## 2. Synod of Diamper

Under pain of ex-communication, archdeacon promised to convoke a synod. The synod began on 20<sup>th</sup> June 1599 and it cut off all powers of the archdeacon and brought the Church directly under the Portuguese crown terminating all its ties with the Persian Church.<sup>91</sup> The process was such: Archbishop solemnly declared his profession of faith and demanded Archdeacon George of Cross make profession of faith and abjure the Patriarch of Babylon as a Nestorian heretic.<sup>92</sup> Session III of decree 8 condemned Patriarch of Babylon as schismatic and it prohibited all commemorating his name in the Holy Qurbana (Mass).<sup>93</sup>

Synod was convoked at Diamper especially because of the vicinity of Diamper to Portuguese fort at Kochi. It was one of the first churches which welcomed Menezes when he made visit to Malabar. Church of Diamper had significance in history because Syrian bishops had spiritual intercourse there with Europeans and it was sometimes considered as episcopal see for such important acts.<sup>94</sup> In the Synod conducted from 20 to 27<sup>th</sup> June 1599, 153 priests and 663 laymen attended; a few Jesuits were also present.<sup>95</sup> Synod had total of nine sessions and it was completed in six days. Meetings of the synod were held daily from 7 am to 11 am and from 2 pm to 6 pm. Participants were allowed to present their observations on articles of doctrine and schemes of the decrees. Menezes responded to the questions personally. Synod had altogether 25 decrees.

### 2.1. *Canons on Doctrine and Discipline*

Synod (*actio tertia*) treated the questions of the doctrine and discipline related to baptism and Chrismation (confirmation). Though archbishop tried to replace the Chaldean office with the Roman breviary translated into Syriac, priests did not agree with it but

<sup>90</sup> J. Puliurumpil, *Jurisdiction of the Syro-Malabar Church A historical Perspective*, 106-107.

<sup>91</sup> G. Sorge, *L'India di S. Tommaso: Ricerche Storiche sulla Chiesa Malabarica*, 67-68.

<sup>92</sup> A. Gouvea, *Iornada do Arcebispo de Goa*, 30<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>93</sup> A. Gouvea, *Iornada do Arcebispo de Goa*, 64<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>94</sup> ARSI, *Cottayam-Franciae*, 1005, fasc. 4, pp. 55-56.

<sup>95</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The Sources of Syro-Malabar Law*, 368.

some corrections were made in the Chaldean office. It also dealt with the canon of the Books in Bible in Malabar; but it was incomplete. This defect was not particular to Malabar. Syriac text of the Bible was same everywhere even before the time of Nesorius. Goan inquisition was extended to Malabar. Some liturgical books and Syriac works were condemned including *protoevangelium of St James*, the Book of Fathers, treatise on sacraments by Patriarch Timothy II, some collections of homilies, *Liber Canonum*, theological encyclopedia of the Metropolitan of Nisibis etc.

## 2.2. *On liturgical feasts, formulas and saints*

Names of persons (formal heretics or suspected ones) were removed from liturgical texts. Certain feasts were abolished and some other new feasts were inserted in order to be confirmed with Latin calendar. Syriac books were brought before Francis Ros and books suspected of heresy were burned. Matters concerning liturgical formulae were given importance. Cathedral of Angamaly which was dedicated to Rabban Hormizd (of 7<sup>th</sup> cent) was replaced with Hormisdas the Martyr of 4<sup>th</sup> cent who is found in Roman Martyrology.

## 2.3. *On other matters (Education, other religions, Councils)*

Synod warned people against indifferentism in religious matters. Christian community was advised to have its own Christian masters. Missionaries wanted to reduce the East Syrian (Nestorian) influence in matters of faith and liturgy. In the 20<sup>th</sup> decree, Indian Church officially declared to accept the decisions of the ecumenical councils. It decided to implement the decisions of the Council of Trent.

## 2.4. *On Faith and Dogmas*

Synod of Diamper which appeared to be a harbinger of changes in Malabar understood various themes into consideration. It discussed themes such as baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion, Holy Qurbana (Mass), correction to be made in Missal (*taksa*), Confession, Anointing, Holy Orders, Marriage, Simony, territorial division of boundaries of parishes, simony, obligatory celibacy for priesthood, sacramentals like blessing of holy water, of ashes, exorcism, etc.<sup>96</sup> Synod acknowledged that the practice of beginning holy fast of Lent on Monday but it should be started on Wednesday to be confirmed with universal Church.<sup>97</sup> Decree 6 of Act III dealt with theological themes such as Trinity, original sin, divine motherhood of Mary, Immaculate Conception, virgin birth, assumption etc.<sup>98</sup>

## 3. **Aftermath of the Synod**

At the end of Synod, all the parish priests were asked to preserve a Malayalam copy of the acts of the Synod in the archive of the parish. After putting signatures to the acts (all the participants), *Te Deum* was sung solemnly. Each parish priest was given altar-stone, cruets for holy oils, text of rituals of sacraments translated from Latin into Syria, a catechism in

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<sup>96</sup> J. Thaliath, *The Synod of Diamper, OCA* (152) Rome 1958, 30-31. Also, P. Malekandathil ed., *Jornada of Dom Alexis de Menezes: a Portuguese Account of the Sixteenth Century Malabar*, Kochi 2003, 275-283.

<sup>97</sup> Session VIII, decree 14.

<sup>98</sup> Session VIII, decree 22.

Malayalam and a surplice for administration of sacraments. Churches were provided with chalices, altar clothes and vestments.

Under pain of ex-communication, Menezes ordered that all Syriac books should be brought to Francis Ros for examination and correction. Ros corrected Nestorian mistakes in some books and gave it for use and all other books were burned. Latin Pontificals were translated into Syriac<sup>99</sup> and gave it for the use of the priests. Even after Synod, missionaries added many clauses to the decision.<sup>100</sup> Menezes resumed his visit of the parishes in Malabar and gave ordinations and confirmations.

#### 4. Impact of the Synod of Diamper

When the Synod was over, time was favourable for Menezes to latinise the Church. He gave altar stone blessed according to Latin rite, vessels to keep holy oil, surplice, Latin pontifical translated into Syriac, vestments according to Latin rite etc.<sup>101</sup> As the synod decided to divide the Church of Malabar into parishes and to be administered by vicars appointed by bishop, vicars were paid by Portuguese colonial government.<sup>102</sup> Gradually, authority of archdeacon was curtailed denying his traditional power and Jesuits began to claim missionary monopoly. East Syrian relation of the Church was cut off after the Synod of Diamper.

Later, at the recommendation of the Archbishop of Goa, the Roman See made Archdiocese of Angamaly a suffragan to Archdiocese of Goa<sup>103</sup> and made Ros, former assistant of Menezes in the Synod of Diamper,<sup>104</sup> Bishop of Angamaly. Eight months after the appointment of Ros, Padroado rights of the King of Portugal was extended over St Thomas Christians also.<sup>105</sup> Act of placing Angamaly under Goa infuriated people and priests in Malabar and they protested against it. Thanks to the continuous petitions the metropolitan status of Angamaly was restored by Rome in 1608.<sup>106</sup>

Francis Ros tactfully implemented the liturgical changes suggested by Synod of Diamper when he became bishop of Angamaly. He restructured the Eucharistic liturgy according to Latin Missal.

#### 5. Validity of the Synod of Diamper

Menezes who was a Latin ordinary had no jurisdiction over St Thomas Christians who were by that time under Chaldean jurisdiction. Therefore his acts were non-canonical and *ultra vires*. Ex-communication and the unduly performed Synod had no juridical effect. After the death of Mar Abraham, See of Angamaly was *Sede vacante*. Neither Menezes nor archdeacon, the administrator, could validly hold a synod under that circumstance according

<sup>99</sup> It was already done after the third provincial synod of Goa in 1585.

<sup>100</sup> P. Malekandathil ed., *Jornada of Dom Alexis de Menezes: a Portuguese Account of the Sixteenth Century Malabar*, lxx.

<sup>101</sup> X. Koodapuzha, *Thirusabhacharithram*, 919-920.

<sup>102</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, 40.

<sup>103</sup> J. Puliurumpil, *Jurisdiction of the Syro-Malabar Church A historical Perspective*, 165. Decision to place Angamaly under Goa provoked Thomas Christians and they protested; therefore, it was declared again archdiocese. Later, Ros changed his See to Cranganoor (Kodungalloor).

<sup>104</sup> J. Thaliath, *The Synod of Diamper*, 27.

<sup>105</sup> J. Kollaparambil, "The Impact of the Synod of Diamper on the Ecclesial Identity of the St. Thomas Christians" in G. Karukaparambil ed., *Marganitha Kynanaita*, 187. See Apostolic brief "In Supremo Militantis" dated 04 August 1600 by Pope Clement VIII.

<sup>106</sup> Apostolic brief "Romanus Pontifex" by Pope Paul V dated 22 December 1608.

to generally accepted dictum, *sede vacante nihil innovetur*.<sup>107</sup> Even missionaries were aware that Menezes was exceeding his capacities but they cooperated with him with a hope that they could correct it when they would get full control of the Church.<sup>108</sup>

Menezes claimed that he had the authority over St Thomas Christians basing on two briefs of Pope Clement VIII; (they are *Nuper non* (dated 27 Jan 1595) and *Cupentes statui* (dated 21 Jan 1597). But these documents did not make him administrator of the vacant see.

Participants put their signature to the decisions of the Synod because of the tact of Francis Ros. Menezes made additions to the acts after the conclusion of the Synod. Most of the regulations were simply read and participants could not understand them properly. Signatures were later affixed to a Portuguese text.

## Conclusion

Synod of Diamper was a kind of camouflage under pretension of purging Nestorian heresy and reducing St Thomas to Catholic faith for uniformity with Roman Church. In fact, St Thomas Christians had communion with Rome before Synod of Diamper. Menezes, the main protagonist of Synod, and Portuguese missionaries misconstrued that theirs was the true form of Christianity, to which all Christians had to conform in order to be true Christians.<sup>109</sup> They tried to bring the Church to their Padroado jurisdiction and to reduce St Thomas Christians only to their king in Portugal.<sup>110</sup> Out of their ignorance and zeal, they enacted a number of laws – both administrative and liturgical – in the synod. They hesitated to acknowledge that St Thomas Christians had been in communion with See of Rome. Portuguese ecclesiastical administration in India was part of their colonial policy.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The Sources of Syro-Malabar Law*, 373.

<sup>108</sup> J. Thaliath, *The Synod of Diamper*, 130-136.

<sup>109</sup> A.M. Mundadan, *Indian Christians Search for Identity and Struggle for Autonomy*, 33.

<sup>110</sup> P. Pallath, *The Catholic Church in India*, 43.

<sup>111</sup> J. Puliurumpil, *Jurisdiction of the Syro-Malabar Church A historical Perspective*, 163.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

**Malabar Church from 1599 to 1653****Introduction**

Pace of the history of the St Thomas Church in Malabar was diverted by the Synod of Diamper and the Church was brought arbitrarily under Padroado jurisdiction. Francis Ros SJ was appointed the first Latin bishop in Angamaly. He changed his residence from Angamaly to Cranganore. He was followed by Stephen Britto and Francis Garcia respectively. Latin bishops tried to curtail the traditional rights of the archdeacons in administration whereas the latter resolved to affirm their role in the Church; it widened the dissensions between the two offices.

**1. Bishop Francis Ros (1599-1624)**

After Synod of Diamper in 1599, St Thomas Church was brought under Padroado jurisdiction and Dom Menezes completed his visit to the churches in Malabar. "A few months after it [Synod], Ros was nominated to the See of Angamali which was now reduced to the status of a bishopric and made subject to the Metropolitan of Goa."<sup>112</sup> Thus the autonomy of the Church was abolished. Owing to the continuous request of people and Francis Ros, dignity of Angamali was restored by the bull of Pope Paul V on 22 December 1608; Francis Ros and Archdeacon George of Cross worked together for the same. Those years, archdeacon was consulted in important matters and his rights and privileges were respected. Ros knew that many of the instructions of the Synod of Diamper were unbearable to St Thomas Christians and he convoked a Synod in Angamaly in 1603. About 300 priests and elected representatives attended it. But he rectified the proceedings of Diamper Synod and the powers of the archdeacon were curtailed to great extent.<sup>113</sup> Ros compiled a Diocesan statute book in 1606 and it was Rosian Statute. His report on Serra was an important piece of information about about the St Thomas Church in India and their customs.<sup>114</sup>

Francis Ros transferred his residence to Cranganore (Kodungalloor) and thus the title of the See was also changed.<sup>115</sup> Archdeacon George of Cross was disgusted with the transfer of bishop's residence to Cranganore from where St Thomas Christians had fled long ago as Portuguese tried to impose Latin custom on them.<sup>116</sup> When Ros tried to curtail the traditional powers of archdeacon their relations began to deteriorate; archdeacon rebelled openly. Ros excommunicated him and intimidated him to the inquisition of Goa. George of the Cross supported the Franciscans. Archdeacon who had the supports of kings (including the king of

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<sup>112</sup> J. Thaliath, *Synod of Diamper*, 60.

<sup>113</sup> P. Podipara, *The Thomas Christians*, 149.

<sup>114</sup> F. Ros, "Report on the Serra (1603/1604)," in G. Nedungatt ed., *The Synod of Diamper Revisited* (Kanonika 9), Rome 2000, 299-367 at 309-311. Original is in British Museum Library MS. Add. 9853, ff. 85-99. Also J. Kollaparambil, *The Sources of Syro-Malabar Law*, 152-154.

<sup>115</sup> P. Podipara, *The Malabar Christians*, Aleppey 1972, 8.

<sup>116</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, 43.

Cochin) neglected the excommunication. Later when king of Cochin favoured the Portuguese and expelled archdeacon from his territory, he withdrew to Mangatt. In 1615, archdeacon submitted to the archbishop.

Another point for resentment was that when Ros went to Goa for a visit in 1618, he entrusted administration of the archdiocese not to archdeacon but to Francis do Oliveira, rector of Cranganore College.<sup>117</sup> Jesuits like Stephen Britto and Jacob Fenicio supported archdeacon in this issue but in vain. Conflict between archdeacon and archbishop continued until the death of Francis Ros in 1624.<sup>118</sup> But before his death, he directed that archdeacon should administer the archdiocese during the interim, according to the custom.

## 2. Bishop Stephen Britto (1624-1641)

Stephen Britto became archbishop of St Thomas Christians in 1624 and his relation with archdeacon was rather good. He believed that it was important to keep a good relation with Archdeacon George of the Cross for a good administration of the archdiocese.<sup>119</sup> Jesuit missionaries interpreted the good relationship of the archbishop with archdeacon as a sign of archbishop's weakness.

There were dissensions between the two: presence of a Dominican seminary at Kaduthuruthy was a point of disagreement. Francis Donati O.P and his companions opened a seminary at Kaduthuruthy and it functioned there one and a half year (1627-1629). Donati was a Roman by origin and was well-versed in Eastern languages including Syriac. He was appreciated by all. Unfortunately, Dominican presence generated heated controversy; Dom Britto opposed the presence of any religious order other than Jesuits in Malabar. Archdeacon George of the Cross wrote to Lisbon and Rome, supporting Dominicans and other religious; his intention was to break the Jesuit monopoly in Malabar. As Britto opposed Dominican presence in Malabar, the seminary was closed later.

Archbishop started a religious institute for priests at Edappally and it was called "The Congregation of St Thomas the Apostle." But members of this congregation sided with archdeacon and petitioned to king of Portugal in 1632 against Stephen Britto that he was ignorant of Syriac and their rite. He would appoint vicars to churches without consulting archdeacon.<sup>120</sup> Jesuits were against the petition to the king and the stance of the members of the Congregation; gradually the Congregation went on dissembling.

Archdeacon George of the Cross died in 1640 and Thomas Parambil was his successor. Archbishop Britto died in 1641 and he was succeeded by Francis Garcia.

## 3. Francis Garcia and Thomas Parambil

Dom Francis Garcia was the coadjutor in Kodungalloor. Garcia did not have the tact and diplomacy of Britto. When he assumed the office after the death of Britto (on 02 December 1641), his relationship with archdeacon was not cordial.

When Archdeacon George of Cross died on 25 July 1640, people elected his nephew, Thomas Parambil to the post. Thomas Parambil wanted to affirm the traditional power of archdeacon but archbishop tried to circumscribe archdeacon's power.<sup>121</sup> Though Stephen

<sup>117</sup> P. Podipara, *The Thomas Christians*, Bombay 1970, 149.

<sup>118</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, 43.

<sup>119</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, 44.

<sup>120</sup> I.F. Raulin, *Historia Ecclesiae Malabaricae cum Diamperitana*, 70-71.

<sup>121</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, 60.

Britto had confirmed archdeacon's traditional powers during his episcopacy but Garcia believed that the act of confirming traditional powers of archdeacon was tantamount to abdicating archbishop's jurisdiction. Garcia was very harsh and vindictive by nature, and therefore, he despised archdeacon's demands and rights. Garcia was not ready to consult with archdeacon about the administrative affairs. Archbishop did not seek the concurrence of Thomas Parambil when he appointed a vicar to the parish of Diamper. (He appointed Joseph Kathanar (priest) of Kaduthuruthy to Diamper Church in 1645). It was considered as a breach of understanding that had already been made. Garcia continued the same when he appointed Nalloor Kuriath Kathanar in Kottayam; these were made without countersignatures of the archdeacon.<sup>122</sup>

Towards 1645, archbishop and archdeacons were open antagonists and archbishop decided to break the contumacy of the archdeacon. He appointed Fr. Jerome Fortado, a Portuguese as his vicar-general and it added the grievances of the archdeacon. Thomas Parambil wrote to Patriarch of Chaldean Church, to Syrian Patriarch of Antioch and to Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria for a bishop.

## Conclusion

When Latin bishops tried to keep archdeacons away from Church administration, archdeacons were not ready to comply with prelates. They were determined enough to confirm their traditional rights. In fact, their conflict was about the right of administration. As Francis Ros changed his residence to Cranganore, Archdeacon George continued to enjoy the support of the faithful. Stephen Britto maintained a rather good relation with archdeacon: but Garcia had an intransigent and non-counsellable nature and it widened the already existing tension between him and Archdeacon Thomas (successor of George). Context was conducive for an outbreak.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### Event of Coonan Cross Oath in 1653

#### Introduction

Historic event of Coonan Cross Oath was the end of an episode as it did not happen all on a sudden. St Thomas Christian revolution in 1653 was consequential because the Church was divided into two in course of time. Tragic event of division of the Church was accelerated by the presence of Mar Ignatius Atallah, a bishop. The event was a natural reaction of the Thomas Christians as they felt illtreated by civil and ecclesiastical authorities.

#### 1. Presence of Mar Ignatius Atallah

St Thomas Christians resented the changes which Garcia imposed upon them. Archdeacon and faithful petitioned to Rome and Portugal for a remedy but they remained unanswered. He

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<sup>122</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, 88.

had requested to Eastern Patriarchs for a bishop. Coptic Patriarch Marcos VI handed over the letter of Archdeacon Thomas (in 1649) to Cyril Mar Atallah bin Issa<sup>123</sup> (Mar Atallah or Adeodatus) and requested him to do service to St Thomas Christians in Malabar. Atallah sailed to Madras and reached there in 1652.

### 1.1. *Life of Atallah*

No clear idea about the first half of the life of Atallah is found in documents. It is believed that he was a Jacobite, born in Aleppo around 1590. He was ordained archbishop of Jacobites of Damascus, Ems and Nicomedia.<sup>124</sup> He professed Catholic faith in Rome under the influence of Cappuchin missionaries in 1632. After his union with Rome, he stayed around one year there. He had to face strong opposition in Syria.<sup>125</sup> He had to move from place to place – from Diarbekir, Husnaziad, Bagdad – and finally he reached in Cairo in Egypt around 1643.<sup>126</sup> He was sent to India by Coptic Patriarch of Cairo but he was deported to Europe by Padroado rulers. He died in Paris in 1654.

### 1.2. *Atallah in India*

When Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria who resided in Cairo persuaded Mar Atallah in 1649 to go over to India, he set out to India; reached at Surat in March 1652. Then he arrived in Mylapore in August. He was detained there in a Jesuit college. Three seminarians met him at Mylapore during their pilgrimage and they communicated this crucial information to Malabar Church leaders.<sup>127</sup> They had brought a letter (or more letters) from Atallah to Archdeacon Thomas which claimed that he was “the patriarch of all India and China” sent by Pope Ignatius: he had all powers to govern the Christians in India.<sup>128</sup> In the second letter, it is said that if he were not able to go to Malabar “the St. Thomas Christians might elect a college of twelve priests who would make one of their ranks a bishop after the death of their ruling bishop.”<sup>129</sup> Portuguese leaders decided to send Mar Atallah to Goa for inquisition. He was taken into a ship which was going via Kochy port.

Archdeacon propagated the news about the arrival of Atallah and the pilgrims testified this message. Priests and people gathered together at Diamper to bring Atallah to Malabar. But, Portuguese authority hastened to deport him to Goa.

### 1.3. *Garcia and Atallah*

Garcia, Archbishop of Kodungalloor was sure that if a Syrian bishop reached in Malabar, Christians would abandon him and follow the Syrian bishop. Therefore, he was adamant to keep Mar Atallah away from Malabar. Garcia’s reason for deporting Mar Atallah was that even if Atallah was sent by pope, he should not be given permission to land in India as it was

<sup>123</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *St. Thomas Christians’ Revolution in 1653*, 100.

<sup>124</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The St. Thomas Christians’ Revolution in 1653*, 213. Also, C. Mar Baselios, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, Trivandrum 1973, 13.

<sup>125</sup> X. Koodapuzha, *Thirusabhacharithram*, 927.

<sup>126</sup> P. Pallath, *The Catholic Church in India*, 113.

<sup>127</sup> ARSI, *Goa 21*, f.21. Also, J. Kollaparambil, *St. Thomas Christians’ Revolution in 1653*, 107 and 121. Three seminarians, namely, George Kuriath of Kuravilangad, Zacharias Itti of Chengannor and Zacharias Cherian Unni of Ambazhakad and a layman called George Kuruvila Perical of Edapally met him at Mylapore.

<sup>128</sup> P. Pallath, *The Catholic Church in India*, 114.

<sup>129</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *St. Thomas Christians’ Revolution in 1653*, 108.

a Padroado territory.<sup>130</sup> Archdeacon and priests requested Garcia for an occasion to verify the credentials of Atallah whether he was sent by pope. But Jesuits were afraid that if Atallah was allowed to contact with a priest, Atallah might ordain him a bishop.<sup>131</sup> They did not permit anyone to visit the bishop even in ship, fearing that any priest in disguise would meet him and receive episcopal ordination.

## 2. Coonan Cross Oath in 1653

Though Archdeacon Thomas Parambil and St. Thomas Christians requested the Portuguese authorities to verify the credentials of the bishop, Captain General of the ship did not grant it because of the compulsion of Jesuits and he sailed the ship out of the channel. Then Atallah was taken to Goa. Jesuits, thus, frustrated Syrians Christians of Malabar. There spread a rumour that Atallah was drowned at sea. This news infuriated archdeacon and the Thomas Christians. They declared that they would no longer obey Garcia and Jesuits.

The offended archdeacon and faithful gathered in the church of Our Lady of Life at Mattanchery and in front of the church on 03 January 1653. They solemnly made an oath that they would not obey Archbishop Garcia and Jesuit missionaries.<sup>132</sup> Those who gathered in front of the Church tied a long rope to the Cross and made the oath.<sup>133</sup> The cross was in a bending or slanting position and therefore, the pledge was called *Coonan Cross Oath*. They declared Thomas Parambil as their governador on 30 January 1653, the third day of the three-day fast at Edappally. Followers of Thomas produced a forged letter<sup>134</sup> of Atallah in which it was said that the community could anoint one bishop by laying on hands by twelve priests.<sup>135</sup> Thus, they convened in Alangad on 22 May 1653 and proclaimed Archdeacon Thomas as their bishop. It can be summarised as: "This was followed by a consultation at Edappally, and by a council at Alangad, where 12 priests imposed hands on the archdeacon, proclaiming him Bishop Mar Thomas I, saying they had power to do so from Ahattalla."<sup>136</sup> They elected four councillors to help the newly elected bishop and they were Kadavil Alexander (Kaduthuruthy minor), Chandy Parambil alias Palliveetil Alexander (Kuravilangad), George Vengoor (Angamaly) and Ittithoman Anjilimoottil (Kallissery).

## 3. Support of Ittithomman Kathanar

Anjilimoottil Ittithomman, a Southist priest from the parish of Kallissery, was one of the staunch supporters of Thomas Parambil in the great revolution of 1653. J. Kollaparambil states that the letter produced before the people regarding permission for anointing Archdeacon Thomas as bishop was forged by Anjilimoottil Ittithomman.<sup>137</sup> According to Placid Podipara, Ittithomman Anjilimoottil was a sorcerer, and he fabricated papal documents to make people believe that the pope had approved the consecration of the archdeacon.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>130</sup> P. Pallath, *The Catholic Church in India*, 114.

<sup>131</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, 134.

<sup>132</sup> J. Thekkedath, *The Troubled Days of Francis Garcia S.J., Archbishop of Cranganore (1640-59)*, Rome 1972, 60.

<sup>133</sup> E. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India*, Bombay 1957, 79.

<sup>134</sup> APF, SOCG 234, f. 355<sup>f</sup> and J. Kollaparambil, *St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, 113.

<sup>135</sup> G. Sorge, *L'India di S. Tommaso: Ricerche Storiche sulla Chiesa Malabarica*, 76.

<sup>136</sup> P. Podipara, *The Syrian Church of Malabar: Its Catholic Communion* in T. Kalayil (ed.), *Collected Works of Rev. Dr. Placid J. Podipara CMI* vol. I, Mannanam 2007, 27.

<sup>137</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, 113.

<sup>138</sup> APF, SOCG 234, f. 355<sup>f</sup>. For the references of the forged letter by Ittithomman, see also, P. Podipara, *The Thomas Christians* in Kalayil, T., ed., *Collected Works of Rev. Dr. Placid J. Podipara CMI* vol. I, 383.

There were three letters in the name of Ignatius Ahatallah of which only the first, according to general opinion among historians of the Malabar Church, was genuine “and the other two were forgeries by Cassanar [priest] Ittithoman Anjilimoottil of Kallicherry.”<sup>139</sup>

#### **4. Oath against Jesuits or Pope?**

Coonan Cross Oath was not against Pope and the Roman See but against Garcia and Jesuits.<sup>140</sup> In a letter dated 30 June 1656 to inquisitors of Goa, archdeacon stated that he and his people did not have the slightest intention to disobey pope or to break away from Rome.<sup>141</sup> Archbishop Garcia also admitted that the protest was not against Roman Pontiff and the Carmelites reported that it was a protest against Garcia and Jesuits.<sup>142</sup> Reasons for the revolt were the following: a) attempt of the Jesuit missionaries and archbishop to eliminate the authorities of the archdeacon b) character of the archbishop was harsh and vindictive c) archdeacon’s decision to affirm his position and d) presence of Mar Ahtallah.

#### **Conclusion**

Rift between St Thomas Christians and Garcia was so deep. Faithful decided to procure the individuality of the Church and traditional power of the archdeacon. When the news about the arrival of Mar Atallah was communicated to Syrian Christians, they were longing to get him in Malabar. Important meetings were held in church of Diamper.<sup>143</sup> As Portuguese captain denied permission for archdeacon to visit Atallah, St Thomas Christians made the historical Coonan Cross Oath at Mattancherry and declared Thomas Parambil as their bishop. Anjilimoottil Ittithomman Cathanar was the mastermind behind the pseudo-episcopal ordination of Thomas Parambil. The Church was divided between Thomas Parambil and Garcia in 1653.

## **CHAPTER NINE**

### **Propaganda Jurisdiction in Malabar**

#### **Introduction**

Coonan Cross Oath was an eye-opener for Roman See. Churches in Malabar abandoned Garcia and missionaries; St Thomas Christians accepted Thomas Parambil as their bishop. Rome sensed the derailment of the course of Church in India; the Holy See appointed apostolic commissions to examine the situations. As a result, Chandy Parambil was ordained bishop of St Thomas Christians under Propaganda Jurisdiction. In course time, a number of

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<sup>139</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The St. Thomas Christians’ Revolution in 1653*, 112.

<sup>140</sup> P. Pallath, *The Catholic Church in India*, 116-118.

<sup>141</sup> SOCG 233, f.286.

<sup>142</sup> J. Sebastiani, *Prima Spedizione all’Indie Orientali*, Rome 1666, 4-5.

<sup>143</sup> J. Kollaparambil, *The St. Thomas Christians’ Revolution in 1653*, 117.

supporters of Thomas Parambil began to dwindle and those who left him came back to dialogue with Roman Apostolic commissaries.

### **1. Situation of the Syrian Churches after Oath**

Since St. Thomas Christians were against Portuguese administration, most of the native parishes abandoned Garcia. After the episcopal ordination, Mar Thomas I sent letters to churches in Malabar to recognize him as their archbishop and the acceptance was almost total. Those who favoured Garcia numbered only two hundred laymen and fifteen to twenty priests. It was an insignificant minority. Some other documents say that they were about a thousand laymen and fifteen priests.<sup>144</sup> Only two Southist churches of Diamper and Kaduthuruthy and a very few people refused to recognise the Psuedo-Archbishop Thomas.<sup>145</sup> Their reason was that the episcopal ordination by twelve simple priests would be invalid.<sup>146</sup> In course of time, a few more churches like Parur, Muzhikulam, Manjapra etc. and individuals joined them siding with Garcia. But ninety percent of St Thomas Christians stood against the missionaries. When Mar Thomas I started ordaining clerics and priests, Garcia understood that he was losing all his control. Garcia tried to get support from political rulers to oust Mar Thomas I but Mar Thomas could affirm his position.

### **2. Efforts for Reunion by Goan authorities**

Revolution against Garcia and Jesuits were so deep and people were emotionally driven and there was no possibility for negotiation. Though Garcia appealed for military help, viceroy responded that the state was not in a position to support him. Garcia was not ready to admit any other religious to Malabar. Office of Goan inquisition sent two commissaries to Malabar in persons of John Rangel and John de Lisboa O.P. the first commissary John Rangel thoroughly neglected by archdeacon as Rangel was suspected to be the partisan of Garcia.

John Lisboa was instructed to avoid contacts with Garcia and Jesuits, deliberately. He could contact archdeacon and persuaded him (Thomas Parambil) to express his regret for what had happened. Archdeacon was assured that the commissary would recommend for him to Goa and the officials in Goa would recommend for him to Rome; thus Thomas Parambil would be appointed and ordained archbishop of Malabar. Archdeacon was ready to accede to the proposals and he wrote to inquisitors (30 June 1656) he had been misled by the letter of Atallah; he asked pardon for the fault. He requested that a non-Jesuit governor should be appointed for Malabar. Garcia was ready for that appointment but he declined to reinstate Thomas as the archdeacon. Then, Thomas Parambil began to give minor orders to some clerics; he began to perform as bishop.

### **3. Reaction of Roman Apostolic See**

Garcia sent Fr. Hycinth de Magistris, an Italian Jesuit and his old collaborator to Rome to report the situations there.<sup>147</sup> When Rome was informed about the revolts in Malabar, Pope Alexander VII (1655-1667) sent two commissions under the jurisdiction of Propaganda

<sup>144</sup> APF, SOCG 232, f.121<sup>v</sup>. Also, J. Kollaparambil, *The St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, 148.

<sup>145</sup> AHEI, LM 23-B, ff. 422<sup>v</sup>-423<sup>v</sup> as quoted in J. Kollaparambil, *The St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, 164-165.

<sup>146</sup> APF, SOCG 232 f.168<sup>v</sup>-169<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>147</sup> E. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India*, 80.

Congregation; these commissaries were Joseph Maria Sebastiani and Hycinth of St Vincent. They belonged to the Order of Carmelite Discalced (OCD). Sebastiani reached Malabar first in February 1657. He conducted several meetings with priests and representatives of parishioners mainly at Edappally, Muttam, Mattancherry and Alengad. He could convince people about the invalidity of the ordination of Mar Thomas Parambil. Even though people understood that Mar Thomas was invalidly consecrated, they were not ready to submit them to Garcia. After completing his mission, he left for Rome to submit his report in January 1658. His report and experiences were published in 1666 as *Prima Speditione all,Indie Orientali*.

Meanwhile, on the feast of *Moonnu nombu* at Edappally, archdeacon presented a sealed document (letter) before the crowd, and it stated said that Atallah was authorised by the pope to make the archdeacon a patriarch. Pope had sent a pallium to him. Thus, he was declared a patriarch before the crowd.

Second apostolic commissary, Hyacinth de Vincent OCD came in 1658 when Sebastiani left for Rome. He was solemnly received by Garcia's partisans. He tried to win the separated group but he could not do much. Archbishop Garcia died on 03 September 1659. Hycinth de Vincent died on 10 February 1661.<sup>148</sup>

Rome understood the real state of the Church in Malabar from the report of Sebastiani. Pope Alexander VII took a bold step and ordained Sebastiani archbishop secretly as Portuguese court would object it. Sebastiani was appointed titular bishop of Hierapolis on 15 December 1659 and was sent to India with precise instructions. He was given sufficient freedom and power to end schism. Sebastiani was sent to India under Propaganda Jurisdiction which was created by Pope Gregory XV in 1622 directly under Roman See.

#### 4. Episcopal Ordination of Chandy Parambil

Sebastiani hoped that he could reestablish unity among St Thomas Christians after the death of Garcia. Sebastiani re-entered in India as bishop on 14 May 1661. He brought back a vast majority of priests and faithful to the Catholic communion; of the four councilors of Mar Thomas I, three returned to the Catholic Church (except Ittithomman Cathanar). Ecclesiastical authorities made an attempt to capture Mar Thoma I and Ittithomman Cathanar and to bring an end to the schism. But they escaped disguised as (Nair) soldiers.<sup>149</sup>

On 07 January 1663, the Dutch captured Cochin and the Portuguese lost their control in Malabar. Dutch rulers ordered all non Europeans (except Dutch) to quit Malabar. Endeavors of Sebastiani were thus blocked. He conferred episcopal ordination to Chandy Parambil (Alexander de Campo), first cousin of Mar Thoma I, as the titular bishop of Megara at St Mary's Valiyapally, Kaduthuruthy on 01 February 1663.<sup>150</sup> Mar Thoma I and Ittithomman Cathanar were solemnly excommunicated by Sebastiani. He wrote to Dutch officials that they should support Mar Chandy Parambil since he was leaving Malabar and he got the assurance.

#### Conclusion

When the St Thomas Church in Malabar was divided after the revolt of Coonan Cross Oath, faithful were confused. Syrian Christians in general abandoned Archbishop Garcia and Jesuits. Their resentment was directly against Garcia and missionaries, not against Rome and

<sup>148</sup> E. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India*, 82.

<sup>149</sup> Bernard of Thomas, *Marthoma Chrisithianikal II*, Mannanm 2021, 584.

<sup>150</sup> P. Pallath, *The Catholic Church in India*, 122.

pope. Thomas Parambil and his party misled people that he was appointed by Atallah who was legitimately sent by pope. Mar Thoma I was not ready to submit to the inquisitors of Goa. Rome sent two apostolic commissions and Joseph Sebastiani who re-entered into Malabar as the archbishop in 1664, ordained Mar Chandy Parambil bishop at Kaduthuruthy.

## CHAPTER TEN

### Emergence of Jacobite Church in Malabar

#### Introduction

Mar Thomas I who was ordained bishop by 12 priests understood clearly that his party would be weak immediately, unless he would get support from any Church or a valid episcopal ordination. Mar Chandy Parambil was ordained validly by Bishop Sebastiani. Therefore, Mar Thomas sent letters to Chaldean Patriarch of Babylon and Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. Jacobite Patriarch sent to Malabar a Jacobite bishop called Mar Gregorios in 1665.<sup>151</sup> As Mar Thomas welcomed him to Malabar, Mar Gregorios began to perform episcopal functions there and Mar Thomas administrative duties. This was the beginning of the relation of Syrian Orthodox Church with the Church of Malabar.

#### 1. Mar Gregorios and *Puthenkur* division

Abdul Jaleel Mar Gregorios (alias Mar Gregorios) who came to Malabar in 1665 was aware of the fact that Mar Thomas I was not a validly ordained bishop. Since Gregorios was an Oriental bishop, he was welcomed by the party of Mar Thomas. Mar Gregorios began to respond to the situations according to the mind of the people and promised to restore the heritage of the St Thomas Christians. He tried to introduce Jacobite Orthodox doctrines and Antiochean Rite in Malabar.<sup>152</sup> Thus he reinvigorated the group of Mar Thomas I with his presence and new hegemony, before Mar Thoma's death in 1670. When Mar Thomas and his party accepted the new alliance with Antiochean Syrian Orthodox (Jacobite) Church, they were traditionally called *Puthenkur* Church (Puthen – new; kur – alliance in Malayalam) commonly. But he did not give any valid episcopal ordination to Mar Thomas though *Puthenkur* party claims it.<sup>153</sup> Gregorios introduced traditional vestments and old calendar which were in use before Synod of Diamper. He denounced obligatory celibacy of the priests. Mar Thoma and his group claimed that Mar Thoma I received valid episcopal ordination from Mar Gregorios. The latter (Gregorios) died in 1671.<sup>154</sup> When Mar Thoma I died in 1673, his brother began to act as his successor but he died within six days. Therefore, his nephew succeeded Mar Thoma I as Mar Thoma II.

<sup>151</sup> C. Mar Baselios, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 19.

<sup>152</sup> P. Pallath, *The Catholic Church in India*, 200.

<sup>153</sup> C. Mar Baselios, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 34.

<sup>154</sup> Historians are not unanimous about the year of his death. Bernard of Thomas, *Marthoma Chrisithianikal* II, 652 and 654. 'Mar Gregorios died in 1670'. X. Koodappuzha, *Bharathasabha Charithram*, Murinjapuzha 2018, 560. 'Gregorios died in 1671. C. Mar Baselios, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 80 foot note 13.

## 2. List of Malankara bishops<sup>155</sup>

Mar Thomas I	: 1653-1670
Mar Thomas II	: 1670-1686
Mar Thomas III	: 1686-1688
Mar Thomas IV	: 1688-1728
Mar Thomas V	: 1728-1764

In 1685, Patriarch Ignatius Abdul Mesih I of Antioch sent Mar Baselios a Maphrian and Mar Ivanios (John) a bishop to Malabar. Mar Baselios died immediately and was buried Kothamangalam *cheriyapally* (small church). During the time of Mar Thomas IV, Mar Ivanios (John who died in 1693) tried to propagate Antiochean rite.<sup>156</sup> In 1751, three Antiocheans arrived in Malabar and they were Mar Baselios, Mar Gregorios and Romban John who was later ordained bishop (Mar Ivanios).<sup>157</sup> Mar Thomas V was succeeded by Mar Thoma VI. He received valid episcopal ordination in January 1772 at Niranam from Mar Gregorios and Mar Ivanios.<sup>158</sup> Mar Thomas VI received a new name (i.e.,) Mar Dionysius I.

List of the successors of Mar Thomas VI is given below:

Mar Thomas VI (Mar Dionysius I):	1761-1808
Mar Thomas VII	: 1808-1809
Mar Thomas VIII	: 1809-1815
Mar Thomas IX	: 1815-1815
Mar Dionysius II	: 1815-1816
Mar Philexinos II	: 1816-1818
Mar Dionysius III	: 1818-1825
Mar Dionysius IV	: 1825-1846
Mar Cyril Joachim (Antioch)	: 1846-1866
Mar Dionysius V	: 1866-1909

## 3. Mar Gabriel (1708-1731)

Mar Gabriel, an East Syrian/ Nestorian and the archbishop of Odurbigan, arrived in Malabar around 1708.<sup>159</sup> It was during the time of Mar Thoma III. Mar Gabriel claimed that he embraced Catholic faith and submitted himself to the obedience of the Chaldean Catholic Patriarch Mar Joseph II. Carmelite missionaries considered him as a Nestorian. He made profession of faith at Changanacherry Church<sup>160</sup> but when he started governing dissident churches, missionaries reported it to Rome. On 31 January 1722, Propaganda declared that Mar Gabriel was working in Malabar against the prohibition of the Sacred Congregation.<sup>161</sup> He worked among *Puthenkuttukar* also. But Mar Thomas IV was against Mar Gabriel and therefore, the former contacted Antioch. He continued his work in Malabar until his death in 1731 at Kottayam. He was buried in Kottayam Cheriyaapally (Orthodox).

<sup>155</sup> C. Mar Baselios, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 218.

<sup>156</sup> X. Koodapuzha, *Thirusabhacharithram*, 1237.

<sup>157</sup> E. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India*, 144.

<sup>158</sup> J. Puliurumpil, *Jurisdiction of the Syro-Malabar Church A historical Perspective*, 135.

<sup>159</sup> J. Perumthottam, *A Period of the Decline*, 82-83.

<sup>160</sup> Bernard of Thomas, *Marthoma Chrisithianikal II*, 636.

<sup>161</sup> J. Perumthottam, *A Period of the Decline*, 88.

#### 4. Introduction of Antiochean liturgy

Though Antiochean missionaries tried to introduce that liturgy to Malabar, it was not accepted all on a sudden. Puthenkur community was clearly having the same Chaldean liturgy at least till 1750.<sup>162</sup> Systematic introduction of Antiochean Anaphoras was done by Mar Baselios and Mar John. Stabilisation of Antiochean rite was due to anti-protestantism movement in Malabar (Malankara). When the Anglican missionaries tried to convert Malankara (Puthenkur Church) to their mission, Mar Dionysius IV worked for the stabilisation of Syrian customs and Antiochean liturgy. “The Orthodox Syrians had proclaimed their allegiance to the Antiochean rite officially and publicly in the Synod of Mavelikara in 1836 in which it was decided that the Syrian traditions and liturgy were not at all to be changed or modified.”<sup>163</sup>

#### Conclusion

Mar Thomas I who recognized that his community was dwindling day by day tried to get support from Oriental Churches. To this context, a Syrian Jacobite bishop Mar Gregorios was sent by the Patriarch of Antioch. Mar Gregorios was followed by other Syrian prelates at different intervals but they began to introduce Antiochean rite to St Thomas Christians under Mar Thomas I. Though this rite was welcomed generally by all then, the Synod of Mavelikkara in 1836 officially accepted the rite and liturgy. Mar Thomas VI who received valid episcopal ordination was a turning point for the *Puthenkur* faction of the St Thomas Christians.

### CHAPTER ELEVEN

#### Catholics in the Eighteenth Century

##### Introduction

After the death of Mar Chandy Parambil, no autochthonous bishop was appointed to St Thomas Catholic Church. Though there were archdeacons for a short period among them, lack of proper leadership in the Syrian Christian community was evident. It was a period of double jurisdiction in the ecclesiastical level. Even if Mar Dionysius I desired to establish reunion with the Catholic Church, missionaries were against such attempts. At this juncture, Syrian Catholics decided to send a delegation to Rome and Lisbon in the persons of Fr. Joseph Kariatti and Fr. Thomas Paremakal.

##### 1. General Situation of the Syrian Catholics in Malabar

Mar Chandy Parambil (Alexander de Campo) administered his mission fruitfully under Propaganda Jurisdiction whereas Padroado See of Cranganore was vacant until 1701 after the death of Garcia in 1659. History of the Propaganda Vicariate and *pazhayakur* community can

<sup>162</sup> C. Mar Baselios, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 106-111 and 113.

<sup>163</sup> C. Mar Baselios, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 118.

be summed up as the following: When Mar Chandy Parambil began to do his ministry, almost 60 parishes were ready to obey him; some of which were claimed by schismatics. In course of time, number of the pazhayakur (Catholic) community increased upto 89 and the strength of the Puthenkur community dwindled.<sup>164</sup> Towards the end of his episcopal ministry Mar Parambil was in need of an auxiliary. He petitioned to Rome for a native successor but under the influence of Carmelite missionaries, Raphael de Figueredo Salgado, a priest of Portuguese origin (born at Cochin) was appointed his successor. Mar Parambil was reluctant to ordain him bishop. Bishop Thomas de Castro of Canara ordained him bishop. He was despised by all because of his misdeeds. Even foreign missionaries also reported that the election was imprudent. Figueredo was unfit for the office of bishop. Mar Parambil appointed Fr. Mathai Parambil as the archdeacon in 1678. Since Figueredo disobeyed Mar Chandy Parambil and disappointed everyone, numerous complaints were sent to Rome. Mar Parambil died in 1687. Rome suspended Figueredo and asked Bishop Custodius de Pinho, the vicar apostolic of Great Mogul (who was appointed by Rome to inquire about the issue in 1687) to assume the office. But before the execution of the decision, Figueredo died in 1695 at Pallipuram.

Here is the list of the bishops under Padroado Jurisdiction and Propaganda Jurisdiction.<sup>165</sup>

<b>Padroado (Angamali-Kodungalloor)</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Propaganda (Malabar/Verapoly)</b>	<b>Period</b>
Francis Ros	1600-24		
Stephen Britto	1624-41		
Francis Garcia	1641-59		
		Sebastiani	1656-63
		Chandy Parambil	1663-87
		R. Figueredo	1677-94
		Custodio da Pinho	1694-96
John Ribeiro	1701-16	Angelus Francis	1700-12
Manuel C. Pimentel	1721-52	John Baptist	1714-50
John L. Vasconcellos	1753-58	Florentius of Jesus	1750-73
		Francis Sales <sup>166</sup>	1774-80

## 2. St Thomas Christians under Double Jurisdiction

Padroado Sees in Malabar were vacant as Dutch rulers did not permit foreign Portuguese missionaries to remain in their territory. According to the agreement in 1698 with Dutch, Rome could appoint a Carmelite called Angelus Francis of St Theresa as bishop to Malabar (to Propaganda vicariate). Meanwhile an East Syrian bishop called Mar Simon Ada reached Malabar for St Thomas Christians, from whom Angelus Francis received episcopal ordination in 1701 at Alengad. But Mar Simon Ada was deported to Pondicherry so that he would not interfere in the affairs of St Thomas Christians. He died there in 1720.

After 42 years, John Ribeiro, a Portuguese Jesuit was appointed to Kodungalloor.<sup>167</sup> Churches like Manarkad and Puthuppally were disappointed at the appointment of

<sup>164</sup> Bernard of Thomas, *Marthoma Chrisithianikal II*, 598.

<sup>165</sup> E. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India*, 187-188.

<sup>166</sup> Francis Sales was asked to resign in 1777 and he left Malabar in 1778. X. Koodappuzha, *Bharathasabha Charithram*, 613.

<sup>167</sup> J. Perumthottam, *A Period of the Decline of the Mar Thoma Christians (1712-1752)*, Kottayam 1994, 32.

Portuguese Jesuit and the revitalation of the Diocese of Kodungalloor. Therefore, they joined Mar Thoma IV. Padroado (Rebeiro) raised the claim over St Thomas Christians. Forty churches backed vicar apostolic (Angelo Francis) in a general assembly under Archdeacon Mathew Pallil, in 1704. But Angelo Francis stopped functioning as their bishop.<sup>168</sup> Therefore, archdeacon changed his loyalty to Ribeiro (Padroado). When Ribeiro took refuge under Samudiri because he was opposed by Dutch, archdeacon shifted his loyalty to Angelo Francis. Thus there were confusion and conflicts between the two authorities. As a result, Syrian Catholics were divided between the two.

Jesuits were suppressed in 1759 by Portuguese royal government and there took place a universal suppression of the order in 1773. Syrian Catholics began to work together at this juncture and they began to approach Rome directly for their causes. Naturally, it was bold step from the St Thomas Christians

### 3. Tensions in the Vicariate Apostolic of Malabar (Propaganda)

While Florentius of Jesus (1750-73) was the vicar apostolic of Verapoly, Carmelite missionaries celebrated the feast of St Thresia of Avila at Verapoly. There was a golden *ostensorium* (monstrance) using for exposing Holy Eucharist. Religious priests (*padri*) left the sacred vessel on altar and went for dinner. According to custom, priests and other faithful would come to the feast. Chacko Cathanar (Ikkako Cathanar) of Kallurkad, then vicar at Edappally, was also present there the feast. Carmelites forgot to close the church after the dinner and the next day, the golden ostensorium was found missing. They suspected Ikkako Cathanar and he was questioned. He was allowed to return to his parish as they understood that he was innocent.<sup>169</sup>

A Carmelite priest, Francis Sales who later became vicar apostolic (1774-1778), accused him again of theft. When Ikkako Cathanar was summoned again he appealed to the lord (ruler) of Edappally. This act was interpreted by missionaries and bishop as proof of his crime. He was forcefully taken to Verapoly, beaten up by low castes, and shut up in a room. He was starved to death. He was not given chance to receive even last sacrament. When Ikkako Cathanar died, his body was wrapped and buried outside church compound on the bank of a tank.<sup>170</sup>

When Florentius died in 1773 priests Syrian priests wanted to carry the coffin which was the right according to the custom. But Carmelite missionaries (Fr Anastasius Jerome) reacted that Syrians' bishop was in Kodungalloor and they have no right in Verapoly.<sup>171</sup> Thus he denied the honour of the Syrian Christians and humiliated the clergy. These events offended St Thomas Christians.

#### a. Meetings at Alangad and Angamaly

St Thomas Christians gathered at Angamaly in August 1773 in which almost all priests and representatives from 45 parishes were present. They desired to break all European ties and to re-establish the office of the archdeacon. They desired to petition for a bishop from their community. When missionaries knew about the meeting, two Carmelites (led by

<sup>168</sup> Bernard of Thomas, *Marthoma Chrisithianikal* II, 627. X. Koodappuzha, *Bharathasabha Charithram*, 588-589.

<sup>169</sup> Bernard of Thomas, *Marthoma Chrisithianikal* II, 672.

<sup>170</sup> T. Paremmakkal, *Varthamanapusthakam*, 46-48.

<sup>171</sup> Cathanar Thomman Paremmakkal, *Varthamanappusthakam*, tran. P.J. Podipara, (OCA 190), Rome 1971, 31. Also, X. Koodappuzha, *Bharathasabha Charithram*, 607.

Lawrence Giustiniani, Apostolic visitor for Carmelites) approached St Thomas Christian leaders. They pacified the leaders and came to an agreement by accepting six conditions (concessions).<sup>172</sup>

The agreements which he signed according to his report were: 1) the Malabarians will bury the bishop, 2) their priests will not be beaten or made to be beaten by low castes, will not be imprisoned, will not be denied the funeral etc.; 3) persons of another rite or caste will not be ordained according to the Syro-Chaldean rite, 4) the Malabarian priests will carry the reliquary in processions, 5) without knowing the truth no punishment, no excommunication etc. will be inflicted, 6) those to whom one Prelate denies ordination will not be ordained by another (The complaint was that the Vicar Ap. had ordained one to whom the archbishop had denied ordination) — (Archives of the S. Propaganda a Congregation, Rome, Scritt. riferit. nei Congr. Gen. 1774-1775, Vol. 34, ff 414 sq.)<sup>173</sup>

Since Carmelite missionaries except Giustiniani offended Malabar Christians again, Thomas Christians gathered at Alangad on 17 February 1776 and decided not to admit those missionaries to their parishes. When Francis Sales returned to Malabar as the vicar apostolic of Verapoly, missionaries did not admit him there. Therefore, he was given residence in Alengad by St Thomas Christians. Bishop was given solemn reception by St Thomas Christians. When Francis Sales and missionaries reconciled with each other, bishop wanted to return to Verapoly. He was given another solemn reception again. When civil authorities challenged this act, missionaries replied that it was their right to give reception to their bishop. Therefore, civil authorities concluded that the reception that St Thomas Christians had given him in Alengad was illegal. This brought damage to St Thomas Christians before civil authorities. (They were punished with fine). There were many assemblies held at several places and they decided to send a representation to Rome to present their petition.<sup>174</sup>

#### 4. Delegation to Rome under Cariatti and Paremmakkal

The second half of 18<sup>th</sup> century, St Thomas Christians took initiatives to bring back the separated brethren to the Catholic folk. Jacobite (Malankara) Bishop Mar Thomas VI (Mar Dionysius I) made many attempts to reunite with the Catholic Church (in 1778), but because of the opposition from Latin missionaries, it did not take place. Against this background, “according to the ancient traditions of the St. Thomas Christians, a general assembly was convoked at Angamaly and it was decided to send some representatives to Lisbon and Rome to present the affairs of Malabar Church directly to the authorities concerned.”<sup>175</sup>

They commissioned two priests namely Joseph Cariatti and Thomas Paremmakkal to go over to Lisbon and Rome to present their petitions. In this delegation, Thomas Paremmakkal represented Padroado jurisdiction of Kodungallur and Joseph Kariatti Propaganda jurisdiction in Malabar. Two boys were also with them to be admitted to the Urban College namely,

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<sup>172</sup> X. Koodappuzha, *Bharathasabha Charithram*, 608-609. Bernard of Thomas, *Marthoma Chrisithianikal II*, 675.

<sup>173</sup> Cathanar Thomman Paremmakkal, *Varthamanappusthakam*, tran. P.J. Podipara, 44, foot note no.3.

<sup>174</sup> Cathanar Thomman Paremmakkal, *Varthamanappusthakam*, tran. P.J. Podipara, 65. Since chapters XIV, XV, XVI and a good portion of XVII are lost, Fr Placid Podipara gives only a gist from his studies and assumption.

<sup>175</sup> A.F. Thonippara, *Saint Thomas Christians of India: A Period of Struggle for Unity and Self Rule*, Dissertation in Gregoriana, Rome 1999, 69.

Chacko Malayil and Mathew Panchasara Palackal. The delegates started their journey from Malabar on May 7, 1778.<sup>176</sup>

Mar Cariatti was nominated Archbishop of Cranganore by the queen of Portugal and Rome confirmed it. He was ordained archbishop for St. Thomas Christians in 1783 in Lisbon but died on 10 September 1786 in Goa, on the way back to Malabar. Before his death, he appointed Thomas Paremmakkal as the governor (*Gubernador*) of St. Thomas Christians.

#### a. *Mar Joseph Cariatti*

“Joseph Cariattil was born at Alangat on May 5, 1742. The Cariattil family was called also Puducherri. He was an alumnus of the Alangat seminary founded by the Carmelites. The Carmelites sent him to the Propaganda College, Rome, when he was a boy of 12.”<sup>177</sup> He was ordained priest on 15 March 1766 and acquired doctorate in theology. When he returned he served as the vicar of Alengat Church. When St Thomas Christians decided to present their grievances and the petition for the reunion of Puthenkur community, 72 churches chose a deputation to Rome under Cariatti and they were authorised to do whatever for the good of the community.<sup>178</sup>

#### b. *Fr Thomas Paremmakkal*

Cathanar Thomman Paremmakkal was born on Sept. 10, 1736, at Kadalnat in the present Syro-Malabar diocese of Palai. He was ordained priest in 1761, and was pastor in a few churches including his own parish of Kadalnat under the Padroado archdiocese of Cranganore. Besides his mother tongue Malayalam he knew Syriac, Latin, Sanskrit and some other Indian languages. Italian and Portuguese, he could read.<sup>179</sup>

He is the author of the travelogue *Varthamanapusthakam* which narrates the journey of the delegates to Rome in 1778 and the events thereafter. After the death of Mar Cariatti in Goa in 1786, he served the Church as the administrator with the help of 12 canons. He changed his residence from Angamaly to Vadayar around 1790 at the context of Tipu Sultan’s Muslim invasion. Towards the end of his life he lived at Ramaparam (his native place); he died on March 20, 1799, and was buried at the sanctuary of the church.

### 5. Administration under *Gubernador*

After assuming office of governor, Paremmakkal Thomas wanted to convoke representatives of churches of Thomas Christians in Angamaly. The representatives rushed to hear their leader and to know the truth about the death of Cariatti. On 01 February 1787, representatives of the Syrian churches produced a written document declaring that they would no longer be under foreign bishops; they requested to authorities concerned to nominate Thomas Paremmakkal as their archbishop. This historical event took place at Angamaly Church and this document – *Angamali padiyola* – was signed by parish priests and two

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<sup>176</sup> A.F. Thonippara, *Saint Thomas Christians of India: A Period of Struggle for Unity and Self Rule*, 72-73. Cathanar Thomman Paremmakkal, *Varthamanappusthakam*, tran. P.J. Podipara, 65. This information is given as a note by Podipara.

<sup>177</sup> Cathanar Thomman Paremmakkal, *Varthamanappusthakam*, tran. P.J. Podipara, 19. (introductory part).

<sup>178</sup> C. Pyngot ed., “Mar Joseph Cariattil: Life and Activities” in *Homage to Mar Cariattil Pioneer Malabar Ecumenist*, Kottayam 1992, 43.

<sup>179</sup> Cathanar Thomman Paremmakkal, *Varthamanappusthakam*, tran. P.J. Podipara, 19. (introductory part).

representatives from each parish community.<sup>180</sup> The *padiyola* of 02 February 1787 states that the assembly elected 12 canons as councilors for Paremakkal for the administration of the Church.

## Conclusion

Since there were two ecclesiastical jurisdictions in Malabar, Syriac Catholics were divided between Padroado and Propaganda. Each party tried to bring more churches under their authority and it caused conflicts and confusion. St Thomas Christians were often humiliated by missionaries. Ill-treatment of the Carmelites which led to the death of Ikkako Cathanar and the belittlement which St Thomas Christians experienced at the funeral of Bishop Florentius infuriated them. The request of the Mar Thoma VI was neglected by the missionaries; therefore, Delegation under Joseph Cariatti and Thomas Paremakkal was an attempt to present grievances of St Thomas Christians before concerned authorities in Rome and Lisbon. This course of events helped the St Thomas Christians more self reliant. Thus, they worked with unity for restoring the identity and rights of the Church.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### Syrian Catholics in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

#### Introduction

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the community conscience of the Syrian Christians was strengthened and they desired to be under a separate Syrian administration in Malabar. Malabar Coast had to witness two schisms in the 19<sup>th</sup> century because of the connection of Syrian Christians with the Persian Church. They were Rokkos Schism in 1861 and Mellus Schism in 1874. After that schisms, Syrians were separated from Latins in 1887 and Vicariates of Kottayam and Trichur were erected. Later, three Syrian Vicariates of Changanacherry, Ernakulam and Trichur were created in 1896 with autochthonous bishops. In 1911, Vicariate of Kottayam was erected. Syro-Malabar hierarchy was created in 1923 with Ernakulam as archdiocese. The Church was raised to the status of Major Archiepiscopal level.

#### 1. General Situation of the Syrian Catholics in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

The early years of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were of disunity and unsteadiness of governance in Malabar Church. There were tensions between Padroado and Propaganda authorities. There were various schisms in the Church.

##### 1.1. *Pandari Schism*

St Thomas Christians sent four representatives to Chaldean Patriarch Mar Joseph IV of Mosul with a letter describing their grievances against Carmelites and their request for a

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<sup>180</sup> A.F. Thonippara, *Saint Thomas Christians of India: A Period of Struggle for Unity and Self Rule*, 223.

native bishop. But Mar Joseph IV was already dead in 1791 and Mar John Hormez was the administrator. Mar John wrote to Propaganda Fide on 25 November 1796 for any direction. As he received no reply from Rome, he sent again another letter also to Rome. Having received no response from Rome, Mar Hormez ordained Paul Pandari, one from the the delegation bishop. Mar Pandari's letter of profession of faith was sent to Rome which reached there on 17 March 1797. Meanwhile, Mar Pandari reached Malabar. But on 10 May 1799 Congregation replied that Mar John had no authority to consecrate a bishop to Malabar which was not under his jurisdiction. Malabar was directly under Holy See. Mar John justified his stance in his letters and respecting the order given to him, he agreed to call Mar Pandari back.

Paremakkal died in 1799; Fr Abraham Kattakayam (+1800/1) and George Shankurickal became the next administrators in Cranganore in 1801 and the Syrians accepted his leadership. By January 1802, a good number of Syrian churches (37) were under the subjection of the apostolic vicar of Verapoly. See of Kodungalloor (Padroado) was often vacant after 1758. Missionaries and the bishops like Raymond and Prendergast were inappropriate to episcopacy in Verapoly (Propaganda) because of their rude nature and immorality. Then Stabilini and Francis Xavier were appointed bishops in Verapoly.

## 1.2. *Suppression of Padroado*

After the death of Mar Cariatti there was no prelate in Padroado diocese of Kodungalloor. The appointments thereafter were nominal and provisional. There were jurisdictional conflicts between Verapoly and Kodungalloor. In Europe also, Rome was seeking means to bring missions directly under Holy See. Even though Prefect of PF (Card. Pedicini) wrote to king of Portugal to see to the spiritual care of the Catholics in the mission in India, they failed. Sees were vacant, Church was desolate and seminaries were neglected. There took place a new turn when pope suppressed its jurisdiction all over the world.

On 24 April 1838, Pope Gregory XVI through *multa praeclare*<sup>181</sup> abolished *Padroado* jurisdiction in India limiting it only to Goa. All Syrians in the diocese of Kodungalloor were brought under the jurisdiction of Verapoly. Fr Antonio Carvalho, the archbishop elect of Goa and Fr Antonio Teixeira, the bishop elect of Madras opposed the brief saying that right of Patronage was not concession (*privilegio grazioso*) but acquired privilege (*privilegio acquisto*). They began to preach against pope and division in the Church headed by Goa (Padroado head) was called Goan Schism. In Malabar some churches in Kochi and Kodungalloor were in the schism in the beginning. In 1857, Rome made a concordat with Portugal suppressing Padroado territories. Thus Syrians in Kodungalloor were brought under the jurisdiction of Verapoly (Propaganda). (Saba Commission in 1870.)

This transfer of Syrian Catholics to Verapoly did not quench their thirst for autonomy. Around 1855, Bishop Bernadine Bacinelli OCD of Verapoly stopped malpanate system. According to him, those who were trained in Puthenpally seminary under Carmelites were eligible for ordination (Monasteries in Mannanam, Elthuruth and Vazhithala also trained candidates).

## 1.1. *Religious Congregations*

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<sup>181</sup> Gregory XVI, *Multa praeclare*, 24 April 1834, Iuris Pontificii de Propaganda Fide (IPPF), vol. V (1834) 164-168. Also P. Pallath, *Important Roman Document Concerning the Catholic Church in India*, Kottayam 2004, 114-125.

The desire for religious life was instilled and nourished among Thomas Christians by three priests – Thomas Palackal, Thomas Porookkara and Kuriakose Chavara.<sup>182</sup> They were allowed to start a Carmelite Third Order (T.O.C.D) for the Syrians in 1831. Later a religious house for women according to the same spirituality was also started namely Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (C.M.C.) in 1866.<sup>183</sup> CMI Congregation later became the centre for the growth and identity awareness of the Syro-Malabar Church. Monks sent petitions to Rome for the new provisions for the Syrians in Malabar. Later there were other congregations like FCC (1888), SVM (1891), VC (1904), SH (1911) etc.

### 1.2. Educational Institutions

Rev. Claudius Buchanan, the Chaplain of the East India Company visited Malabar in 1806 (he visited Mar Thoma VI) and at request of British resident, **Church Missionary Society** sent Thomas Norton (1816), Benjamin Baily (1816), Joseph Fenn (1818) and Henry Baker (1819) to Malabar and they worked among Syrians of Puthenkur division but their relation faded immediately for various reasons especially with Mavelikkara Synod in 1836. Carmelites in Verapoly tried to keep their intrusions among Syrian Catholics. They prohibited even English education thinking that their contact may lead to protestant ideas. (CMS had 124 and LMS (London) had 138 in Tracancore and Kochin.)<sup>184</sup>

Protestant missionaries started a college in Kottayam and Benjamin Baily was its first principal. Jacobites also took initiatives in this line and they got job in government sector. Syrian Catholics were deprived of English education. Even when Travancore government put Rs 5,000 a year for the education of the Catholics bishop Marcelline (aux. bp) did not use Rs 20000 (4 yrs) fearing protestant influence. At last Mellano (Abp) started a college in Kochin but did not serve it for Syrians.

While Jacobites had archbishops and bishops towards the end of 19<sup>th</sup> cent, Syrian Catholics had no native bishops. Nationalist spirit was growing in them.

### 1.3. Rokkos Schism

Syrian Catholics under former Padroado (Kodungalloor diocese) approached Chaldean patriarch for a bishop under the influence of Danaha Barjona (Syrian missionary who reached in India in 1853) who was then staying at Kuravilangad. A representation consisted of Frs Antony Kudakachira and Antony Thondanatt was sent to Chaldean Church in 1857. Kudakachira died there and Fr Thondanatt returned to Malabar with a bishop called Mar Rokkos sent by Mar Audo IV the patriarch.

Mar Thomas Rokkos, a Chaldean bishop, landed in Kerala in May 1861, and quickly around 80 parishes completely and 34 others partially followed the Chaldean bishop. Fr. Kriakose Elias Chavara was appointed vicar general for the Syrians in the diocese of Verapoly to defeat Rokkos Schism. Thanks to the effort of Chavara Kuriakose and pressures of missionaries, Rokkos was recalled by Patriarch in 1862. Fr Thondanatt accompanied Mar Rokkos and received episcopal ordination from Nestorian Patriarch Shimun (not Mar Audo) and returned to Malabar with a new name Mar Abdiso. But he was not accepted by people.

In 1863, the Apostolic Commissary Archbishop Salvator Saba who came to India to end Padroado Schism ordered that all the churches in Propaganda and those in Padroado on the

<sup>182</sup> Chavara Kuriakose Elias, "Nalagamangal," p. 15, in *Chavarayachante Sampoorna Kruthikal* I, 15 & 19.

<sup>183</sup> Bernard of Thomas, *Mar Thoma Kristhianikal* II, 235.

<sup>184</sup> Sherring, MA, *The History of Protestant Missions in India*, London 1884, 333.

day of the signing of the Concordat in 1857 had to join either Padroado (Verapoly) or Propaganda jurisdiction. Under Verapoly there were 104 churches, 37 under Padroado.

#### 1.4. *Mellus Schism*

In 1874, another Chaldean bishop Mar Elia Mellus came to Malabar and stayed there for some time, and in 1878, he was officially recalled by the Patriarch. Though at first around 44 parishes followed him, their number dwindled into 15 and their main centre was Trichur and this schism had a severe impact on the Catholic Church, unlike that of Rokkos. Mar Mellus brought Mar Philip Jacob Uraha (a bishop) from Persia. Propaganda sensed that situation was going out of the control of Mellano bishop of Verapoly.

After the arrival of Mellus, many parishes were divided into Catholics and Mellusians and there were suits in parishes. Chittattukara Church case was one among such suits. Major group of the Church (once in Padroado) followed Mellus and the rest was in Verapoly division. District Court of South Malabar judged in favour of Mellusians. Case was brought to Madras HC and Fr Nidiry took initiative. Madras HC issued a verdict that as Mellus got a letter of recall from patriarch by that time, he cannot be considered as legitimate authority. Thus Mellusians failed in the case (not there but in Velianad, Palayoor, Arunattukara, Arthat... etc).

Mellus returned to his Church only on 05 March 1882.<sup>185</sup> Another problem was that Thondanatt Anthony (Mar Abdiso), one of the supporters of Rokkos who had managed to obtain episcopal ordination from the Assyrian Patriarch, Simon XVIII Ruben assumed office of bishop when Mellus was recalled. (Though Abdiso had approached Rome for reunion, he was considered an apostate. He remained in Elamthottam near Pala) He went to Thrissur later and strengthened that party.

## 2. Arrangements for the Syrians in Verapoly until 1887

Alarming situation in Malabar Coast was an eye-opener for Church authorities.<sup>186</sup> Rome sensed that situation in Malabar Coast was going out of control of Archbishop Mellano of Verapoly. St Thomas Christians had a lot of grievances against missionaries in Verapoly. Therefore, TOCD priests decided to send a petition for demanding separation of Syrians from Latins. Seven Carmelites namely, Paul Sankoorickal, Mathew Matheikal, Emmanuel Meenattoor, Joseph Chavara, Varghese Irumpan, Hilarios Tharavattathil and Luois Pazheparambil sent a petition to Rome for the same. (But they were expelled from monastery and they were called seven Dolours).

Rome sent an apostolic visitor to Malabar in 1874 - Leo Maurin, Apostolic Vicar of Bombay<sup>187</sup> and then in 1877, Ignatius Persico. According to them, the desire of Thomas Christians for a native bishop had been alive for centuries. On the basis of reports sent by Leo Maurin and Ignazio Persico, Rome decided to take significant steps for the good of the St. Thomas Church. According to the report of Persico, Msgr. Marcelline OCD was appointed coadjutor of Mellano. He was given exclusive charge of Syrian Catholics. The decree was promulgated on 17 August 1877. Mathew Makil, a Southist priest, was appointed secretary to Marcelline for a short period of time. However, Marcelline did not act according to the

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<sup>185</sup> C. Varicatt, *The Suriani Church of India: Her Quest for Autochthonous Bishops (1877-1896)*, Kottayam 1995, 56.

<sup>186</sup> C. Varicatt, *The Suriani Church of India: Her Quest for Autochthonous Bishops (1877-1896)*, 15.

<sup>187</sup> C. Varicatt, *The Suriani Church of India: Her Quest for Autochthonous Bishops (1877-1896)*, 14.

wishes of Rome as he was over-dependent<sup>188</sup> on Mellano; his overdependence caused suspicion among Syrian Catholics. Though Rome continuously gave him directions to appoint a vicar general and four councillors, those directions for the said provisions did not serve the purpose of separating his jurisdiction from that of Mellano.<sup>189</sup> The archbishop considered Mercelline as his assistant<sup>190</sup> and continued to extend his jurisdiction to the Syrian Catholics. Thus, appointment of Mercelline could not realize the cherished desire of the ecclesiastical autonomy of Syrian Catholics and separation of the administration from Mellano.

### 3. Syro-Malabar Vicariates in 1887

Cry from St. Thomas Christians for a Chaldean bishop was acute in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, interventions of the Chaldean Patriarch on the Malabar Coast to bring it into his jurisdiction forced the Roman authorities to consider the possibility of providing St. Thomas Christians with autonomy under their own bishops.

In 1884, Antony Agliardi was appointed as the first apostolic delegate in India. Holy See established Indian Hierarchy by the apostolic letter *Humanae Salutis Auctor*. After Agliardi's visit to Malabar in 1886, he reported that Syrians should be separated from Latins in Malabar with two vicariates (to divide the strength of the Syrians). On 20 December 1886, PF decided to separate the Syrians and entrust the vicariate to non-Carmelite congregation. A general meeting of the ap. Vicars of South India in 1887 (Jan) declared that it is apt time to create Syrian vicariates demarking river Aluva as the natural limits. (They thought that Marcelline would be appointed to TCR and Fr Polycarp OCD to KTM). But Aiuti (delegate ap) had sent a telegram not to appoint Carmelites to new Syrian vicariates.

After having done necessary consultations and discussions, the Roman See issued the brief *Quod iampridem* on 20 May 1887, with which Pope Leo XIII separated Syrians and Latins of Verapoly, and established two vicariates for the Syrians: Trichur and Kottayam.<sup>191</sup> Adolph Medlycott, an English priest, and Charles Lavigne, a French Jesuit priest, were appointed respectively their apostolic vicars.<sup>192</sup>

#### 3.1. Charles Lavigne and Kottayam

Charls Lavigne was born on 06 January 1840 in France and was ordained priest in 1864. He was ordained bishop on 13 November 1887 and was sent to India. He reached Mannanam on 02 May 1888 in the monastery of the Carmelite community. He planned a systematic development of the vicariate by building a college, a seminary, bishop's residence, schools and orphanages.

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<sup>188</sup> ACO, ACTA 41 (1911) 12, prot.no. 30391. p. 542 or 4. Footnote no.1, Report of Agliardi in the general meeting of Propaganda Fide on 31 July 1911.

<sup>189</sup> E. Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India: a History of the Syro-Malabar Church from the Earliest Time to the Present Day*, Calcutta 1957, 125.

<sup>190</sup> C. Varicatt, *The Suriani Church of India: Her Quest for Autochthonous Bishops (1877-1896)*, 49.

<sup>191</sup> Leo XIII, *Quod iampridem* 20 May 1887, ASS, vol. 19 (1887) 513-514. Also ACO, *Lettere e Decreti* 1887, vol. 20, ff. 184<sup>f</sup>-185<sup>f</sup>. Also, P. Pallath, *Important Roman Document Concerning the Catholic Church in India*, 190-193.

<sup>192</sup> ACO, *Lettere e Decreti* 1887, vol. 20, f. 344<sup>v</sup>-345<sup>f</sup>, Decree of appointment of the apostolic vicars dated 2 September 1887.

In the vicariate of Kottayam, Syrian Catholics residing south of river Aluva were placed. There were 1,07,000 faithful, 271 priests, 190 seminarians; 96 churches, 49 chapels etc according to the report of 1888.

### 3.2. *Adolph Medlycott and Trichur*

Adolph Medlycott was born on 1835 in Chittagong, Bengal India, of European parents. While he worked as a military chaplain in Punjab, he was appointed vicar apostolic of Trichur. There were more than 100,000 Catholics, 123 priests, 83 parishes and 22 chapels in the vicariate. There were around 5000 Mellusians in his territory. He coveted counsels of Fr Polycarp OCD (of Verapoly who was a possible candidate to Trichur) which created diffidence among the Syrians. He was harsh with his subjects and even excluded natives from refectory.

Syrian Catholics north of river Aluva were placed under the vicariate of Trichur. A part of the territory (Chavakkad and Paraur) was spread in the Malabar province of the Madras presidency of British India. Medlycott planned to begin middle and upper schools, minor seminary, girl's school, catechumenate for females, a residence for vicar apostolic etc. He urged that all parishes to start Malayalam elementary schools.

### 3.3. *Vicars General*

Because of ritual separation, when the two vicariates for Syrians were erected, Archdiocese of Verapoly became very small - in number of faithful and churches. "On 12 October 1887, Matthew Makil, along with Nordist Varghese Valiyaveetil, went to Ooty to meet Andrea Aiuti as representatives of the apostolic vicar of Varapuzha."<sup>193</sup> They were asking for a *Nadumisam* (a third vicariate at the centre). Valiyaveetil expressed the view that if a third vicariate was erected, Marcelline could be made its apostolic vicar and the Syrians would be given three vicariates altogether.<sup>194</sup> Purpose of Mathew Makil and the delegation (from 10 churches) was also to get a separate Syrian vicariate for Southists under Latin prelates. Missionaries of Verapoly encouraged such petitions.

Lavigne administered vicariates with councillors selected from native clergy. When Rome directed Syro-Malabar vicar apostolics to appoint vicar generals Medlycott appointed Fr Varghese Mampilly as his VG and Lavigne appointed Fr Mani Nidiry (for Northists) and Fr Mathew Makil (for Southists) as VGs. Context of the appointment of two VGs in Kottayam was that Syrian Christians (both Catholics and non-Catholics) were divided into two sections from time immemorial as Northists and Southists. Southists had petitioned for separate administration even before the arrival of Lavigne. Accepting their petitions Rome gave permission for separate administration under a vicar general.

### 3.4. *Jathyaika Sakhyam and Nidiry*

Mani Nidiry was originally from the parish of Kuravilangad. Nidiry was considered as a man trained in *Puthenkoor* seminary<sup>195</sup> and received the minor orders from Rokkos; he sent letters for a Persian bishop to Malabar. On the day of his first Holy Qurbana in Mannanam,

<sup>193</sup> C. Varicatt, *The Suriani Church of India: Her Quest for Autochthonous Bishops (1877-1896)*, 159.

<sup>194</sup> ACO, *DISM* 1897-1900 (109) 2, fasc. 8, ff 9<sup>r</sup>-10<sup>v</sup>, letter of Fr George Valiyaveetil and other priests to Ledochowski dated 3 December 1890. He continued his letter in 1891 also (dated 1 March 1891, ff 16<sup>r</sup>-17<sup>v</sup>, 28 August 1891, ff. 21/3<sup>r</sup>-21/4<sup>v</sup>).

<sup>195</sup> A. M. Nidhiry, *Father Nidhiry (1842-1904) A History of his Times*, 16.

Bishop Mellus arrived in Kuravilangad. Since he too was involved in the petition for a bishop exclusively for the Syrians in Verapoly, the Latin missionaries were suspicious on him.<sup>196</sup> For the missionaries, one who advocated for the independence of the Church was a schismatic. But it cannot be undermined that Nidiry worked hard to defeat the schism in Malabar and he did many suits against the Mellusian partisans in courts. So the comment of the missionaries about him regarding schism cannot be considered neutral. Nidiry was considered a scholarly man in Malabar. He was well versed in Malayalam, Sankrit, Syriac, English and Portuguese. He had a flair for speaking. In addition, he had a satisfactory knowledge of the laws and procedures of the government. Though he did not go through systematic university studies, he acquired those languages through his constant efforts and contacts.<sup>197</sup> For the reunion of the Syrian Christians both in the Catholic and Non-Catholic Churches, an association called *Jyathiaykya Sakhyam* was formed for which Nidiry took initiative. Deepika news paper, a common college etc. He died in 1903.

#### 4. Brief *Quae rei sacrae* in 1896

Petitions for native bishops were sent from the Syro-Malabar Church to Rome and other ecclesiastical heads, some of which were to the Chaldean Patriarch, Khayyath. He took initiatives to re-establish his authority in India.<sup>198</sup> There was threat of a Nestorian Schism due to the presence of Mar Abdiso (Antony) Thondanatt in Malabar. Congregation of Propaganda Fide intervened at this juncture considering seriously the demand of the Syro-Malabar Christians – to provide native bishops. The General Assembly of Propaganda Fide on 7 January 1895 was in favour of the demand of the Syrians.<sup>199</sup> The Congregation asked the apostolic delegate and apostolic vicars to present names of eligible candidates to episcopacy. Though Zaleski, Apostolic Delegate of India, was against this proposal, the two apostolic vicars presented their lists. Propaganda Fide decided to erect three vicariates with autochthonous bishops<sup>200</sup> and appointed Mathew Makil, Louis Pazheparambil and John Menacherry respectively in the Vicariates of Changanacherry, Ernakulam and Trichur and it came into effect through the Brief *Quae rei sacrae*<sup>201</sup> on 28 July 1896.

Through the apostolic brief “*In Universi Christiani*” issued on 29 August 1911, Pope Pius X dismembered all Southist parishes and churches from the two Apostolic Vicariates of Ernakulam and Changanacherry. Thus a Vicariate of Kottayam was erected for the Southists or Knanites and Mar Makil was transferred to Kottayam.

#### Conclusion

After the death of Fr. Thomas Paremmakkal Syrian Catholics were devoid of proper leader. Syrian Catholics were looking to overthrow Latin administration both Padroado and Propaganda jurisdiction. General situation of the Malabar Coast in the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century was in favour of schisms. Desire of St Thomas Christians to get a separate

<sup>196</sup> A. M. Nidhiry, *Father Nidhiry (1842-1904) A History of his Times*, 73.

<sup>197</sup> AAK, M. Makil, *Nalagamam II*, 6-7.

<sup>198</sup> ACO, *ACTA* 26 (1896) 6, f. 103, som 13. Letter of Khayyath to Propaganda Fide dated 6 April 1895.

<sup>199</sup> ACO, *ACTA* 25 (1895), f. 51. The resolution of the Cardinals regarding the concession of native bishops as noted by Persico. Also, C. Varicatt, *The Suriani Church of India: Her Quest for Autochthonous Bishops (187-1896)*, 379.

<sup>200</sup> ACO, *DISM* 1889-1900 (109) 2, fasc. 15, ff. 210-211, prot.no. 5663. Decree of the appointment of Makil signed by Lodochowski and sent to Zaleski dated 19 August 1896.

<sup>201</sup> P. Pallath, *Important Roman Documents concerning the Catholic Church in India*, 194-197.

administration and ecclesiastical arrangement were reflected in their petitions to Rome. Their attempt to regain the ecclesiastical independence and identity led to the erection of Syrian vicariates. When two Syro-Malabar vicariates were created in 1887, Petitions for native bishops and threats of schism forced Rome to take steps to provide autochthonous bishops to Syro-Malabar Christians dividing the existing two vicariates into three. Though there were chances for schism in Malabar, Syro-Malabar Christians kept up their unity and faith to great extent. Erection of indigenious religious houses, especially TOCD, helped the Syro-Malabar faithful to regain the identity and individuality of the Church.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### Other Christian Churches and Denominations

#### Introduction

Till Coonan Cross Oath in 1653, Christians in Malabar were called ST Thomas Christians or Syrian Christians. After the oath, there were two groups – *Pazhayakuttukar* and *Puthenkuttukar*. Even then they followed same East Syrian liturgical tradition. Though Mar Gregorios later came to introduce West Syrian liturgy in Malabar, he was not successful then. Mar Thomas VI or Mar Dionysius I (1761-1808) tried to effect reunion with the Catholic Church but in vain. In the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> century, Anglican missionaries tried to make inroads into Malabar Coast especially among Christians of *Puthenkur* Community. Later, there formed Church Mission Societies and Marthoma Church. Internal disputes among the Malankara Christian community gave way for the division between Jacobites and Orthodox Churches.

#### 1. Malabar Independent Syrian Church or Thozhiyoor Church

Bishops in *Puthenkur* Community could not provide proofs for their episcopal ordination. During the reign of Mar Thomas VI, there were two bishops in Malankara brought by his predecessor Mar Thomas V from Antioch. They had not consecrated Mar Thoma V who refused to pay the travelling expenses of Antiochene prelates until they ordained him bishop for which they were brought down.<sup>202</sup> King of Travancore intervened in the situation and Mar Gregorios and Mar John (Ivanios) ordained Mar Thomas VI in 1772 bishop (because Marthoma V had died). He took the name Dionysius I.

Mar Gregorios gave episcopal ordination to Romban Abraham Kattumangatt (who was a rival of Dionysius) at Mattancherry in 1772. The new bishop took the name Mar Koorilos. He had to face opposition from Mar Dionysius and he left Travancore and settled in Thozhiyoor or Anjoor, a village in British Malabar. It took the name Malabar Independent Syrian Church.

#### 2. Church Missionary Society

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<sup>202</sup> C. Mar Baselios, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 41-42.

Beginning of the Church Missionary Society in Malabar was with the visit of Rev. Claudius Buchanan, the Chaplain of the East India with Mar Thoma VI in 1806. They began to work among Non-Catholic Syrian Christians. They began to propagate Anglican theology. British residents like Col. Colin Macaulay and Col. John Munro were Anglicans. Munro encouraged Syrian Church to receive support from Anglican Church. Thus started CMS College at Kottayam; Munro was its patron and Benjamin Baily was its first principal. The first batch of CMS missionaries worked in the Church were Thomas Norton, Benjamin Bailey, Joseph Fen and Henry Baker. Later when missionaries tried to intervene in the affairs of the Syrian Church, they separated themselves from the Anglican missionaries in Mavelikkara Synod in 1836. Anglican Church began to function separately in Malabar. (Later, CMS – CSI & CNI). They began to work among Cheramar (Pulaya), Sambavar (Parava), Sidhar (Kurava) and Arayans (Hill tribes). In 1879, a diocese was formed for Travancore and Kochi with Kottayam as its headquarters.

### 3. Marthoma Church

Encouraged by the support/ influence of the theology of Anglican missionaries Palakunnath Abraham malpan of Maramon (1796-1845), a professor at Kottayam Seminary and Kaithayil Geevarghese malpan of Puthuppally tried to do reforms. Abraham malpan translated Qurbana into Malayalam and eliminated prayers for the dead in 1837. He removed images from the churches. At this juncture, Dionysius who was the Metropolitan refused to ordain deacons who were with Abraham malpan. He sent his nephew deacon Mathew to Jacobite Patriarch at Mardin who ordained Deacon Mathew bishop in 1843 as Metropolitan. After the episcopal ordination of Mathews Mar Athanasius in 1843, Mathews Mar Athanasius with the support of Thozhiyoor bishop Joseph Mar Koorilos ordained (his nephew) Thomas Mar Athanasius bishop in 1869. Mar Dionysius V sent Joseph Pulikottil to Antioch; Joseph Pulikkottil was ordained bishop with the name Dionysius VI. Patriarch was invited to Malabar. Patriarch Peter III reached Malabar in 1875. It was declared Dionysius VI legitimate head.<sup>203</sup> He convoked a Synod at Mulanthuruthy in 1876.

Patriarch reached in Malabar and Synod under his guidance condemned Mathews Mar Athanasius and his colleagues. Thomas Mar Athanasius succeeded Mathews Mar Athanasius in 1877. In the litigation between the two groups, the group with Patriarch won in the court in 1889. Thomas Mar Athanasius got three churches only viz, Kozhanchery, Maramon and Kottarakkara. They were called reformed party. After the death of Thomas Mar Athanasius in 1893, Titus I became the bishop. Titus II ruled the Church between 1899 and 1944 and during his reign it took the name Mar Thoma Church. In 1952 under the leadership of K N Daniel there took place a split in the Church and formed St Thomas **Evangelical Church** of India.

### 4. Orthodox Church and Jacobite Church

After the schism of Coonan Cross Oath, Mar Thoma I carried out the administrative acts. Antiochean liturgy was introduced by Mar Gregorios in Malabar. Mar Thomas VI received valid episcopal ordination in 1772 from bishops from Antiochean Church.<sup>204</sup> During the time of Col. Munro there started a “Mission Help” from Church Missionary Society in London. Later CMS missionaries tried to reform Syrian Church. During the time of Chepped

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<sup>203</sup> A.M. Mundadan, *Indian Christians Search for Identity*, 119; C. Mar Baselios, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 64.

<sup>204</sup> Context of the birth of Thozhiyoor Church was at this period.

Dionysius there was tension between the two groups. Syrian bishops and faithful opposed this reform at Mavelikkara Synod in 1836 saying that they could not do anything in the matter of faith without the permission of the Patriarch of Antioch (*Mavelikkara Padiyola*).

(Encouraged by the support/ influence of the theology of Anglican missionaries Palakunnath Abraham malpan of Maramon (1796-1845), a professor at Kottayam Seminary and Kaithayil Geevarghese malpan of Puthuppally tried to do reforms. Abraham malpan translated Qurbana into Malayalam and eliminated prayers for the dead in 1837. He removed images from the churches. At this juncture, Dionysius who was the Metropolitan refused to ordain deacons who were with Abraham malpan. He sent his nephew deacon Mathew to Jacobite Patriarch at Mardin who ordained Deacon Mathew bishop in 1843 as Metropolitan. This created two groups in Malankara. (Context of **Mar Thoma Church**.)

Joseph Pulikottil was elected by the clergy of the Malankara Church to episcopacy and was ordained bishop by the Patriarch in 1865 and he was known as Mar Dionysius V (1833-1909), the Malankara Metropolitan of the Church. He opposed Mathews Mar Athanasius and invited Jacobite Patriarch Peter III to Kerala. The Patriarch came in 1875. During his visit, the Patriarch convened a synod at Mulanthuruthy,<sup>205</sup> Kerala in 1876,<sup>206</sup> and upheld the supremacy of the See of Antioch which later became a point of dispute in the history of Malankara Church. Dionysius wanted to maintain his position as head of the Malankara Church. Peter III ordained six other priests as bishops<sup>207</sup> and created new bishoprics. Since it was considered as a step to weaken the authority of Malankara Metropolitan, Mar Dionysius V who wanted to uphold his supremacy over the Church was in a difficult position.

A powerful group of the Church under Malankara Metropolitan came forward to defend the independence of the Indian Church from Antiochean Patriarch. After the death of Mar Dionysius V, Mar Dionysius VI became the Malankara Metropolitan. During his tenure, Patriarch Abdulla II (Abed Aloho II) visited Kerala and asked Dionysius VI to give a letter of submission to the See of Antioch to which the metropolitan was reluctant. The patriarch ordained Paulose Mar Athanasius and Geewarghese Mar Severius in Kerala.<sup>208</sup> Mar Severius who was ordained on 28 August 1910, was from the Jacobite Southist community. In addition, the patriarch made Paulose Mar Koorilose<sup>209</sup> as the head of the Church against Mar Dionysius VI. As a result there was a great rift in the Malankara Church. Those who supported Mar Dionysius were called *Metran faction* (bishop's supporters) and those who were with the Patriarch were called *Bava faction* (Patriarch supporters). Thanks to the conflict between the partisans of Bishop (*Metran kakshi* – partisans of the Malankara Metropolitan later known as **Malankara Orthodox Church**) and the partisans of Patriarch (*Bava kakshi* – partisans of the Jacobite Patriarch, later known as **Malankara Syrian orthodox Church or Jacobites**).

Vattasseril Mar Dionysius (or Dionysius VI), Malankara Metropolitan invited Patriarch Abded Mishiho who was deposed from office in Syria and the opponent of Abded Aloho II to Malankara. Abded Masiho declared Indian Church (Orthodox) a Catholicate and made Paulos Mar Ivanios Catholicos. There took place litigation between the two Churches on the validity of the Catholicate. There was formed a constitution in 1934. There was peace in the Churches from 1958 to 1971 on the basis of a court verdict. After 1971, there started litigations again.

<sup>205</sup> E.M.Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, ed. Kuriakose Moolayail, 216.

<sup>206</sup> 15 to 17 Midhunam 1051 of Malayalam Era which is 28, 29 and 30 June 1876.

<sup>207</sup> E.M.Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas*, ed. Kuriakose Moolayail, 216.

<sup>208</sup> E.M.Philip, *The Indian Church of St. Thomas The Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church History* (Malayalam), tran. E.P.Mathew, Kottayam 2005,<sup>2</sup> 353.

<sup>209</sup> He was ordained bishop on 31 May 1908 in Jerusalem by Patriarch Abdulla (Abed Aloho) II.

When it reached at its peak, Baselios Mar Augen I was excommunicated in 1975 by Patriarch Jacob Mar Ignatius II.<sup>210</sup> He installed Baselios Mar Paulos as the catholicos of the Patriarchal party whereas Baselios Mar Mathews succeeded Baselios Mar Augen I as the Catholicos of Orthodox party. In 2020 SC verdict was against Jacobite Church.

## 5. Assyrian Church of the East

At the context of schism, Mar Elia Mellus brought Mar Jacob, bishop of Gaserta to Malabar. But Patriarch ordered them to return. Mar Jacob returned to patriarch but Mar Mellus remained in Malabar some more years. He returned only in 1882. Strength of Mellusinas was dwindling and it was confined to Trichur only. Fr Mathew Palakkunnel was his vicar general. He reunited with Catholic Church in 1878. Mellus entrusted his people to Mar Abdiso Thondanatt and Fr Augustine (a East Syrian monk). Later though Mar Abdiso tried to reunite with the Catholic Church ministered in the Church from Vilakkumadam, near Palai. (Mar Abdiso died in 1900). A group of parishioners of our Lady of Dolorous Church broke their relation with the Catholic Church<sup>211</sup> and petitioned to Assyrian Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun Patriarch (1903 – 1918) to send a Metropolitan to Trichur. Thus Mar Abimalek Timotheos arrived in Trichur in 1908. Those people who accepted his his leadership later formed the Assyrian Church of the East.

## 6. Protestant Churches

They were established in India in 1914. Now more predominant are pentacostal Churches. Lutheran Church was started in Perurkada, Thiruvananthapuram.<sup>212</sup> Though there was Dutch presence in Kerala from 1663, Calvinist Church was not established in Kerala. But Calvinist idea could influence other new generation Churches.

## 7. Baptist Churches

It was formed in 1600s in England. They are Anabaptists and advocated immersion in water. William Carey, English missionary came to Calcutta in 1893 and pioneered this movement. Serampur College and theological centre was their contribution. (Worked with Raja Ram Mohan Roy to eradicate *Sathi*). When one is admitted to the church, he has to accept the covenant obligations and is subject to the discipline of the congregation. They follow the custom of adult baptism by immersion. There are several independent Baptist Churches in Kerala.

## 8. Pentecostal Churches

A fundamentalist group of cults formed a radical step for holiness movement. Characteristics – conversion (cleansing from sin), baptism of the Holy Spirit, renewal of gifts of Pentecost (Acts 2, 4). The movement began in 1906 in Los Angeles. Bible is the sole doctrinal authority. They do missionary works with great enthusiasm. (There were other groups like Salvation Army, Brotheron Churches, etc in India)

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<sup>210</sup> M. Mundadan, *Indian Christians: Search for Identity and Struggle for Autonomy*, Bangalore 1984, 111.

<sup>211</sup> G. Chediath, *Keralathile Kraisthavasabhakal*, Kottayam 2019, 307.

<sup>212</sup> G. Chediath, *Keralathile Kraisthavasabhakal*, 307.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

**Syro-Malabar Church in the Twentieth century and Thereafter****Introduction**

Growth of the Syro-Malabar Church after the appointment of Autochthonous bishops was laudable though it was not mesmerising. There was a steady and gradual growth as the Church was provided with a separate hierarchy in 1923, territorial extension of jurisdiction in 1955, mission dioceses in India, major archiepiscopal status with synodal form, mission diocese in US and other countries, extension of right for pastoral ministry all over India etc.

**1. Erection of the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy in 1923**

The Syro-Malabar Vicariates were under Propaganda Fide but there was a rearrangement in 1917. Pope Benedict XV erected 'Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches' through a motu proprio *Dei providentis* of 01 May 1917. Then Syro-Malabar was placed under this Congregation. Taking into consideration the progress which these vicariates achieved under native bishops and their oriental nature, a hierarchy was erected for Syro-Malabarese by an apostolic constitution *Romani Pontifices* of 21 December 1923 making Ernakulam as metropolitan see and Changanacherry, Kottayam and Trichur as suffragan dioceses. Here Syro-Malabar Church was a province directly dependent on Holy See as Latin provinces according to the code of 1917.<sup>213</sup>

**2. From Metropolitan status to the Major Archiepiscopal status**

Pope Pius XII bifurcated the diocese of Changanacherry and created Palai on 25 July 1950. A Syro-Malabar diocese with Thalassery as its see was erected for migrants to Malabar on 31 December 1953. The territorial extension of the Jurisdiction of the Syro-Malabar Church was effected by four decrees dated 25 April 1955 and made public on 25 July 1955. Thus the proper territory of Syro-Malabar Church was extended up to Cape Camorin, Mangalore and South Kanara.

New ecclesiastical province of Changanacherry was established in 1956 (*Regnum caelorum* published on 1959) with Palai and Kottayam as its suffragans. Holy See erected a Syro-Malabar ordinariate of Chanda in 1962, the first mission diocese (later) of the Church. On 16 December 1992 Pope John Paul II raised the Church to the status of Major Archiepiscopal Church with apostolic letter *venerabili fratri*. Metropolitan of Ernakulam (Mar Antony Padiyara) was made the major archbishop of the Church

**3. Syro-Malabar Church after 1992**

Pope John II raised the dioceses of Trichur and Thalassery to the status of metropolitan. There were new dioceses in India outside proper territories. The first diocese outside India was St Thomas diocese of Chicago in 2001. In 2005, Kottayam was raised to the status of

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<sup>213</sup> P. Pallath, *The Catholic Church in India*, 171.

metropolitan without a suffragan. When Mar Varkey Vithayathil passed away, the synod elected Mar George Alencherry as the next major archbishop in 2011.

Considering the pastoral needs of the Syro-Malabar faithful migrated to Australia (Melbourn 2014), Canada (Mississauga 2015), UK (Preston 2016), and European continent (2016) new eparchies (dioceses) were erected. The Syro-Malabar Church was granted right for mission all over India in 2017. Though she could not attain their full jurisdiction all over India, right for mission in any region in India is certainly an achievement.

## **Conclusion**

Growth of the Church was in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and thereafter was gradual and providential. Syro-Malabar Church is on the way to retrieve its identity and zeal which she lost in course of time. She could affirm its synodal nature and the right for all India (*tota India*). Thus she shines in the Catholic Church as the second largest Oriental Church.

## **CHAPTER FIFTEEN**

### **Latin Hierarchy and Syro-Malankara hierarchy in India**

#### **Introduction**

Origin of Latin Christianity in India was in 13<sup>th</sup> century whereas the Syro-Malankara Church traces its origin in the apostolate of St Thomas. Latin missionaries worked tirelessly in the Indian mission. But their attempts to bring St Thomas Church under Portuguese Patronage ended up the schism in India. Later, Antiochean liturgy was introduced in India among the separated Syrian Christians. Later, a group returned to Catholic faith retaining their rite gave birth to Syro-Malankara Church in the Catholic Church of India.

#### **Latin Church Heirarchy in India**

Arrival of Vasco de Gama was into India was at the end of the 15 century. But there were sporadic presence of Latin missionaries in India. A Franciscan missionary John of Monte Corvino reached in India at the end of 13<sup>th</sup> cent (1291) and he baptised around 100 people near Mylapore. Jordan Catalani of Severac and four brothers reached at Thana in 1320 and proceeded to Gujarath. He was appointed bishop of Kollam in 1329 but Muslims stoned him to death at Thana. John Marignoli another missionary stayed at Kollam in 16 months. Then, Vasco de Gama at Kozhikkode in 1498 and Francis Xavier was an important missionary of the 16<sup>th</sup> cent who came to India for evangelisation. Thus, Jesuits made a labourious work in various missions in India. They were followed by Dominicans, Franciscans and Carmelites.

With the arrival of Portuguese people, Portuguese Padroado was established in India. Archbishop Dom Menezis of Goa tried to extend padroado jurisdiction to Malabar after the death of Mar Abraham in 1597. He convened a synod at Diamper in 1599 and brought the St Thomas Church under Padroado. When the Syrian Christians reacted to the Jesuit rule by the great event of Coonan cross oath in 1653, Rome sent two commissions to India. By ordaining

Joseph Sebastiani bishop and sending him to India, Rome started Propaganda jurisdiction in 1659. Till 19<sup>th</sup> there were Padroado and Propaganda jurisdictions in Malabar.

But Latin missions were progressing various regions of India. Roberto de Nobili was a missionary who reached in Madurai in 1606 and his mission was extended to Trichinapoly, Dindigal or Tanjore etc. Mughal Missions of the Jesuits were initiated as King Akbar invited them; R. Aquaviva, A. Monserrate and Francis Henriques were the important missionaries there. (no much mission communities). Agra mission was the outcome of Tibet mission. Cappuchins were the main missionaries there.

Vicariates were erected in Agra (1845), Mangalore (1845), Patna (1845), Madurai (1846), Jaffna (1849), Mysore (1850), Visakhapattanam (1850), Coimbatore (1850), Pondicherry (1850), Kolkatta (1850), Krishnanagar (1851), Hyderabad (1851), Punjab (1880) and Kandy (1883). On 01 September 1886, Pope Leo XIII established Latin Hierarchy by an apostolic letter *Humanae salutis auctor*.

### **Syro-Malankara Heirarchy**

Patriarch of Antioch declared himself the head of the Church in India and he convened a synod at Mulanthuruthy in 1876. Indian Church was made under the Antiochean see. A group under Malankara metropolitan in Kottayam opposed this decision. A Syrian Catholicate was established (Orthodox) in 1912. There were reunion talks with Catholic Church from the Orthodox Church. Faithful of Antiochean rite had a passion for their rite and liturgy. Rome granted the rite to celebrate in Antiochean rite in the Catholic Church (for reuniting priests) in a letter dated 05 July 1921 to Mar Choolaparambil. It was considered as an encouragement for reunion.

On 01 May 1925 Fr P.T. Varghese was ordained bishop for Bethany with a new name Greevarghese Mar Ivanios. He was deputed to do communications with Rome to effect communion.<sup>214</sup> Though Orthodox Church withdrew from the reunion talks, Mar Ivanios went on with his venture. Pope Pius XI accepted the request and conditions presented by them. Thus Archbishop Mar Ivanios, Mar Theophilos, Fr John Kuzhimepurath OIC, Deacon Alexander and Chacko Kilileth made their profession and reunited with the Catholic Church retaining their ancient tradition and rite on 20 September 1930. On 11 June 1932, Rome erected the Syro-Malankara Catholic Hierarchy.

FR MATHEW KOCHADAMPALLIL

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<sup>214</sup> C. Mar Baselios, *The Syro-Malankara Church*, 154.

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