

# TOWARDS THE IMAGE OF CHRIST



**GOD CREATED MAN  
IN HIS IMAGE AND LIKENESS**

**11**

**THE SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC CATECHISM**

**TOWARDS THE  
IMAGE OF CHRIST**

**STANDARD - XI**

**The Synodal Commission for Faith Formation**  
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23 March 2020

### BENEDICTORY MESSAGE

It is with great pleasure and reverence that I cherish the publication of the catechism Text of the Syro Malankara Catholic Church in 2002, during the apostolic ministry of His Beatitude Moran Mor Cyril Baselios Catholicos. It was indeed a dream come true as it helped the Church to make a truly measured step towards faith formation. With God's immense grace we are also able to publish the text in Malayalam, Tamil and English for classes one to twelve.

The message of creation and salvation manifested through the life of Jesus Christ was revealed to us all the way through from the Old Testament to the New Testament. The history of this revelation is the history of the salvation of the Church. The core of catechism is this history of revelation and salvation. Through the Holy Spirit this history of salvation continues today in and through the Church. For us this salvation becomes a living experience through the ecclesial life of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. Therefore the history of salvation and the patrimony or the valuable traditions of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church become the fundamental source for this catechism. I pray that this Catechism Text brings a new vigour in the growth of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church and I earnestly advise the faithful to receive this Catechism Text and help in the promotion and progress of the Church for the greater glory of God.

I sincerely appreciate this unique achievement. I express my profound gratitude to His Grace Most Rev. Thomas Mar Koorilos, the former Chairman and Rev. Dr. Antony Kakkanatt, the former Secretary of the Synodal Commission for faith formation who continues to give commendable leadership to prepare and publish this Catechism Text. I wholeheartedly appreciate the genuine efforts taken by His Excellency Most Rev. Dr. Thomas Mar Eusebius, the present Chairman of the the Synodal Commission for Faith Formation, for his services. God bless them and all those who have collaborated with them in this noble mission.

God bless you all!

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## PREFACE

By now the Malankara Catholic Catechism Texts from Std. I-X have been published in three languages: Malayalam, Tamil and English. We are happy to publish this year the text for Std. XI.

In the Texts from I-X, we tried to present the mysteries of God's revelation. What is meant by 'God's revelation', is the sharing of God's love. The history of God's love begins with the creation of the universe, continues with the creation of human beings and progresses through the call of Abraham and through the history of Israel and fulfills in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and it will continue till the end of the world through the Church. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life" (Jn. 3:16). We have tried to impart to the children, the history of the revelation or the history of God's love through the Texts from I-X. From Standards I-VII, we tried deeply to impart to the children the mysteries of revelation and to familiarize the students God, who creates, redeems and protects. The response man gives to the revelation of God is the topic of discussion from Stds. VIII-X. In short, God himself is the very topic of discussion from Stds. I-X. It is the answer to the question: "Who is God"? that is introduced through these Texts.

A student enters Std. XI at the age of 16. 'Man' is the topic under discussion in Std. XI. Who is man? How did he come into existence? What is the aim of his life? Is there yet another life beyond this world? What for is God, religion, Church and communities? How can we make life in this world and in the world to come, happy and fortunate? Such are the topics under discussion in Std. XI. In short, man and his problems are the topics in Std. XI. Chapter one begins with the fundamental question: "Who is man?". Answer to this question is introduced with the explanation of the difference between man and animals. Animals, by nature, have four qualities: namely

to eat, to take rest, to reproduce young ones and to attack. Compared to this, man has several qualities and it is clear that man is distinguished from animal through his humaneness. This humaneness is the image and likeness of God in which he is created. In short, the question: Who is man? could be answered only by relating man with God. It is this thought that the 1st chapter gives. According to the Christian view-point for the presence of God in man, man is fundamentally related to Christ. The 2nd chapter explains that Christ as creator and redeemer of mankind and as the perfection of his humaneness, a man is inseparably related to Jesus Christ. In the 3rd chapter, it is explained that God created man in His own image and likeness and that image of God or the divine presence of God is the Holy Spirit and that when the first man sinned, this Holy Spirit was lost and that he has regained the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, and that it is through baptism that each man receives this Spirit and that the foundation of Christian spirituality is to augment this treasure of the Holy Spirit in each individual and about the means which the church puts forward to increase this divine treasure.

The Christian life is to be lived with utmost care. There is possibility of losing this divine treasure one has acquired through carelessness. Chapters 4-7 introduce the ways how a man loses God. The first way of losing God is the capital sins and their accessories. The topic under discussion in the 4th chapter is 'How a man loses the presence of the Spirit in him through sin. In the 5th and the 6th chapters are introduced Atheism, which consciously denies God and Communism. The use of the intoxicants which destroy human personality and the presence of God in man is discussed in chapter 7. If the divine presence is thus lost, having lost the humaneness in him, man will lower himself to the state of a beast; and he will degrade himself below the animal level.

The aim of the 8th chapter is that there is possibility for regaining the divine treasure or the Holy Spirit, if one has somehow lost the same and that if anyone has incurred despair through sin or worldly living conditions, there is possibility for him to be led to happiness by giving him hope.

A Christian is one who is called to live as another Christ aiming at Jesus by gaining the Holy Spirit. The 9th chapter is about St. Paul the apostle who thus lived as a true Christian. A true Christian should be a part of the Church, the body of Christ. It is through the Church that one owns Jesus. The text of Std. XI ends with the message that the Church which is the body and continuation of Jesus exists in its perfection in the Catholic Church and therefore I remain as a faithful of the Catholic Church. In short, the aim of this book is to enable an emerging youth to answer the following questions consciously and to lead the Catholic faith with conviction: 'Why should I be a Catholic faithful?, Why should I be a Christian?, Why should I be a believer of God?'. My gratitude is immense towards His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis, head of the Malankara Catholic Church, who blessed us with every possible support and to all the prelates of the Malankara Catholic Church.

We call to mind with gratitude all those who have helped to fulfill this mission. I would like to thank Rt. Rev. Ramban Samuel Thykoottathil for his effort to translate the Malayalam Text into English. I acknowledge Rev. Fr. Scaria Vattamattom for his valuable remarks and correction. We also remember with thanks Professor K.M.Francis, Msgr. Cherian Ramanalil, Cor Episcopa, Rev. Dr. Antony Chethipuzha, Rev. Dr. Thomas Kulangara, Rev. Dr. Berchmans O.I.C, Rev. Dr. George Thomas O.I.C., who have helped to prepare this book and those who have studied the content and gave clear instructions namely Professor Mary Matthew and Sri. M.V.Thomas, the members of the Catechism Coordinative Committee. I express special thanks to Bro. Bibin Thannickal, Bro. Sebastian Kunnumpurathu and to the Rev. Sisters of the Bethany and Holy Spirit Communities. Immense gratitude is due to Msgr. Antony Kakkanatt, who gave leadership to the formation of this text.

We publish this Catechism Text with greetings to all those who are of the age- group of boyhood/girlhood so that they grow towards identifying themselves with the image of Christ.

**+ Thomas Mar Koorilos**

Former Chairman, The Synodal Commission for Faith Formation

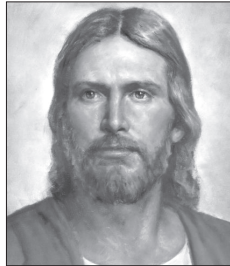
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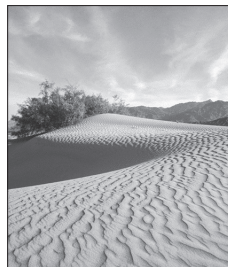
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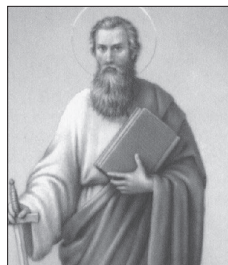
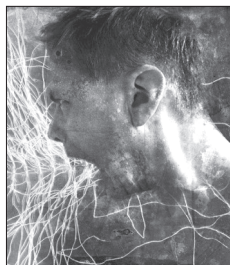
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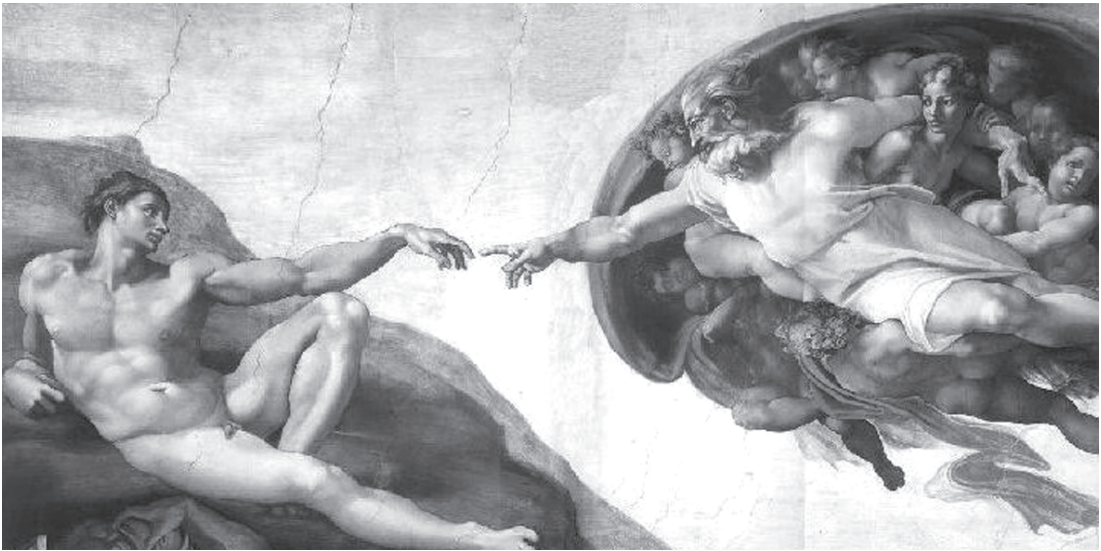


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# Man and God



To be thinking is the special quality of the mind of man. Who am I? Where did I come from? Why do I live? What is the relationship between me and community? What is the relationship between me and the universe? Am I created or self-originated? Does my life end with death? All these questions are part of the thinking of each man. On the basis of the answer to these questions various human topics have originated. We form our life basing on the answers to the questions related to man. Hence we ought to find out satisfactory answers to these questions.

## 1. Who is man?

If we examine the difference between man and animal, the way becomes easy to find out who man is? For this we could make use of the inferences of the animal- science. According to the animal science, animals are engaged in activities helpful to their self-existence and to the continuance of their species. They eat food for their own existence and take rest. They fight and defeat their enemies. For the continuance of their species, they mate. By doing these activities such as eating, resting, fighting and reproducing progeny automatically, animal life goes forward. If they are hungry they eat even their young ones. Those who belong to the male group of animals

impose their dominance on others. The tendency to dominate is evident in the behavior of animals.

There are many philosophers who argue that man is an animal and therefore to eat, to rest, to fight and to procreate are the four activities proper to human beings. But besides these four, there are in man many other qualities.

### **Some of them are quoted below:**

1. Man is one who manufactures many things for others and thus do service to them.
2. Man is one who loves his/her mate even if the sexual relations cease and rears his/her young ones even if they have stopped sucking mother's milk. Man is one who is capable of living with his/her mate and children as a family until death.
3. Man is a being who can love his enemies.
4. Man is a being capable of living in a community.
5. Man is capable of seeking and finding out universal truths with his reasoning power.
6. Man has endless desire.
7. Man is one who could fruitfully communicate ideas through language and to increase this capacity of communication.
8. Man is one who builds up culture.
9. Man is one who freely decides and acts.
10. Man is ready to die for others, endangering his own life.
11. Above all, man is one who could live face to face with God and he adores God.

The sum total of these characteristic qualities, apart from animals, is his 'humaneness'.

### **The Humaneness in Man**

How did this 'humaneness' originate in man? Why does man lose these human qualities and act like an animal? Which are the ways to foster humaneness having transformed the animal characters? Different religions, philosophies and social sciences have emerged from the divergent answers to these questions.

In an animal there is only the animal character. But in man, there is animal character as well as human character. If it is so, how did this character different from an animal originate in man? For the human character in man, (humaneness), various religions use different words such as: divine nature, divine image, divine seed and divine life. The Jewish, Hindu, Christian and Islam religions think that humaneness and divinity are one and the same.



The knowledge that the humaneness of man is the divine character could be seen in the initial chapters of the book of Genesis. 'Man is created in the image of God'. It is on this basis that the whole bible is built up. The holy Bible says thus: "Then God said, let us make humankind in our own image, according to our likeness.....So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them" (Gen.1: 26-27). In man there is the image of God, in other words, the Spirit of God. This is the fundamental vision which the holy Bible gives about man.

The definition of humanity which the Indian Mythologies and thoughts of the Upanishads share is not different from the above-said statement. Sri Sankaracharya, the theologian uses the Vedic utterance "*Thathuam asi*" to mean that divinity and humanity are one. The only difference between the Hindu and Christian philosophies concerning this is 'whether they are identical or similar'?

In the Ramayana, the Epic Valmiki defines man in a special manner. It could be understood if we study Hanuman. Hanuman is presented in the form of a monkey. When Hanuman is asked whether he has seen Seetha and Raman, he opens his own chest. This action of Hanuman indicates that Seetha and Raman, god and goddess, are dwelling within him.

Valmiki introduces here, the divine nature which is hidden within man. Here, Hanuman reminds that man is a monkey with divinity. Once these divine aspects are lost in man, he becomes a beast lower than a monkey. Likewise, Valmiki became a man bereft of divine nature.

The idea that man has divine characters was held by the ancient Greek philosophers. Socrates held that the soul is the position where humaneness lies sleeping in man. The Greek philosophers have expressed their opinion that just as the whole coconut tree is hidden in the flower-bud that is in the coconut, the human soul is the source of immense possibilities. Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, the Greek philosophers believe that God is the source of humanity. In short, we could give a clear answer to the question: "Who is man?" only in relation with God.

## **2. The Presence of the Holy Spirit in Man:**

'The humaneness in man is the divine characteristic', is a fact that is commonly accepted by all religions. If the relation with God is cut away from man, what is just opposed to humanity will happen in man. This is the opinion common to all religions. If divinity in man is lost, he will lose his humanity too. The man who lost his humanity will become one with animality. Adoration of God has become the foundation of the civilized communities, just because man has recognized that it is his divine relationship that brings up his humanity. The human societies without adoration to God turn into herds.

The bible introduces how divine nature came into being in man in a special manner. God moulds man from the earth in the likeness of God. Then He breathed into him the soul of God (Gen. 2:7). Bible makes it clear that man has 'become' having the Spirit of God and divine character. When the Spirit of God dwells in man he gets the power to act according to the divine character that are in him. It is the Christian faith that man is the temple of the Holy Spirit. "It is the Spirit that gives life" says Jesus (Jn. 6:63). St. Paul says: "You are God's temple and don't you know that God's Spirit dwells in you"(1Cor.3:16) . In short, what is said to be the image of God in man is the presence of the Holy Spirit in man.

The Holy Spirit that dwells in man is the gift which God the Father has given to man through His Son. Hence if the Holy Spirit should dwell in man, he should establish relationship with God, the Father. God the Father

has established a relationship with man by giving the Holy Spirit. Faith is man's response to this relationship with God. It is through this relationship, man is able to live in accordance with the divine characteristics.

### **Sin will destroy the Holy Spirit**

Severing the relationship with God is sin. In the state of sin, man loses his association with the Holy Spirit. When the first parents, Adam and Eve sinned, they severed the relationship with God. Then they lost the Holy Spirit. Having seen them living in body only, God said: "My Spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh" (Gen. 6:3). Cain lost the Holy Spirit due to the murder of his brother Abel (Gen.4: 8-16). Samson who lost the power of God was caught by the Philistines (Judg. 16: 15-22). King David, after he had sinned, prayed thus before God: "Do not take your Holy Spirit from me" (Psalm 51:11). David prayed so due to his conviction that the Holy Spirit is lost when one sins.

When the association of the Spirit of God is lost, man loses his power to live according to the divine character and the animal character such as to eat, to rest, to conquer and to have sex become predominant in him. Food, sexuality, rest and authority are not evil in themselves. But if they are not suitable to the humaneness in man, he becomes worse than animals. If an orange is squeezed, its juice and waste are separated. When the juice of orange is united with its waste, it becomes an orange. When the juice is separated from its waste, we throw away the waste. Similarly when the Holy Spirit and body of man are united, man becomes a true human person. Just as the juice in orange separates from its waste, if the presence of the Holy Spirit in man separates, man degrades himself to the state of an animal and his bodily characters turn into evil. The animal character unsuitable to the humaneness in man, are evil.

As long as the Holy Spirit dwells in man, he will be able to live as a true person. When the association of the Holy Spirit is lost from man, the relationships are broken and the community shall collapse. St. Paul grieves over the constant collision between the body and the Holy Spirit. 'I am the unfortunate man who is unable to do the good I desire'. St. Paul writes thus about the activities of the soul and body: "Live by the spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these

are opposed to each other, to prevent from doing what you want....If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit” (Gal. 5:16-17; 25). In short, it is the image of God or the presence of the Holy Spirit in man that sanctifies the bodily or beastly characters in man and leads towards virtue.

In the encounter between the Spirit and body, when the Spirit fails, luxury, sexuality and authority etc. become the goal of life. This is the reason for all quarrels. Remember the poetical words: “Quarrels of various kinds abound on earth due to wealth and beautiful woman”.

### **3. Worship and Culture**

Those who have started the worship of God are those who have understood that the severance of the relationship with God is the reason for the loosing of the Holy Spirit, the elimination of the humaneness and for the destruction of human community. The intrinsic power of all human planning is divine worship. In order to grasp the relationship between divine worship and culture, we ought to define clearly the word culture.

If we relate the word culture with agriculture it will be easily understood. Cultivation causes to grow the bud, which is in the seed, thus making it a plant producing fruit. Basing on this word, the words agriculture, horticulture and aqua-culture are formed. The mode of arrangement to produce maximum fruit by providing the seed with water, manure, sun light, pesticide etc., is agriculture. Similarly, the effort that makes to grow humaneness-divine seed in man is culture. These are the two parts of culture: 1) the relationship with God, the source of humaneness, 2) the creation and the nourishment of the means necessary to bring under control the animality in man and to foster his humaneness.

In other words, culture is the sum total of all activities and plannings that nourish and cause to grow the entire phases of humaneness in man. We have understood that the humaneness in man is related to God. Religion and the Church are the means for man to relate with God. Since the foundation of humanity is in God, worship of God is its life-principle. Certain cultures which err in defining humaneness turn against humanity and collapse. Hence in order to form culture, the search for ‘Who is man’? is inevitable. Hence the communities that are built upon wrong concepts are cultures of death. Hence history teaches us that all cultures built up in atheism will collapse. Since Communism ultimately is a movement built

upon atheism, it does not approve either the divinity in man or true humanity. That is why the Church teaches that the movement of Communism does not give any ultimate good to human generation. Hence humaneness is inevitable for a community to grow in culture. This humaneness could be obtained only through relationship with God.

#### **4. The Scientific Inference about the Origin of Man**

The basic vision of all religions is that the origin of the universe and man is due to the will of God. The strong intervention of God in the creation of the universe and man is clearly described in the beginning (Chapters 1 & 2) of the book of Genesis. St. John, the apostle, says: "All things came into being through Him and without Him not one thing came into being" (Jn. 1:3). But, science often cannot accept this religious vision as such. For, science does not consider anything that does not come under observation and experimentation. It is under these circumstances that some scientists have expressed the Great Explosion Theory (Big Bang) about the origin of the universe and the Theory of Evolution regarding the origin of man.

Charles Darwin (1809 – 1882), in his book 'Origin of Species' has evolved Evolution as a theory. According to this, it is from the minute living beings of the ancient age that all beings of the present era have evolved. The reason for the hundreds of thousands of species that exist today is Natural Selection. The principle of this Natural Selection is known as the 'Survival of the Fittest'.

According to the Theory of Evolution, man came into existence through the evolution of crores of years of life. After the origin of the universe, it was subjugated to the Natural Selection. Later on ingredients that are useful to generate life, as a result of which other ingredients helpful to perpetuate life came into existence on earth. From the evolution of the unicellular being, which is the foundation of life, came fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals and primates (highly developed mammals) and through them evolution reached its climax. Darwin's theory has proved that from Anthropoids, that have acquired more straightened forms, formed man, having intellect and freedom of will.

Science cannot give a perfect answer to all questions concerning man. Under this circumstance, the Christian religion interprets in relation to God that the inference of science that the origin of man is through evolution,



the origin of the universe and life and the creation of man come from the will of God. Science doesn't give the right answer to the Great Explosion that caused the origin of the universe and how life was formed for the first time. Science interprets that all these occurred accidentally. Here, the Christian Church gives the clear answer, that is, the inducing power that worked behind all these 'is God', the Supreme Truth.

We should not understand the evolution of man from animal like the other states of evolution. From the beginning of life until the state before man, no change has occurred to the animal characteristics, such as eating, resting, attacking and copulating. But once we reach man, we have seen that many special qualities that are not seen in animals have appeared in man. The qualities of intelligence, remembrance, discretion, thought, emotion, conscience, personality, communication of ideas are not seen in animals like in man. The animals have no capability of speaking, thinking of God; desire to wear dress, righteousness, appreciation of beauty, consciousness of worship and creative thinking. How did man get all these? No animal has logical thinking, or imaginative power. They have only instincts. If there were genes helpful to logical thinking and use of languages in small beings, they would have evolved and developed before the origin of man and would have given them the ability for logical thinking, use of language and consciousness of God. Since they have not happened thus, the interpretation that these special characteristic features of man are due to the activities of nature alone, is not logical. We could understand from common sense that there is the intervention of an unseen power in the evolution of man from animal. Hence, the common inference of the Church is that God has intervened in the origin of life and in its evolution, especially in the evolution towards human being. Hence, the Church teaches that man is the special creation of God and since he is created in the image and likeness of God, divine characteristics that are not in animals are dissolved in him.

It is not the aim of the holy bible to prove scientifically the scientific directions that have been subjected to observations and experimentations regarding the origin of the universe and man. On the other hand, the aim of the holy bible is to teach and witness that there is the unseen hand of God in the creation of the universe and man. In short, the answer these questions: Who is man? How is he created? What is the aim of his life?

...could not be found without God. For, the fundamental divine characteristics which differentiate man from animal, he got from God. For, Zechariah Praises: "The Lord who stretched out the heavens and founded the earth and formed the human spirit within" (Zech.12:1). Job says: "But truly it is the spirit in a mortal, the breath of the Almighty that makes for understanding" (Job 32:8). Psalm says: "You have made them a little lower than God" (Ps.8:5). In short, we are unable to understand the origin of man and the special characteristic that differentiate him from an animal without God. For, God is the fundamental cause of all things.

## Topic for discussion

**The Difference between man and animal, the presence of God in man and the glory of man**

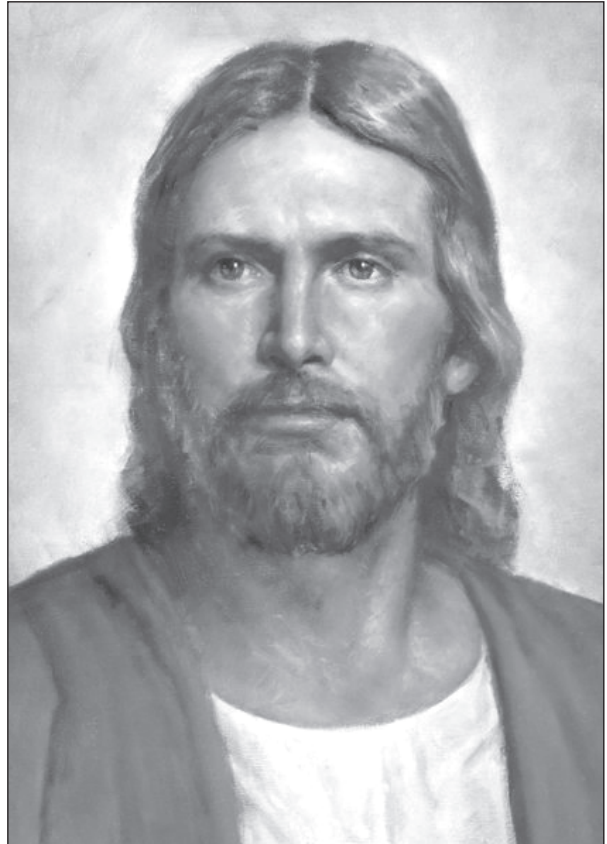


# Jesus Christ, The perfection of Humanity

The common vision of all religions is that a clear answer to the question: 'Who is man?' could be given only in relation to God. But, the vision of man according to the Christian religion could be given only in relationship with Jesus Christ, the perfect man and perfect God. For, the Christian religion teaches that man is inseparably related to Jesus Christ, and that the perfection of humaneness is seen in Jesus Christ.

## 1. Jesus Christ and Man

Christ who was born from the Father from all eternity and who is the only Son and God took the form of man in the fullness of time. The Son of God took birth from Virgin Mary and grew up in Nazareth and was known in the name of Jesus. "And the Word became flesh and lived among us" (Jn. 1:14). The Son of God incarnated and became part of history and divided human history itself into two parts: before and after Jesus. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn. 1:1). Since the Son of God, the Word became man, He is at the same time God and man. God, through receiving the marrow and body, mankind obtained a new state of being and order. Mankind was sanctified, renewed and saved through Jesus Christ. Mankind was raised to the right hand side of the heavenly Father through the ascension of Jesus.



The relationship between Jesus Christ and mankind does not begin in incarnation, but it started in the beginning of the creation of man. The common theological approach is that God the Father is the creator of everything; the Son of God is the Savior and God the Holy Spirit sanctifies and perfects all things. But the common approach of the Eastern Churches is that all Persons of the Holy Trinity are related to each other in the activities of creation, redemption and completion. Hence the Eastern Churches see with greater importance the special intervention of Jesus Christ in creation, redemption and sanctification.

### **The Image of Jesus to Man**

God the Father created everything through the Son or Word. In the beginning, through the following words: "Let there be" God created the universe and everything in it. "All things came into being through Him, and without Him not one thing came into being" ( Jn. 1:3) St. Paul teaches "For in Him all things in heaven and on earth were created" ( Col. 1:16).

We repeat in the Creed: "By whom all things were made". From the prayers of the Malankara Liturgy, it is clear that Jesus, the Son of God formed man with His hands. In the prayers of the Holy Week, especially that of Good Friday, there are lot of descriptions of the Son of God about the creation of man. It is repeatedly made clear in the prayers that having seen the adversity of man, whom He formed in His own image, likeness and form with His hands, the Son of God Himself incarnated in order to save man. "Lord, in your own image and likeness you formed us with your hands. When we were destroyed, you saved us through your holy sufferings. You made us sharers in your sacred body and blood". (Funeral Service of women, 2<sup>nd</sup> Service, Sedro). The Father entrusted to the Son, the fulfillment of the salvation plan and the Son of God became man, just because that the creator himself should save mankind.

"Let us make humankind in our image". (Gen. 1:26). This desire of the Father must have been the common desire of the Holy Trinity. It is the Son who fulfills this desire. In short, it is the Son who forms man with his hands according to the desire of his Father. The Son, who had no form in eternity, how did he form man is a question we could justly think of. In the fullness of time, when the Son would become man, foreseeing this human form he would then take, he gave form to man and formed the first man. The

explanation of the Fathers of the Eastern Churches is that God gave to the first man the face of Jesus, who is to be born man.

In short, we could understand that man received his form and image from the form and image of Jesus, who has incarnated and hence, man is indebted to Jesus for his form and image. But, Jesus made it clear that he has the form and image of His Father: "Show us the Father, and we will be satisfied"; to the disciples who said thus, Jesus said: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father". (Jn. 14: 8-9). "I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me". (Jn. 14:6). Jesus thus made it clear that the only way of seeing and hearing the Father, is Jesus and that he has the form of the Father. Mankind is basically related to God, the Father and the Holy Spirit through Jesus.

Man is indebted to Jesus not only as the creator of mankind, but also as its Redeemer. According to the will of the Father, the Son created man and made him dwell in paradise. But having worked against the will of God, man lost the grace of God or the presence of the Holy Spirit and degraded himself to the state of inert matter. Having seen the unfortunate state of man, who was caught in the darkness of sin, the Son of God himself, who has formed man with his own hands, became man and constituted a scheme for man's salvation. Jesus who became man, through his life was sanctifying mankind. As the Lamb of God, he took upon himself the whole sin of the world and having poured out his blood on the cross, he offered the sacrifice of atonement for sin. Thus he saved mankind and gave back the Holy Spirit, whom man lost in paradise, on the Pentecost day. Hence, as the redeemer of mankind and as creator of man, man is related to Jesus Christ invincibly.

In short, Jesus Christ, who has the image of the Father, gave his image and likeness to man. Hence, only in relationship with Jesus Christ could we be able to find out the answers to the questions: Who is man?, Why is he created?, What is the meaning of his life? What is the aim of this worldly life? etc.

## **2. Who is a Christian?**

Those who believed that Jesus, having been born in Bethlehem from Virgin Mary, grew up in Nazareth and preached the Gospel in the territories of Galilee, Judea and Jerusalem, died on the cross and resurrected, is the Messiah, the fulfillment of the promise of the Old Testament and that he is



the only Son of God the Father from all eternity, followed Jesus. After the resurrection of Jesus, those who followed Him were called Nazarenes. The Kerala- Christians were called 'Nazranikal'.

Later, the followers of Jesus began to be called 'Christians'. The common opinion is that the followers of Christ began to be called Christians in Antioch. (Acts 11:26). King Agrippa told Paul: "Are you so quickly persuading me to become a Christian?" (Acts 26:28). Thus says in the epistle of St. Peter: "If any of you suffers as a Christian, do not consider it a disgrace" (1 Pet. 4:16). It is probable that those who gave the name 'Christian' to the followers of Christ are the Gentiles. The Christians called themselves 'Brothers' (Acts 14:2); 'Believers' (Acts 15:3); 'Disciples' (Acts 13:52); 'Saints' (Acts 16:15); 'Faithful' (Acts 10:45); 'belonged to the way', 'of the way' (Acts 9:2); 19:9).

A Christian is one who believes and follows Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah or Christ, as the First born of the Father and as the Word and God. Hence it is possible to describe Christian existence only related to

Christ. The call of a Christian is to live aiming at Christ, following the example of Christ, and facing Christ. Each Christian becomes another Christ through deeply building up personal relationship with Christ. "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Each Christian should have this conviction of Paul. It is the basic aspect of each Christian to be united with Christ through believing in and loving Christ. St. Paul says: "For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him" (Phiip. 3:8-9). St. Paul who ardently loved and closely followed Christ says about the love towards Christ thus: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?" (Rom. 8:35). "For to me living is Christ and dying is gain" (Philip. 1:2). So saying, St. Paul introduces a true Christian.

### **3. Christian Existence, Growth towards Christ**

The Christian existence of a person begins when that person establishes relationship with Christ. It is through the Sacraments of Initiation, such as Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist, an individual formally associates with Jesus Christ for the first time and with God, His Father and with the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus sent. Thus an individual, through the sacraments of initiation, enters into relationship with the Holy Trinity and with the Church, the body and continuation of Jesus.

During the early times of Christianity, when the adults wished to enter into Christian religion, they consciously knew Christ, believed, confessed, got converted and received baptism. But in the later periods, the children of the Christians were admitted into Christianity at their age of infancy. Today, since an individual generally receives Christian existence at the age of infancy, he builds up relationship with Jesus not after having clearly known and convinced of truths pertaining Christianity. The parents give to the children whatever that is virtuous. There is nothing wrong in the parents' deciding to render their children in their tender age itself, their Christian existence and personal relationship with Christ. Just as each child, according as it becomes mature attains personality development, each Christian child gradually recognizes consciously its Christian existence and tries to grow in it. As a child begins catechism, it makes the conscious beginning of its Christian growth. When a child recognizes right and wrong,



good and evil, it tries to grow in the understanding of conscious Christian existence. That is why the Church prepares children for the reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation as the next step of the conscious Christian life. The first confession and the following ones and the reception of Holy Eucharist are the parts of the conscious Christian life.

### **Deliverance from Sin**

The incarnated Jesus begins his public life saying thus: “The kingdom of God has come near, repent and believe in the good news” (Mk. 1:15). God knows that in man there are the animal instincts and since man is limited, man’s mind is prone towards evil and that only through relationship with God, the animal characteristics in man could be ennobled and changed to goodness. Hence, in order to build up relationship with Jesus Christ, an individual should repent over his sins and having left evil, he should be converted and should believe in the good news of Jesus. The experience of the kingdom of God is the state of belonging to Jesus and to be with God accepting the authority of God. All men are called for the experience of the kingdom of God. The first step to come towards this experience is repentance over one’s state of sin and conversion.



The internal reconciliation with Christ and with God the Father through Christ is the foundation of Christian existence. God the Father was reconciling the world with him (2 Cor. 5:19). It is God himself who takes the initiative for this reconciliation. When man responds to the invitation of God in order to repent, to be converted and to believe in the Good News, he is reconciled with God and gets deliverance from sin. Sin is the alienation, opposition and enmity with God. Deliverance from sin however, is the closeness, love and reconciliation with God. One gets the true Christian existence when one builds up relationship with God, having left sin and turned towards God. Hence sin and Christian existence do not go together. One becomes a Christian when one lives united with Christ. (Rom. 6:11).

It is through the sacraments of initiation; a person becomes the member of the Church and enters the kingdom of God. Through the sacrament of initiation each individual is washed and cleansed and grafted with Christ in love. The basic love of each Christian to Christ is to be grown continuously. Since human nature is weak and inclined towards sin, only in proportion to the strengthening of love-relationship with Jesus, one shall obtain deliverance from sin. The famous St. Leo says thus: O! Christian, recognize your glory. Since you share now the nature of God himself, you should not return by committing sin to your meanest state, which you had before. Remember! Who are your head and the member of whose body you are. Remember! You have been liberated from the power of darkness and you are led towards the light of the kingdom of God”.

In short, one, who, having believed in Christ and who is in association with Christ and the Holy Trinity, is dead to sin. It is the obligation of each Christian, having consciously cooperated with God, to perpetuate the state of heart of deliverance from sin.

### **Love of God towards one's Brother**

The person, who reconciles with God, reconciles with his brother through deliverance from sin. One's love of God becomes evident through his love for his brethren. The Holy Scripture says: “For those who do not love a brother or sister, whom they have seen cannot love God whom they have not seen” (1.Jn. 4:20). Hence, the love of God and fraternal love are two scales of the Christian existence. The love of God grows, flourishes and reaches perfection through man. “Just as you did it to one of the least

of these who are members of my family, you did it to me” (Mt. 25:40) says the Lord. Hence, Christian existence grows and fades relating to fraternal love.

The one who enters into relationship with Christ through baptism is in association with all who relate themselves with Christ. Jesus Christ is the head of the body of the Church and all Christians are the members of that body. Christians, like members of that body, should enjoy together and suffer and help and perfect each other in Christ and in his spirit” (1Cor. 12:12). This is to be formed by one, through building up deep relationship with Christ. This fraternal love, which the Christians ought to cherish, is over and above being the children of the same mother, but are of brothers having the same spirit” (1 Cor. 12:13). Since the relationship of one with God demonstrates through brotherly love, the Christian existence that has no relationship with the community is meaningless.

#### **4. Growth towards the Image of Christ**

An individual truly becomes a Christian standing apart from the state of sin, grows in the love of Christ and man. The Christian existence of one grows continuously towards perfection. “Be perfect therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt. 5:48). It is to this perfection that all Christians are called. There is no life in one who does not grow. Hence, growth is the basic state of Christian existence. When a Christian grows aiming at Christ, he grows towards the perfection of his individuality and becomes identified with the image of Christ.

Those who grow towards Christ will be like Christ. They will enter into Christ and Christ will enter into them. They will be able to abide with God, with themselves, with others, and with the worldly realities, like Christ. They will identify themselves with the ideas, opinions and mode of approaches which Christ expressed. They will make the Gospel values as part of their life and will respond accordingly in their daily life. The progress in all these, are the different aspects of the growth towards the image of Christ. St. Paul says: “I am again in the pain of Childbirth until Christ is formed in you” (Gal. 4:19). This pain is an inevitability for growth towards Christ. Only when we consciously cooperate with God this transformation and growth take place. Thus, by abandoning your old self and putting on the new one you make this growth possible towards the image of God (Eph.4:22).

## **Faith, Hope and Charity**

When you say that an individual grows towards the image of Christ that individual is growing in the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity. It is through the grace one gets from the presence of the Holy Spirit that these virtues are being born and growing in that individual. Thus an individual should be able to enter into the depth of faith through the grace of the Holy Spirit. The first phase of faith is to believe consciously that Jesus Christ is the incarnated Son of God and the Messiah that the people Israel had expected and the Savior of the world. This faith has to grow from the phase of knowledge to the deep personal relationship towards Christ. Thus, Jesus Christ should become part of the existence of the individual. Hence, it is the faith in Jesus Christ that is the fundamental theological virtue. It is the deepening into this faith or the growth in the personal relationship with Jesus that is the growth towards the image of Jesus. This kind of faith will enable an individual to put hope in Jesus. A Christian will be able to put trust in Jesus in the dark moments of life and despair and sufferings and to constantly deepen in that trust. It is then that he grows into the image of Christ. It is this hope that gives a Christian the enthusiasm and vigor to strengthen personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Again, it is this hope that gives us the conviction that we need not be apprehensive about the future, since God is faithful in his promises.

The Christian, having been strengthened in the faith of Jesus, goes forward in hope enters into the strong love of God. Faith and hope are the means towards the perfection of love. The faith in Jesus is the beginning of the love for Jesus. Love is a divine gift which God sheds in us through the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5). We have to see the glory of Christian life in obtaining identity with God, who is love itself and in growing towards divine image.

The love of a Christian for Jesus will come towards his brother and community. Thus, we mean the growth towards the image of Christ is the growth of one's love towards God and man. Without this basic love an individual cannot be a true Christian. (1 Cor. 13); this love will help one to grow towards abandonment and suffering. On account of the love for Jesus one will be ready to suffer any abandonment and forsake everything. St. Paul, filled with the love of Jesus says: "I do not count my life of any value" (Acts 20:24). "For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and

I regard them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him" (Philip. 3: 8-9).

Christian love is the continuation of the love of Christ. Jesus said: "You love one another as I have loved you" (Jn. 15:12). Christian existence will come in a Christian only when he realizes Christ through love, that is, Christ begotten, Christ-like and Christ-inspired. Thus, in order to love God and man perfectly, a Christian should ennoble and transform the animal-character that is in him through divine presence. In order to attain this refinement, one should grow in moral virtues such as discretion, justice, mental power and self-control. All these ultimately lead towards love of God and love of man. Hence, everything that does not nourish love directly or indirectly is not virtue.

### **5. A Christian who is led by the Spirit of God**

Each Christian becomes a son or daughter of God through Jesus Christ. St. Paul says that the one who is led by the Spirit of God is the child of God (Rom. 8:14). Hence all Christians are to be led by the Spirit of God. We have seen that the image of God in man or the divine presence is the Holy Spirit. We have understood that we own this Spirit through the sacraments of initiation. Hence, Christians are to live through the inspiration of the Spirit. (Rom. 8:4). St. Paul teaches that we have to be strengthened in the Spirit in order to control the urges of the body since there are the animal characteristics in man basically. "You are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Any one who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him" (Rom. 8:9). "So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh, for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body; you will live" (Rom. 8:12-13).

St. Paul tells clearly to the Galatians: "Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the flesh. For, what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit" (Gal. 5:16-17). Again St. Paul makes it clear that those who live by the flesh are not real Christians and that they engage themselves in prostitution, impurity, evil dealings, idolatry, witchcraft, enmity, fight, envy, anger, rivalry, split, sectarianism, hatred, drinking and drunken rivalry and that they shall never claim the kingdom of heaven. But the true Christian, who is led by the Spirit, will produce the fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, mercy, goodness, fidelity, gentleness and self-discipline. Hence one who produces

these good fruits is a true Christian. St. Paul says that those who belong to Jesus Christ, crucify their body along with its emotions and lusts and if we are living in the Spirit, let us be engaged in it. St. Paul makes it clear that a true Christian is led by the Spirit. (Gal. 5: 19-26).

Each Christian is continuously growing into perfection. He is the light of the world, salt of the earth and is the leavened dough. Thus the Christian is called to lead the entire mankind towards Christ. Thus, in order that the salvation of the whole mankind may be realized through Jesus, a Christian should become the fragrance of Christ and also the witness of Christ (2 Cor. 2:15; Acts 1:8).

## Topic for discussion

Discuss the Christian vision that only through relating to Jesus Christ, one could find out a clear answer to the question: 'Who is a Christian'?



# Possessing God: the Foundation of Christian Spirituality

We understood that man is created in the image of God and that God gave him the Holy Spirit in paradise by infusing in him the breath of life. It is this presence of God in man or the presence of the Holy Spirit, the kernel of the Christian religiosity. The foundation of the Christian spirituality is to grow daily in this Holy Spirit. It is the presence of the Holy Spirit in man that helps him to grow towards the image of Christ. How does each individual receive the Holy Spirit? Which are the means, the Church



proposes in order to grow in the Holy Spirit? Which are the various measures of the Christian spirituality?

These are the things that are explained in this chapter.

## 1. God who loves man

“God is love” (1 Jn. 4:8). This is the basic definition about God. The three divine Persons: the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit are in love continuously from all eternity. It is this perfect love of the Triune God that is the foundation of the dictum that ‘God is love’. When the love of God

overflowed, that became visible. This beautiful universe which is formed thus is the first symbol of the love of God. God expressed his love still more, having created man in his own image and likeness and giving him the Holy Spirit. God made man settle down in the Garden of Eden, having given him perfect freedom. Man who ought to have lived in union with God and according to his plan, working against the will of God committed sin and lost the image of God or the presence of the Holy Spirit. Seeing man who lost the Holy Spirit God said: "My spirit shall not abide in mortals forever, for they are flesh" (Gen. 6:3).

Having seen the state of man who lost the Holy Spirit, God grieved very much. God desired to give back the Holy Spirit to man and he chalked out a big plan for the same. God intervened in history and through the forefathers: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and through the history of Israel. He loved mankind and shared His love, precaution and mercy. God determined to give back the Holy Spirit, whom mankind lost and to do reparation for the sin man has committed. Thus sending His own Son to the world, God the Father expressed His love through Jesus Christ. "And the Word became flesh and lived among us" (Jn. 1:14). Through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, mankind could see and hear God, the Father and experience His love.

Jesus Christ Himself got ready to sanctify mankind and to do reparation for the sin mankind committed, in order to give back the Holy Spirit whom man has lost. Having taken up to himself all sins of the world, he became the Lamb of God who carries the sins of the world and offered himself on Calvary as the lamb for the sacrifice. Thus God the Father, through love for mankind, gave the life of Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (Jn. 3:16). Jesus sanctified mankind through his incarnation, public life, passion, pouring out blood, death on the cross and resurrection. Thus by atoning the sin of mankind, Jesus made man a new creation. Through his ascension, he made mankind sit at the right hand side of the Father forever. Through the ascension, humanity, which Jesus received, has been raised along with him to heaven and glorified. Jesus promised the apostles to give back the Holy Spirit lost to the first man in paradise. Thus on the day of Pentecost, the 50<sup>th</sup> day after resurrection, Jesus gave back to mankind the Holy Spirit, who is lost to man. In the Litany prayer for the feast of Pentecost, according to the

liturgy of the Malankara Church, we pray thus: “My Spirit will not any more abide in man, for he is mere flesh. This verdict of God the Father, He corrected this day on Pentecost by giving back to man the Holy Spirit. “Thus the love of the Father towards man is fulfilled through Jesus Christ by giving back the lost Holy Spirit.

Even though mankind regained the lost Holy Spirit, each individual makes this Spirit his own individually. Each individual makes the Holy Spirit his own by believing and professing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Christ and that he is the second Person of the Holy Trinity and through receiving the sacrament of baptism. Jesus answered: “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit” (Jn. 3:5-6). In order to give the Holy Spirit whom Jesus promised, he founded the Church. The basic spiritual wealth of each individual is the presence of the Holy Spirit or divine life, which each individual receives through baptism. Each Christian is obliged to increase this spiritual wealth, which he receives at a tender age.

To grow in Christian spirituality means, to increase the wealth of the Holy Spirit. You are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Don't you know that the Holy Spirit is growing in you? (1 Cor. 3:16). These thoughts are the convictions of the thoughts about the Holy Spirit. St. Paul reminds us that when we commit sin, this Spirit is being lost and there is possibility of losing the gifts of this Holy Spirit, unless we are very careful. The means Jesus instituted to grow more in the Spirit without losing the same and to amass more divine life, is the Church. The true means to grow in the Holy Spirit is to live with this Church.

## **2. What is the Church?**

Why should I be a faithful? Why should I be a member of the Church? Why should I go to the Church? Why should I attend the Sunday School? Why should I read the Holy Scripture? Why should I do good deeds? There is only one answer for all these questions. I do these things in order to earn God or to increase the presence of the wealth of the Holy Spirit, who is in me. Unless I cooperate with the means which the Church has brought forward for earning the wealth of God, I will become like an animal having lost the presence of the Holy Spirit, who is in me. The result of this will be



anarchy, absence of peace and uneasiness. But if the presence of the Holy Spirit is strong in me, the following divine virtues: love, mercy, patience, justice, truth, sharing, peace and joy will be strengthened in me. In addition to this, the presence of the Holy Spirit in me will make me a new creature at the time of my death. In whom- so- ever the presence of the Holy Spirit is filled with, they shall transform to be new creatures. St. Paul says: "Listen, I will tell you a mystery! We will not all die, but we will all be changed" (1 Cor. 15: 51-52). St. Paul says that this is a mystery, because this is a thing which is beyond the understanding of human intellect and which is effected only by the Spirit of God. One who has the presence of the Holy Spirit will be in the heavenly experience in the life of this world, and in the life of the world to come. The heavenly experience is to be with God or God be with us. But the state of the absence of God is hell.

It is this divine Spirit which strengthens one, when there are afflictions, sufferings and oppositions in life. Besides, when there is the evil situation, it is this divine Spirit who gives one the strength to keep aloof from it. Hence to the one who has God with him, God will give the strength to face any situation. The greatest wealth of anyone is the recognition that God is with him. "All deserted me, but the Lord stood by me" (2 Tim. 4:16-17). This recognition of Paul strengthened him during the time of his suffering. The true religiosity or spirituality is the recognition that if you make God your own, all the rest will be your own. Jesus said: "Strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well" (Mt. 6:33).

The early Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit. It is through the presence of the Holy Spirit that they stood unwaveringly in front of torture and martyrdom. To the one who has not in him the presence of the Holy Spirit, he will have in this world the experience of hell or the state of the absence of God. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth....but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (Mt. 6:19-20). This teaching of Jesus implies the increasing of the wealth, which is the Holy Spirit. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Mt. 6:21). Hence it is the wealth, which is the Holy Spirit that makes a man self gratified in the life of this world and in the world to come. In short, I should have God, the Church and the spiritual means which the Church suggests in order to live as a good man and to live happily and prosperously in the life of this

world and in the life of the world to come. If not, I shall degrade to the state of an animal.

### **3. The Means the Church suggests for the Earning of God**

Jesus, the Son of God, who was born man, after his death and resurrection, continues his love towards mankind till the end of the world through the Church, which is his body. The resurrected Christ continues even today through the Holy Spirit. The supreme foundation of the Church is Christ and the Holy Spirit whom he has sent.

The Lord who has resurrected gave the mandate of spreading the Good news to the apostles or the Church. "Go into the entire world and proclaim the Good news to the whole creation" (Mk. 16:15). What we understand from the 'Good news' is, the history of the divine love, which started in the creation of the universe, continued through the creation of man, flourished through the history of Israel and perfected in Jesus. In short, the Church fundamentally has only one mission. That is to proclaim the Good news of this revelation till the end of the world. This has three states of meaning. Firstly, you should receive and teach the Good news (Mt. 28: 19-20); Secondly, you should celebrate the Good news (Lk.22:19); Thirdly, you should live the Good news (Acts 1:8, Lk.10:37).

The reception of the Good news and its teaching and preaching the Church continues through her catechizing, preaching and through various other means. The Church celebrates the Good news through worship and administration of the Sacraments. The Church lives the Good news through her activities of witnessing, performing virtuous deeds and through social activities. Jesus fulfilled in his public life the services of teaching, sanctifying and leading, related to the missions of Prophecy, Priesthood and Kingship of the Messiah. It is these three-fold missions that the Church, the body and continuation of Jesus, has to accomplish.

What we are going to explain next is the three ways of fundamental spirituality which is based on the three-fold ministry of the Church for acquiring God: (1) Relating to the teaching of the Good news, i.e., The spiritual method that is based on the Word (Biblical Spirituality); (2) relating to the celebration of the Good news i.e., The liturgical spiritual method; (3) relating to the living of the Good news i.e., The living spirituality, or the Witnessing spirituality.

## 1) The Biblical Spirituality

After understanding the terms: Word and Word of God, we shall try to understand the Holy Bible, which is the written Word and the Biblical Spirituality.

What we understand by the term 'Word of God' is that it is the word of the Father, his voice, his holy will and his holy desire. Holy Bible uses the Hebrew words: 'Dabar' 'Amar' and the Greek words: 'Logos' 'Rema' to indicate the term 'Word'. The Holy Bible makes the term 'Word' mean the holy will of God, which was revealed through the Law, the Prophets and later on through Jesus Christ. The Church understands the 'Word' in 7 ways:

- (i) The Word that was with the Father from all eternity. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (Jn. 1:1)
- (ii) The Word of God, having the creative power, which creates from nothingness. 'In the beginning God created the universe through his Word and through his wisdom, he sealed the creature' (Gen. 1: 1-7)
- (iii) The Word that was spoken through the Prophets in olden times: "Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets" (Heb. 1:1)
- (iv) The Word of God that became man in the fullness of time: "And the Word became flesh and lived among us" (Jn. 1:14). "But in these last days, He has spoken to us by a Son" (Heb. 1:2)
- (v) After the resurrection of Jesus, the Word of God which was preached by the apostles and their followers. Between A.D 33 – A.D.55, the Word of God was preached by oral transmission.
- (vi) The Word of God, which was written in human language through God's inspiration. The New Testament Books were written after A.D. 55.
- (vii) The Word of God, which is preached, honored in the Liturgy and in the life of the Church.

The Word of God, which is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the only Son of the Father and which is inseparably united with Jesus Christ,

who has become man in the fullness of time. Hence, it is Jesus Christ himself, who is the Word of God.

In short, the Word which was with the Father from eternity, the Word of God that created everything, the Word of God that was spoken by the ancient Fathers, the Word of God that has become man, the Word of God that the apostles and the early church preached through the word of mouth, is not fully written in human language. We call the written Word as Holy Scripture or Holy Bible. We call the unwritten word of



God as the holy tradition. It is the history of the Word of God that is the history of the revelation of God. The history of God who loved man or the history of the revelation which is fulfilled in Jesus, a collection of what different people wrote in various times through divine inspiration is the Holy Scripture or the Holy Bible. But the entire Word of God or the history of revelation of God is not fully written down in human language. We can see the unwritten holy tradition in the life of faith of the Church, liturgy, witness, various writings and exhortations. Hence in order to understand the Word of God, Holy Scripture, the written word and the holy tradition, the unwritten Word, are needed. The Holy Bible is the basic source; we received today in the Church in order to understand the Word of God and to know the history of revelation.

### **The Importance of the Word of God in Christian Life**

The two signs we could see to the fact that the resurrected Christ lives in the Church, are the Holy Qurbono and the Holy Scripture. The Church believes that just as the presence of the Lord is in the Holy Qurbono, there is His presence in the Holy Scripture also. Hence the faithful could share

the transforming presence of Jesus Christ through the Holy Scripture. The Holy Scripture contains the words of divine love. Hence the one who reads and listens and meditates this word will grow in personal relationship and love with God.

The Holy Scripture itself gives witness about the strength of the word of God. We know that the words of man have strength. If so, how much more the strength of the word of God! In the beginning, through the words: "Let there be" (Gen.1), God created all things from nothingness. Hence the creative word has strength. The word of Jesus cures disease and gives health. Throughout his public life Jesus gave cure from disease and he gave health to many people. Jesus, through his words, cured one who was possessed with an unclean spirit, a paralytic and many other sick people (Mk. 1:21-26; 2:1-12).

The word of God leads towards conversion and grants remission of sins. "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God has come near, repent and believe in the Good news" (Mk. 1:15). This invitation of Jesus has led lots of people toward conversion. "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mt. 2:15). Saying so Jesus absolved sins. The word of God gave hope and trust to those who were in despair, grief and in bondage (Mk. 5:1-20); 7: 31-37). Jesus controlled wind storm and sea through his word. Thus the strength of the word of God manifested against the natural force (Mt. 8: 23-27). "Lazarus come out" (Jn. 11: 43). Through these words Jesus showed the strength of the word, having revived Lazarus. During the time of the temptation in the wilderness, Jesus defeated the temptations and the force of the evil one through quoting the word of God. "For it is written, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Mt. 4:4). The psalmist says: "I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you" (Ps. 119:11).

In short, the word will help man to keep aloof from sin and evil. St. Paul says thus about the strength of the word of God, about the stirrings it makes in the mind of man and about the difference: "Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebr. 4:12). The psalmist says that the word of God is the hope and trust and the light for those who remain in darkness: "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path"

(Ps. 119:105). Again the psalmist says about the sweetness of the word of God and the delight it gives: "How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth" (Ps. 119:103). In short, the word of God influences the mind, intellect and the heart of man. The word of God strengthens man to live united with God and thus helps him to grow in the Holy Spirit.

### **Holy Bible, the Means of Earning God**

It is one of the most important means for earning God, the spirituality based on scripture or on the word. The word of God is able to equally influence, the intellect, mind, heart and emotions of man. The Holy Scripture is the first means to strengthen the presence of the Holy Spirit each man received through baptism.

Jesus gives different answers to the question "What should I do in order to obtain eternal life?". Jesus told his apostles thus: "This is eternal life that they may know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (Jn. 17:3). One should grow in Spirit in order to attain eternal life. The earning of God through knowledge is the first means for growing in the Spirit. The first source for knowing God is the history of the love of God or the revelation of God that is the Holy Bible, written in human language. In short, in order to know who God is and to be convinced of the love of God for man, we ought to read, hear, meditate, deliberate, reflect and learn the Holy Bible, which is the basic source given to us. Hence the Holy Bible is very essential to know God. Jesus told his apostles: "Anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life" (Jn. 5:24). Hence, the Holy Scripture ought to become part of the life of the faithful. The faithful has to daily attend to know God better through the constant reading of the Holy Scripture. Thus the earning of God obtained through the knowledge will lead us to eternal life. Under this circumstance the saying of St. Jerome: "The ignorance about the Scripture is ignorance about God", is more meaningful. In short, in order to grow in the Holy Spirit in the grace of God and to obtain eternal life, each faithful should be able to form a spiritual style based on the Holy Scripture.

### **How should we read the Holy Scripture?**

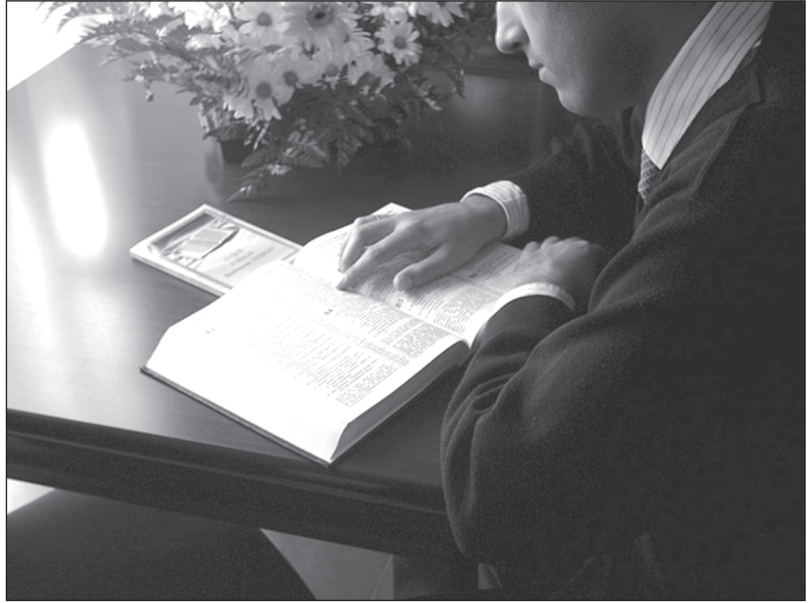
St. Cyprian says thus about the reading of the Holy Scripture: "We speak to God when we pray, God speaks to us when we read the Holy Scripture". We should keep the doors of our heart open, in order to daily

listen to what God has to speak to us. We should read the Holy Scripture with an open heart. When we read the Holy Scripture thus, God speaks to us and nourishes our life with his presence. Thus we will be renewed and renovated. Hence when we read the Holy Scripture, with an open mind, our life will be renewed. When we read the Holy Scripture as the word of God, Jesus speaks to us and as individuals Jesus communes with us.

At times, the word of God will become to us the word of joy and consolation. But at other times it will become a challenge to our life. The word of God, at times, may appear to us soft and at other times hard. As much as we desire to be changed, so much the word of God will stir us and the life of God will be shed to us. We could read the Holy Scripture without any personal relationship. But we could read the Holy Scripture in such a way as it influences us personally. When we read the bible as the word of God, he will speak to us this day, here and personally. The Holy Scripture invites us that we relate ourselves with God and that we relate with our own selves. We cannot escape from this invitation without giving an answer. Just as we see in marriage relationship and in other love-relationships, the intimacy with God through the Holy Scripture might become at times dry and lifeless. But at other times, they may be moments of strong emotionalism and joy. This variety of experiences is part of life both in the ordinary life as well as in the relationship with God. When some such shattered moments occur in life, we have to understand that God is working in our life in the midst of these difficulties.

It is doubtless that certain parts in the bible will influence us more. But we could make use of any part of the Holy Scripture in order to speak to us. At times God will make use of even certain part which seems quite unimportant in order to speak to us. Hence when we read the Holy Scripture, we should be quite open to God. Considering that we do not understand many parts of the bible or that they have no relationship with our situation, there is no reason that we should be dejected. We should approach the word of God with humility. We should understand that our intellect and strength are very limited. The word of God works in humble hearts. The best way to find strong relationship with God is the daily reading of the Holy Scripture. It is not only when we are involved in problem or difficulty that we should read the Holy Scripture. God does not expect from us a relationship for a short while only. God confirms love with us by

conversing with us in the good moments of our life as well as in the bad times. We have 1440 minutes a day to live. Out of this, if we could build up relationship with God through reading the word of God for at least 30 minutes, we will have happiness and



internal change. This is the time when God prepares to talk to us. During this time we enter into the world of the word of God. Likewise, the word of God enters into our world and into our daily life.

### **The Activity of the Holy Spirit**

When we read the Holy Scripture, that word becomes alive through the operation of the Holy Spirit. It is through the Holy Spirit that each page of the Holy Scripture and each word are transformed into the living word of God. The Holy Spirit is the lake in between the two banks, which are we and the Holy Scripture. When we read the Holy Scripture, as the word of God, the Holy Spirit who inspired the authors of the bible works in us also. When we read the Holy Scripture in order to have real communion with God and to converse with Him, it is necessary that we specially pray to the Holy Spirit. We should specially plead the Holy Spirit in order that he may lead us, stimulate us and breathe residing in us.

When we read the Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit enters into us in different ways. Firstly, the Holy Spirit strengthens us as the word of God, to read the Holy Scripture. Thus by reading the word of God individually and understanding the same, we experience that our life is meaningful. Secondly, the Holy Spirit helps us to understand the divine meaning of the Holy Scripture. He strengthens our effort to understand the Holy Scripture.



The Holy Spirit, having opened our mind, makes it clear what the word of God wants to tell me individually. When we humbly cooperate, what the holy word wishes to tell me becomes clear to me.

Thirdly, the Holy Spirit will influence our response to the word of God. Residing in us, the Spirit will help us how to respond to the Holy Scripture we read; what to reply and what change we should make to our life.

When we read the Holy Scripture together with the Holy Spirit, we would not be able to sit idle. We will have to respond some how or other. At times, this reply will be relating with God in deep relationship. At other times, this reply will be through activities that are related with the people. Still at other times, it may be challenge towards the inner Christian life that we have trifled. The reading of the bible, inspired by the Spirit, will serve to strengthen the experience to follow Christ in daily life. Thus the word of God will become a reality that lives in us, and will enlighten our mind and thoughts and will ignite our hearts. The Holy Spirit is the grace and gift which God gives us. Let us pray for this Spirit, the gift of God, when we read the word of God and live accordingly. Then the life of God will be enlightened in us.

### **The divine reading of the Holy Scripture**

The reading of the Holy Scripture that existed in Ashrams and Religious houses in different periods was known under the name 'the divine reading'. This kind of divine reading could be grouped in four parts.

#### **(a) The Reading of the Holy Scripture**

Firstly, find out a suitable place for the reading of the Holy Scripture. Secondly, enter into the reading quietly after having specially prayed to the Holy Spirit. Perhaps the part of the Holy Scripture we read in the first reading may not have influenced us. Then slowly repeat the same portion several times. Then any part of the word or any idea will appeal us.

#### **(b) Meditate or reflect which we read**

Think over and meditate the portion that appealed us. Certain part of the Holy Scripture may accuse us, console us, make us bold or invite us towards conversion. Try to understand through silent meditation what stirring this portion of the Holy Scripture form in our mind.

### **(c) Dedicate the Meditated word as Prayer**

Perhaps, it may be thanksgiving or adoration or else of repentance or forgiveness, if not, it may be of petition and supplication for increased divine grace. Thus dedicate to God the meditated word as prayer.

### **(d) Enter into Contemplation**

The word that became experience through reading, meditation and prayer will lead us towards reflection or perfect meditation or contemplation. At that time we will be raised to a divine realm where God and I become one. We will experience a kind of spiritual gratification, tranquility and God-experience. Thus, there is no doubt that the reading of the Holy Scripture will be very useful for earning God. It is said in the Official Document of Vat. II about Divine Revelation: "Nourishment should be given to the faithful both from the Table of the Word and Table of Life". The word of God should change as the daily spiritual food for the growth of the spirit.

## **2. Liturgical Spirituality**

"Preach the Good news to the whole world" (Mk 16:15). The second phase of this command of Jesus is the celebration of the Good news. What we mean by 'liturgy' is the celebration and commemoration of the history of revelation, which began in the creation of the universe and completed in Jesus Christ, through signs, symbols and rituals. Jesus told thus at The Last Supper: "Do this in remembrance of me" (Lk. 22:19). It is on the basis of this command that the Church commemorates and celebrates the mysteries of revelation. It is not enough to know the mysteries of revelation, we should experience the same. It is through the liturgy that one deeply experiences the Good news or the mysteries of revelation. Hence what we refer here is the spiritual style which is related to the liturgy of the Malankara Church. All instructions should be led towards divine experience. That is the bible-based spirituality that leads us to the Liturgical Spirituality.

The divine knowledge through bible should become deep experience through liturgy. Hence the spiritual style based on the liturgical spirituality is the means for earning God.

Each faithful of the Malankara Church should be able to descend into the depth of the experience of salvation through the liturgy and through

living according to the liturgy. The prayers of the Seven Hours of each day of the Malankara liturgy of the hour, the special prayers of each day of a week, the Seven Seasons of the Liturgical Year and their prayers and celebrations and the important Seven Obligatory Feasts of our Lord and the feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Apostles, the Martyrs and the Saints, the Seven Sacraments and the sacramentals are the basic components of the Liturgical Spirituality. Similarly, the pious observance of the Three Days' Fast, the Eight Days' Fast, the Thirteen Days' Fast, Fifteen Days' Fast, the Twenty Five Days' Fast and the Fifty Days' Fast and the abstinence and the special prayers of the Fast, all these are the parts of the Liturgical Spirituality. Thus, through the prayers of the Hours of the Day and the prayers of the Seven days of the week of the seasons of the Liturgical Year, the faithful of the Malankara Church could live along with the occurrences of the life of Jesus. Thus a spiritual style in accordance with the liturgy of the Malankara Catholic Church is very important for earning God.

The spiritual life based on the Liturgical spirituality is not entirely different from the Spiritual style based on the Biblical Spirituality. But the first one is the continuation and fulfillment of the second one. Holy bible is the history of the revelation written down in human language, which began from the creation of the universe, continued through the Old Testament and completed in Jesus Christ. The celebration of the same history of revelation through signs, symbols and rituals, we understand from the term 'liturgy'. In short, the content and subject of thought of the Holy Bible and liturgy are the same. Both give us Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of revelation. The Protestant Churches introduce the biblical spirituality instead of the liturgical spirituality. On the other hand, the biblical spirituality becomes more meaningful and experiential through the liturgical spirituality. This is the teaching of the Catholic Church. These two spiritual styles do not oppose each other. On the other hand they are complementary; the one is the continuation of the other.

The instruction of the Catholic Church is that nourishment should be given to the faithful from the Table of the Word as well as from the Table of the Bread. Both these are realized in each Holy Qurbano. The reading from the Holy Scripture and its explanation in the Jewish synagogue and the sacrifice in the Church of Jerusalem are in the celebration of the Holy

Qurbono. The first part of the Holy Qurbono is the reading from the Holy Scripture and its explanation and in the anaphora, the remembrance of the events of the Pasch of the sacrifice of Calvary take place. In short, in each Holy Qurbono, the



Church gives the Holy Scripture from the table of the word and from the thronos, or altar, the table of the bread, the body and blood of Jesus Christ as spiritual food to the faithful.

The biblical spirituality and the liturgical spirituality are the two phases towards the aim of Jesus-experience. We could see both these phases in the event of the disciples who went to Emmaus. Both these phases of Jesus-experience, Jesus gave one after the other to the disciples who went to Emmaus (Lk.24: 13-35). Jesus, as a stranger, walking with the disciples going to Emmaus taught them from the Holy Scripture. Jesus gave them nourishment explaining the Holy Scripture. Then, the disciples recognized Jesus. Thus, Jesus gave himself to them through the moment of the adoration of the breaking of the bread. In short, the Emmaus event makes it clear that both these spiritual styles are necessary for Jesus-experience. The Holy Scripture and liturgy are the two means of the Church received in order to come in communion with the risen Jesus and to promote personal relationship with him. Hence the Church reveres and respects the Holy Scripture, which includes the mysteries of revelation and holy tradition equally.

The catechists and elders who try to make the liturgical spirituality grow in the life of the children should be solicitous about this spiritual life. The elderly people should be models for the children in observing lent, abstinence, fasting, prayers of the Hour and sacramental life. There is a

large share for families in promoting liturgical spirituality. The prayers of the Hour, observance of fast, the fast and abstinence related to the observance of fast and the interest which the parents show among the members of their family to the sacramental life; all these have an important part to play to make grow the liturgical spirituality in children.

May we introduce some practical suggestions to strengthen this spirituality. The children should understand well the hymns, prayers and rituals of the worship and they should learn well the hymns of the liturgy and should pay attention to participate in liturgy in a lively manner. In short, we will be able to make grow in children the liturgical spirituality through the family life, catechism and liturgical services. The catechism of the Malankara Catholics aims and promotes clearly the liturgical spirituality. Through the liturgical spirituality of the Malankara Church, each individual should be able to grow in the Holy Spirit.

### **(3) The Living Spirituality or Witnessing Spirituality**

We understood that the Biblical Spirituality and the Liturgical Spirituality are the two phases of the spiritual way to arrive at Jesus-experience and experience of salvation. The third phase of this is the Living Spirituality or the Diaconal (Serving) Spirituality. Just as we experience the presence of God when we proclaim the Holy Scripture and celebrate the faith through worship, so also we recognize the divine presence when we serve our brethren and love them in the name of Jesus. "Just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" (Mt. 25:40). These words of Jesus are pertinent here. "You love one another as I have loved you" (Jn. 15:12); "You will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8); "Go and do likewise" Lk. 10:37). These interpretations of our Lord are clear signs to the 'living spirituality'.

'The activities related to fraternal charity', is the measuring rod that measures the depth of the divine experience of an individual. The spirituality and divine experience that do not relate with our brethren is imperfect. "For those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen" (1 Jn. 4:20). This part of the Holy Scripture perfectly accepts the spiritual style related to fraternal charity. When we serve the lowly ones, those who are disregarded, who suffer and those who are segregated before our eyes – of the community,

we love and serve Jesus himself. Through such kind of work an individual experiences the presence of God, grows in divine experience.

The thought that just as there is the divine presence when we proclaim the Good news and at the moments of the celebration of worship, so also, when we render service to the lowly ones in the name of Jesus, there is the divine presence, is very meaningful in modern times. When we render service to an individual in the name of Jesus, irrespective of class, color and caste, Christian principles will become still more social and living. Thus the Living Spirituality is a clear way that leads towards God-experience. Mother Theresa, Fr. Damian and many other Saints have given priority to the Living Spirituality.

In the Malankara Catechism, a part, 'life-witness' is added to each chapter. There, the action-based or witnessing Christianity is highlighted. Each chapter becomes more meaningful by relating to the action of witness that is presented at the end of the chapter. It is this living spirituality that is explained in the latter chapters of the Texts of each class. In short, the Malankara Catholic Catechism aims at the spiritual style that is related to the action-based and daily life of man. The interest to come in friendship with man and to love and serve him should be strengthened in children at the catechism classes themselves. They should be clearly convinced that the means for loving the unseen God is to love our brother who is seen. Thus a spirituality that is related to fraternal charity will have to grow in children. "Not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven" (Mt. 7:21). This teaching of Jesus should influence the children. They should also strive to take in the values of the Gospel-portion that is attached to each chapter.

We have understood these three spiritual styles of the preaching of the Gospel, namely the teaching of the Gospel (instruction), the celebration of the Gospel (adoration), and to live the Gospel (witness) are closely related. All these three spiritual styles could produce their own God-experience. All of them are necessary for Christian spiritual growth. The Church is not ready to reject any of these spiritual styles or receive any other, considering it as perfect. On the other hand, all these spiritual styles are three ways that lead to Christ-experience. All these three are necessary to reach the aim, which is Christ. One does not replace the other. On the other



hand, one leads to the other and continues it. The Biblical spirituality should lead to the Liturgical spirituality and both these to the Living spirituality. We could see these three phases in the experience of the disciples to Emmaus. The divine experience the disciples got, when Jesus explained the Holy Scripture

to them on the way, has turned to strong God-experience at the time of adoration, when he broke and shared the bread with them. It is the result of both these divine experiences, their returning to Jerusalem or their witness at Jerusalem. To bear witness means to give the Christ-experience to others as love and service. In short, these three spiritual styles are the three different means of the Church for earning God or to grow in the Holy Spirit. "Earning God is nobler than serving God". These words of Mar Ivanios, the servant of God, are suitable here.

### Topic for discussion

Make a discussion on what answers you could give for the following questions: Why should I be a faithful? Why should I go to church? Why should I pray? Why should I learn catechism? Why should I do virtuous deeds?



# How does Man Lose God? (The Capital Sins)

We have understood what differentiates man from animal is the image of God or the presence of the Holy Spirit, which God gave him. We have also seen that as this presence of the Holy Spirit strengthens in us the humaneness in man will strengthen and that man is able to control the animal nature in



him. We have understood from the preceding chapters how we could increase the wealth, which is the Holy Spirit and how one grows to the image of Jesus Christ through growing in the Holy Spirit and becomes another Christ. In short, the ultimate end of each person is his growing towards Jesus Christ, the definition of humaneness.

In order to retract man from this goal, Satan or the power of evil is still trying. Through the sacraments of initiation, even when we try to earn more the presence of the Holy Spirit that we received, there are very many possibilities for losing the presence of the Holy Spirit in our daily life. We discuss in this chapter the ways of sin for man to lose God. When man commits sin, he goes astray from God, the divine grace is lost to him and through that he loses the wealth, which is the Holy Spirit. It is the rejecting of the love of God or opposing the will of God that is sin. All sins that swallow man emerge from the capital sins. When we are in disease, we



have to treat and cure the root- cause of the disease and not its symptoms only. Likewise, in order to avoid sin, we have to avoid the root-cause that leads to sin. We decline to sinful life when we go astray from divine grace.

## **Man is created in the Image and Likeness of God**

Man who is created in the image and likeness of God, lived in perfect freedom in the beginning stage of creation. But man, subjected to temptation, submitted his freedom to Satan (Gen. 2:6). He dared to oppose the will of God. This is the Original Sin. This has become the cause of evil in the conscience of man. Man is subjected to internal struggles from here. The struggle between good and evil started in his mind. The inclination towards evil thus took form in man. This is called concupiscence in Eastern Theology.

One who does not try to oppose the inclination towards evil through relying on the providence of God, leads one to serious sins. The story of Cain is to be specially remembered here (Gen. 4: 1-16). His heart was perturbed with the thoughts and emotions of sin. Sin was lurking at his gate. His face was blackened with anger. Avarice, greed and jealousy subdued him. He challenged God with pride. "Am I the custodian of my brother?" Thus he became the murderer of his own brother. Thus Cain, who did not cooperate with God was degraded to the level of animal and declined to all sorts of evil. The evil that started with original sin leads man towards sin even today. We discuss in this chapter about these basic sins.

## **What are Capital Sins or Radical Sins?**

Seven thoughts of sins are considered to be the Capital Sins. The Fathers of the Western Church: John Cassian and Gregory, the Great teach about these. From the 13<sup>th</sup> Century the thought that the Capital Sins are seven, became common. These are called the radical sins or basic sins, because they procreate other sins and vices. The capital sins are: pride, avarice, jealousy, anger, prostitution, gluttony and laziness.(CCC.1866). These, having invigorated the body of man, are adequate to make the fruits of the soul lifeless (Gal. 5:19-21). Jesus says that those things which pollute man originate from his heart, when he teaches about internal purity. Thus the first among those which makes man impure, Jesus says is about impure thoughts. (Mt. 5: 19). It is these impure thoughts, which are known as

radical sins. From these emerge murder, union outside marriage, fornication, stealing, false witnesses and calumniation.

In this chapter we make each of the radical sins subjects of our study. Because, the knowledge about sins and the circumstances of sins will enable us to avoid them from our life and to fight against their temptations with vigour.

## **1. Pride**

Pride is the irregular desire that one should get praise, honor and glory. Origen (4<sup>th</sup> Cent.) qualifies pride as the most important weapon of Satan. St. John Chrysostom, theologian and Father of the Church, qualifies pride as the foundation, source and mother of other sins. When one has subdued other sins, pride may raise its head in him. In the highest point of pride, we make blasphemy. Without rendering the due praise and glory to God, we retract from prayer-life itself. Pride instigates one to install oneself in the place of God. The proud man picks up quarrel with others soon and insults them and defies those who are in authority and denies one's own faults.

It is the ignorance of the nothingness of man that leads one towards pride. The ecclesial vision removes one from pride. In the Holy Church, which is the mystical body of Christ, we are each a limb of the same. Hence the one who ridicules his brother, ridicules the Church; and one who ridicules the Church ridicules also the Messiah. St. Paul asks us in his epistle to the Philippians, that we may have the attitude of Jesus, who has incarnated (Philip. 2:5). The attitude of Jesus was that of humility and self-negation. Jesus redeemed me, a sinner and trifling by giving his body and blood as price. We should make this as subject for meditation (1 Cor. 6:20). "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1:31). The virtue against pride is humility. Through practicing this virtue, we will be able to win over pride.

## **2. Avarice**

The desire for pleasure, false prestige and lack of faith are those that lead one towards avarice. It is from the worry over insecurity that the bud of avarice springs out. If so, it is the lack of faith in divine protection that is the most important reason for avarice.

Avarice is the exceeding desire for material wealth. Wealth is necessary for the fulfillment of one's bodily and spiritual needs, for the integral

development of his individuality and for the livelihood of those who depend upon us. Hence each individual has the right for personal wealth. But avarice instigates a man to live aiming at wealth alone. His life moves aiming at achievement of wealth alone. These people close their eyes towards the large group of people, who live in the level of poverty. Avarice prepares them to do any evil deed.

Avarice denies the social phase of the private ownership of wealth. (*Rerum Novarum*, 19). These people conveniently forget the fact that we are only the transactors of wealth. We should make use of wealth in a manner of responsibility and mutual respect. We should be able to share our wealth generously with those who are in poverty. This was the life-force of the early Christian community. "They would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need" (Acts 2:45).

The avarice of man is destructive to the nature also. The nature becomes liable to exploitation. This will make the existence of the future generation as well as our own in danger. This will lead us to pragmatism, a doctrine that considers nature as a mere thing that could be used according to one's own will and that could be made subject for exploitation.

Wealth may often become an obstruction to the invitation of Jesus. "The young rich man goes away from Jesus grieving" (Mt. 19:22). He had the desire to follow Jesus. But avarice becomes an obstruction for the same. Selfishness prompts one to reject reliance on God. But we should realize that, to the one who stands away from God, has not even existence.

One will be able to gain emancipation from avarice through reliance in the providence of God. Besides, we should practice alms-giving. What the angel tells to Cornelius is that "Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God" (Acts 10:4). God who protects the lilies of the field and the birds of the air under his protection, with how much more care will he not protect man, who are much more valuable than them! (Mt. 6:28-31). Generosity is the virtue against avarice. When we try to share generously with others, the wealth, the gift which God has given us, we will be able to subdue avarice.

### **3. Jealousy**

The word 'jealousy' indicates the grief that occurs when one sees the things of others and the irregular desire for acquiring them even unjustly

(CCC 2539). Gregory the Great teaches that jealousy engenders many other sins. Hatred, infamy, calumny, joy in the misfortunes of others, grief at the prosperity of others etc, originate from jealousy.

Jealousy is the sin opposed to fraternal charity. We are called to deal in conscience with each other (Rom 12:16). But jealousy undermines the life-force. But healthy competitive spirit is alien to the slaves of jealousy. A jealous man never enjoys peace of mind. Charity or love is the virtue opposite to jealousy. By practicing hospitality, humility, self-dedication to the providence of God, we could fight against jealousy, (CCC 2554). The good news of others will never be an objection to us. We should be able to encourage the virtues that we don't have. The virtue that one has is what belongs to all. The source of all virtues is God himself. Hence, one who approves another one's virtue is glorifying God himself.

#### 4. Anger

The basis of anger, the basic sin is the desire for retaliation. Anger delivers one to the conscious desire for killing the neighbor or to fatally injure him. Anger is the serious transgression of charity.

All have the right to get angry justly. We can moderately get angry in order to express our just anger. We should get angry basing on fraternal charity. Here, we don't try to ruin one, but only to correct the fault and to regain the order that is lost. Hence the psalmist reminds: "Be angry, but do not sin" (Ps. 4:4). St. Paul advises "Do not let the sun go down on your anger" (Eph. 4:26). Prolonged anger causes hatred. Anger disturbs the very soul of the one who gets angry. Thus anger alienates us from prayer and activities of fraternal love. He who gets angry cannot judge



justly. Equanimity is often lost through sentimental excitement. Concentration is alien to these people in order to seek the will of God and to implement divine inspiration. We should be careful to have a generous approach towards the faults and mistakes of others. We ought to be careful to avoid as far as possible the circumstances that entirely disturb us. To err is human, but to forgive is divine. Instead of getting angry with those who wound us, it is better that we ought to pray and do penance for their conversion. Let the holy words of Jesus resound in our ears. "But I say to you; love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Mt.5:44). Patience or self-control is the virtue against anger. We could outlive anger through practicing the virtue of patience.

### **5. Concupiscence (Lust)**

What is concupiscence or lust is to separate the aims of sexuality, that are procreation and love and to seek instead the bodily pleasure alone (CCC 2351). Lust enters into one with impure thoughts. Hence it is not enough to avoid evil actions; on the other hand, we should be solicitous to root out from mind even impure thoughts.

We find around us a culture that gives a false explanation to concupiscence. It is not easy today to protect purity even if one desires to be engaged in holiness. The publicity-culture that does not value the virtue of purity leads easily to subject us to temptations. Internet and mobile phones etc., spread around us impure pictures and clippings. These make our imagination impure. We wouldn't be able to stand against the modern means of communication. Hence the only remedy for this is to acquire maturity for their prudent use.

Often concupiscence causes to ignore the personality of others. The libertines see others as mere objects for lust, forgetting the truth that others too bear the image of God. Hence we should be conscious about man and about the glory of the body of man. The human body is pure. That is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16; 6: 15-20). The sanctification of the heart and the habit of self-control help us to achieve liberation from concupiscence. Never idle away your time. Allow your mind to be engaged in matters of purity. We should try to avoid as far as possible the concupiscence filled with temptations. This is a courageous act. Besides, devotion towards our holy Mother will help us to live in holiness. The virtue

against lust is self-control or discipline. We will be able to control lust through practicing self-control in our thoughts and transactions.

## 6. Gluttony or Greed

The strong interest for food and drink is gluttony or greed. The gluttons are those who live for their belly. Gluttony will enslave the soul to the body. Gluttony will lead us towards excessive comfort. This will enfeeble our mind and make our bodily propensities grow. "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God" (1 Cor.10:31).

We ought to specially consider the social aspect of gluttony. We ought to know that through our lust, some one else is losing what he deserves. It is the common sight in under-developed countries, the pale faces of children, devoid of nutritive food due to poverty. We should practice to eat



moderately. The strong interest we have for food often becomes reason for wasting food. Besides, overeating makes us sick.

We ought to practice moderate eating against gluttony. We should prepare our mind to abstain from food, even when it is available for the sake of ulterior motives. We should abandon more pleasing food materials. We should practice to eat what is not pleasing too. We should prepare our mind for abstinence. This will increase our will- power. We should avoid intoxicating drinks as we practice moderate food. Ultimately, we should be able to eat and drink in the spirit of fraternal charity.

## 7. Laziness (Idleness)

Laziness is the alternative of gloominess. The lazy man spends time without any interest in anything. What is contained in the sin of laziness is the disinterestedness in doing good works. Laziness may seize one even in the spiritual realm. Idleness strengthens in one, temptation. "Laziness makes evils grow in us" (Sir.33:28). The mind of the lazy will be filled with irregular thoughts, desires, emotions and imaginations. This will cause the increase of evil desires. Thus laziness obstructs one from achieving the perfection of virtues. In the worldly sphere, those who are lazy always depend upon others. In the execution of their duty, these people commit serious faults. Thus the idlers become a burden to the community and family. "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a robber and want, like an armed warrior" (Pro. 24: 33-34). We should take pride in the culture of perseverance. We should find time to do works of fraternal charity instead of doing one's own works. This will increase our ability to accomplish our duties tenfold. The virtue that is against laziness is enthusiasm. To try to do our duties enthusiastically and carefully will help us to increase our enthusiasm and to deaden sin and laziness.

"Just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin" (Rom. 5:12). But in Jesus Christ we are redeemed. We are those who have removed the old man of sin in us, and have put on Jesus Christ. We should be able to hate and reject sin forever. We should never try to identify ourselves with sin and its circumstances. For, sin leads to death. St. Paul says: "For those who live according to the flesh, set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace (Rom. 8:5-6).

Often, we are not able to do the good, we intend. "For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent from doing what you want" (Gal. 5:17). In our weakness the grace of God works. We ought to avoid sin not through the strength of the will but through the grace of God. Our justification is in Jesus Christ. "All have sinned and fell short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:23-24). We can also make our

own the fruits of the redemption that is in Jesus Christ through the sacramental life and through meditation of the word of God. Let us try to confront consciously and win over the radical sins and the evils that sprout from them and that we may not degrade ourselves to the animal state, having lost the divine grace that is in us.

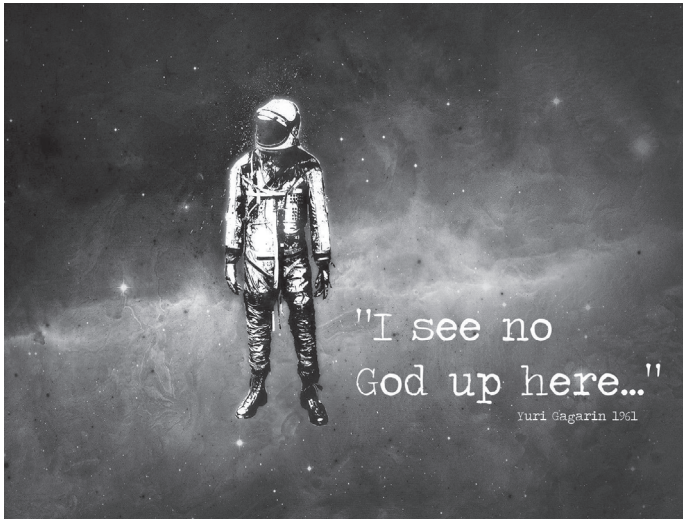
### Topic for discussion

**Even though there is the presence of God in man, the human nature is inclined towards evil, the strife between good and evil is strong. Discuss how we could stand along with goodness in this strife.**





# Atheism and Experience of God



We have understood that the Capital Sins and those that are derived from them destroy the wealth of God that is in man. But God will be lost to man through consciously denying Him. But in this chapter we discuss Atheism that consciously denies God and the ways through which God is lost to man

and also the fundamental God-experience in man.

Imagine an atheist asks you, a believer in God, in this manner: “Have you seen God?; What is the basis of your belief in God?”. When these arrows of question pierce your face, perhaps you react in this manner: “Friend, you are asking questions that are logical. Yet, let us also ask; Have you sufficient reasons to believe that there is no God? In fact, is it not a belief like what we have, that here is God, that you have another belief that there is no God?”

There are around us lots of friends who deny God. Vat. II Council instructs us that we should conduct friendly discussion with those who think and believe differently from the Catholic faith, which we have: (Church in the Modern World, No.22). Ours is a community, where followers of different religions and those who believe in different ideologies live mingled and work. Pluralism has become, all over the world, the distinguishing feature of the community- life. We should be prepared for continued dialogue, avoiding fanaticism and terrorism if you want to maintain peace and co-existence based on goodness. The aim of this chapter is to prepare students, who have entered into rationalistic thoughts

appropriate to young people to have dialogue with the atheists. Besides, we will have very many doubts and obstructions in our own spiritual journey. The continuous dialogue will be held in the mind of any thinking faithful about the existence of God and in the relationship between God and us. Shouldn't we be prepared for this dialogue?

### **Atheism through History**

Man looks at the phenomenon that happens in his own self and in nature. The ancient man came to the conclusion that there is some unseen power behind them. The natural awareness of God and religious expressions that result from them are universally seen. Yet, from time immemorial atheistic concepts and movements had their hold in history. Epicurus, (B.C.270), the Greek theologian, taught thus: "Deities or Life after death do not exist. Without fearing them, enjoy the felicities they extend such as: eating, drinking and mating. The atheistic Indian Philosophers of the early times deny the existence of Brahman and believed that the earthly things are the only realities. Although Jainism and Buddhism kept silence about the existence of God, they gave importance for moral cognition and religious life. When Mahaveeran, the founder of Jainism, had taught that all living beings have soul, What Sri Buddha instructed is the moral way of leading man to the 'other shore', having saved them from the sea of suffering.

For the past two centuries, we are seeing the sight of atheism increasing and spreading all over the world in different forms. The two important reasons St. Thomas Aquinas (1274) found out for atheism are relevant in this age also: One, the existence of evil, two, the progress of worldly knowledge. Some people turn towards atheism when they feel disharmony between sufferings in human life and the existence of the all-knowing, all-perfect in virtues, and the all-powerful God, they turned towards the denial of the existence of God. The progress in the field of knowledge also leads some towards the denial of the existence of God. The explanation of many phenomenons that were unknown, man used to find out in God. The ancient man believed that not only the rain, storms and climatic changes, but also diseases and turbulence of nature happen through the intervention of God. But today, science gives natural explanations for all these and suggests remedy for them. Let us examine the various forms of atheism which are seen in the modern world.

## **Science-based Atheism**

Looking at the progress of physical sciences, some people think as follows: "In order to explain the universal phenomena; we don't need the imagination of 'God' any more. For example, the theory of evolution satisfactorily explains the origin of life. Science is able to fulfill all the needs of man. To the man who earns maturity, developing science has no need for God. Auguste Comte (1857) an atheistic French philosopher, established a doctrine that the human mind could develop towards maturity through three phases.

### **1. Religion**

Ancient man tried to find explanation and remedy for the problems related to nature through legends and gods.

### **2. Philosophical Thought**

When thought-habit grew in man, instead of myths and gods, philosophy (logical thoughts) was installed. Theism explains 'everything is godliness, the different forms of the same reality'. The faith, Pantheism too is formed in the furnace of philosophy.

### **3. Science**

Science has grown today to such an extent as to find solution for all problems that man confronts with. God is not needed to the man who grows towards self-sufficiency through scientific knowledge. Faith in God has arisen from ignorance. Atheists interpret science in these ways:

The above-explained theory somewhat explains the evolution of human mind. But history makes it clear that religion, philosophy and science are not the phases that come one after another by replacing one another. But the three circles that exist deeply rooted in the mind of man are religion, philosophy and science. Although these influences transform each other, one does not make the other either irrelevant or unwanted. Though science is very important in the life of man, it is not able to give answer to all curiosities concerning existence. When science confines itself in the realm of worldly enterprises, the mind of man travels beyond seeking wealth and happiness. Yet, there is no opposition what so ever between science and faith in God. They are complementary.

## Atheism based on Psychology

Feuerbach (1872) established the doctrine that the imagination of God is created by man basing on his own psychological needs. The man who stood frightened and helpless before the powers of nature, waned to God Almighty in his imagination for his consolation and strengthening. The all Perfect and holy God was imagined

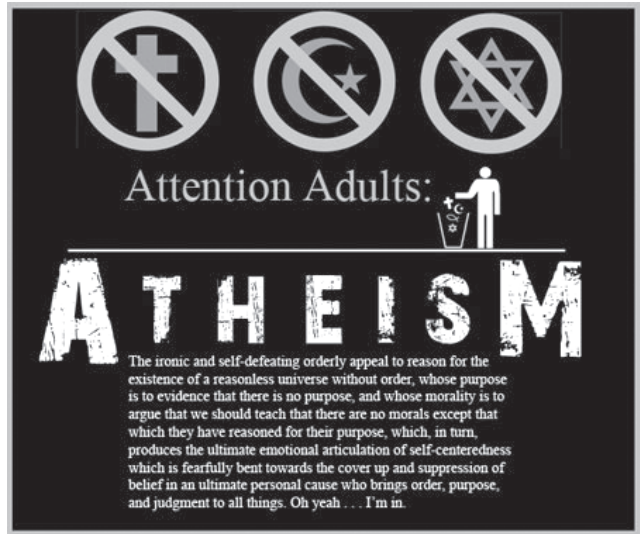
in order that virtue may not die down in a world filled with evil. In fact Foyer Bough argues is faith in God is falsehood and pernicious to the progress of humanity. Man prepares the way to deviate from his own obligation through imputing illusory imagination of God for developing good qualities, strength and holiness, which he should acquire in his own personality. His argument is that faith in God will detract man from the obligation of making this world better.

Sigmund Freud (1939), the chieftain of psychology spread this very idea. God and the religions are part of the imaginary world created by human mind in order to fulfill his own mental needs. At childhood, a human being experienced safety in the protection of his father. Man installs in his mind when he gets old, the Almighty God, filled with goodness as his father, in order to get this protection further. These people argue that God is merely an illusory imagination.

It is not right to consider faith in God as an illusion formed by man for the psychological needs. Certainly there may be psychological reasons for faith in God. But the mind of man doesn't create God, on the contrary, he only discovers God.

## Atheism based on Social Science

Karl Marx and Fredrick Engels established the doctrine that it is not possible to analyze the real man by mere psychological approach; on the



other hand, the social and financial factors influence man decisively. Man, in his entirety (including his psychological factors) is being controlled and decided by his historical, social and financial factors. The sum total of all these influences is the entire existence of man. Belief in God and the whole life of religion are the results of these influences. Fundamentally, all these are of the world. Substance alone is existing. Beyond material state there is no foundation or root for God or religion. In the capitalistic system, which existed throughout history, a minority subdued the entire majority group of proletariats and ruled over them. Religion and God are the opium created to perpetuate them in chain of slavery, having alienated the people from themselves. The subdued group of men found relief in their horrible sufferings, having themselves used morphine, which is the belief in God. In the hopeless life-horizon, the taper of hope, which is the other-world-life was enkindled. Faith in God is the sigh of those who are subdued by the exploitation of the capitalists: that is the soul of an empty hearted social system. Belief in God and religion will disappear when a socio-economic system will come through communist revolution. The new social system, which communism imagines will naturally be atheistic.

Marx and Engels tried to sound severe criticism against the established religions. The doctrine of Marx is not a sufficient reason to deny the existence of God. There is no historical evidence for the historical and doctrinal interpretation of Marx. The argument that the faith in God is perfectly determined by social and economic factors is the denial of human freedom. In fact, the social, economic and psychological influences do not destroy human freedom. Even though the power of their influence is immense, the human freedom to think and to take decision freely does exist. History testifies that the doctrine of Marx and its use is wrong in itself.

### **The Denial of God Based on Human Freedom.**

Some people argue that there is no limit to the human freedom and therefore God's existence and human freedom never go together. Nietzsche and Sartre (1980), the chief Western Philosophers are those who spread such atheism. They think that once we accept God, man could only be slaves. What they spread is a kind of humanism denying God. We should have people with will-power in order to guide the human history. Those people are the masters and heroes. No rule or even conscience should be an obstruction to them. They are the super-men who rise as dictators in

life. They don't need God. Hence, they wish to kill God. The reason is that God annihilates human freedom. Nietzsche is not trying that there is no God through the doctrine of psychology. But, he is obstinate not to have God. 'God died, let the superman reign forever', that is his motto.

Sartre says that the freedom of man is perfect and of the highest order and that he himself should create his essence. Sartre argues that man exists even before his essence take form in him. Sartre denies God, who, keeping in mind the idea of how man should be and gives him such kind of existence. If you approve of such a God, then the freedom of man is mere illusion. It is contradictory that God creates man free. That is impossible. The fact that one is free and that he is created is contradictory.

In fact, is the freedom of man without any restriction? Haven't we a freedom that is created and as such restricted? We enjoy a freedom that is given to us. And the criterions to make use of such freedom also are given to us. The moral values are the sign posts to take free decisions.

### **Denial of God based on the Doctrine of Transience**

According to the opinion of some philosophers such as Merleau-Ponty (1961), Bertrand Russell (1970), the fundamental features of human life are perishability and moderation. 'Everything grief, uncertain, materialistic'; They sanction this saying of Sri Buddha. Man is floating on a demolishing log of wood in an ocean, without any hope of reaching the shore. Sri Buddha chanted the song of detachment to cross the ocean of sorrow. But what Merleau-Ponty and Russell proposed is another aspect of life. Man, in his helplessness, without relying on God or religion, should go forward bravely accepting the meaninglessness and sufferings of one's own existence. Man should practice to live without confidence having admitted his own failure. One who lives thus is a brave man. Those who console themselves that everything will be alright relying on the illusory concept of God are cowards.

We should accept that perishability and transience are the basic aspects of human life. However, man is able to go beyond this experience and to find out the source of spirituality and lead a meaningful life. Is it not stupidity to consider it noble to live in despair and meaninglessness, having rejected this possibility? Doesn't it require more bravery to rise towards immortality from mortality?

Although human life is meaningless in itself, without secretly running away or preparing oneself for suicide, Albert Camus (1960) invites to fight bravely for moral virtues. Camus considers the belief in God and in the life of the other world, are a sort of secret running away from the true moral obligation. Camus declared that the atheistic lovers of men are the true saints.

The thought that religious life is the hidden running away from the obligations of true life, is the rejection of the historical truth. The reason is that crores of religious faithful have fulfilled the obligations of life on the foundation of their religious faith. If one denies God, the foundation of all virtues, then what foundation is there for morality? It is faith in God that is capable for spreading light towards the true glory of man. Pope John Paul II, in his book 'Crossing the threshold of hope' deals very clearly about humanism that is based on faith in God.

### **Atheism based on Language**

A. Ayer (1989) argues that a statement becomes right or wrong through physically scientific proving. All statements concerning the existence of God cannot be proved through worldly observations and proofs. Hence, they are all meaningless. According to the doctrine of the philosopher Wittgenstein, language has only one social function. In each community, people have their own language to communicate to each other. In order to have meaningful communication, there shall be internal coherence in the language. It is not a problem whether the things indicated through the language truly exist or not. It is enough to have the harmony. The statements relating to the existence of God are meaningful and valuable to those who make use of them (irrespective of whether they are believers or unbelievers). But, we do not know whether God truly exists or not. It is better to keep quiet about that.

The afore-said thought-patterns entwine the horizon of human mind in worldliness. But, they disregard the experience of the inner man which travels beyond worldliness. Truly, it is hypocritical to argue that man is completely ignorant about God or that there is no relationship to the statements about God. It is the denial of one's own inner experience.

### **Christian Atheism**

In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, some Western theologians proclaiming that 'God has died', invited modern men towards a new

religious life. Those who spread this kind of atheism were Hamilton, Vanbueran, Don Cupitt etc. Hamilton argued that the evils and sufferings, man experiences in the modern world expose the absence of God and whether God exists or not remains as an open question. In the opinion of Vanbueran, without believing in the existence of God himself, one could be the disciple of Christ and live the Gospel. Don Cupitt proved that it is better for modern man to have a religious life without belief in God and spirituality. Along with the denial of God, the spiritual need necessarily be not forsaken. He criticized the atheistic movements for ignoring the spiritual thirst which is inborn in human mind. We should form a spirituality which is useful to improve human life, having denied God and the code of faith which the traditional religions introduce. What we have to acquire through spirituality are: to transform personality, to improve life-situations and to experience mental peace and inner joy. This is possible through appropriating faith-values in our life. Meditation, moral life and practice of Yoga etc., are very helpful for this. What Sri Buddha taught is a moral and spiritual life without faith in God.

A spiritual life denying God is like building up a house without foundation. A theology without God and spirituality without interior content will not nourish integral personality of man.

### **Practical Atheism**

A stance that is being increased in the modern world is Practical Atheism. Those who receive this stand point have no interest what so ever in the question 'whether God exists or not'. They are those who spend their whole energy and interest in the affairs of the worldly life. God and spiritual life is no subject of thought for them. Even though some of them admit God in the intellectual level, they don't give any interest for faith in the practical level. This tendency which gives importance to the economic progress, comforts of life and worldly affairs alone is known as 'secularization'. This is different from secularism or respecting all religions equally. Our secularism is a planning of respecting all religions, granting freedom for individuals in religious affairs, and demanding tolerance towards all religions. The kernel of Indian secularism is "Equality of all Ethics". Although secularization has exerted its influence in India, it is not yet deep-rooted.



Secularization stands as an obstruction in promoting divine virtues and spiritual attitudes in the life of individuals and communities. This creates a social situation that makes the spiritual life difficult even for those who have the consciousness of God. That is a great challenge for the life of faith. The faithful of God should confront this challenge through sanctifying and deepening more the faith in God and thus sharing vigorously in spiritual gatherings.

Let us examine atheism in general. Some hold the misunderstanding that atheists do not give importance to morality and human values in life. In fact, even though there is the denial of God, there are lots of people who live showing unselfish moral love towards their neighbors. There are also people who lead immoral life among those who believe in God. In fact, the thing that prompts very many for denying God may be the lack of the awareness of justice, activities of exploitation and immoral life of the faithful. Besides, many atheists deny actually not God; on the other hand, they deny the false concepts that are formed in their minds about God. For example they deny a God, who does not grant room for freedom or a merciless God, who is waiting for the opportunity to punish man. Could we really imprint such people with the seal of atheism? Should we not try to lead them towards a lofty knowledge about God through friendly discussion?

There are lots people who although they have a clear understanding of God, deny God. God exists beyond the sphere where sources and mind of man transact. The Indian philosophers called the knowledge obtained through the senses and mind the 'ulterior knowledge'. Rising from this sphere, when we seek in the intellectual level 'transcendental knowledge' is possible. This knowledge that is beyond the senses could be called 'intuition'. It is only through the transcendental knowledge that one could know and experience God. All men have the inner call to awake the mind towards the sphere of knowledge which is beyond the material world. But man is capable of transacting solely in the sphere of senses and reason without attending the afore-mentioned realms. When we live thus, we will experience the non-existence of God more than His existence. Having subdued this experience with reasoning, man could give form for the atheistic arguments. That may be the reason why the psalmist sang "Fools say in their hearts, there is no God" (Ps. 14:1).

One may ask ‘Why God allows many men to live as atheists?’ The ways of God are different from that of man. God desires that all men who are created free should use that freedom. “Who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth” (1 Tim.2:4). But God doesn’t annihilate the possibility of human freedom to incline towards the denial of God and human freedom.

### **The Experience of God**

The young man Narendran who was known later on as Vivekananda Swami came to Sri Ramaparamahansa and asked: “Have you seen God?”. Then and there he got an answer. “Narendra, I see God clearer than I see you. To the mystics, the existence of God and the presence of God are clear, indubitable and experienced. The foundation of the belief in God of ordinary people is their own limited spiritual experience. Spiritual experiences are the gifts that God gives, more than the result of man’s curiosity, continuous search and efforts. They are the revelations of God. God who exists hidden, reveals himself to those whom he loves. In order to receive this revelation; the free man should cooperate with the grace of God and prepare himself through logical thinking, and practice of religious rites. The deliberation over experiences and medication are the parts of human efforts for the experience of God. To share the experiences regarding God’s existence and the logical thoughts with others are helpful to us and to others to grow in the life of faith. However, do not think that through rationalism alone, that one can convince atheists the experience of God.

### **Logical Thoughts based on Universe**

The philosophers have introduced various arguments in order to prove the existence of God, basing on the experiences of the outer universe. When we examine the universe through the view points of the worldly sciences, we get the knowledge about the origin of the phenomenon and their character. This knowledge in itself need not lead towards the denial of God’s existence. It is the logical thoughts which man conducts on the scientific knowledge that leads one towards faith in God or towards the denial of God. For all things we see in the universe there should be reasons. This thought comes from the logical thinking of man. Aristotle, the Greek philosopher and the Indian *Nyaya* Philosophers have come to the conclusion that for all phenomenon of the universe there should be an eternal truth which is extraneous to the universe as its fundamental reason.

St. Thomas Aquinas suggested 5 ways to prove the existence of God. They are the logical thoughts on the 5 phenomenon which we ordinarily see in the universe. Firstly, Aquinas makes 'motion' as subject for our thought. We see different kinds of motion in nature. Not only the motion from one place to another, but the change from one state to another state also could be seen as motion. Behind movement there



should be something that moves. A row of unlimited powers of movement is not sufficient an explanation for motion. Aquinas leads us to the inner view that for every movement there should be an immovable reality which works behind it.

Secondly, Aquinas invites us to think about 'causation'. i.e., about the relationship between cause and effect. We understand that there are reasons behind the things we see in nature, and these reasons are the results of other reasons. The row of cause and effect could not be continued unlimitedly is a fact and that this fact leads us to the inner view that there exists an 'uncaused cause', that is, a cause that has not been caused by any other, and that that is the cause of all.

Thirdly, Aquinas proposes the phenomenon 'contingency'. All worldly things are transient; that is, not permanent. This fact leads to the logical conclusion that there should be some 'reality' which is permanent and necessary.

Fourthly, Aquinas makes 'gradual perfections' as subject for our cogitation. Gradation of perfection is noticed because they share in their ultimate perfection. This thought points to an existence of supreme perfection.

Fifthly, Aquinas points out the 'order and design' that exist in the universe and leads us to the 'Master intellect' that works behind this arrangement.

We can say there are two stages in our deduction we make towards the existence of God from the existence of the universe. First we have the awareness of the limited and perishable realities of the universe. In the second stage, our intellect gets the inner view that there ought to be a reality as source, foundation and aim for the entire phenomenon which are perishable and relative. This supreme reality is immortal, indeterminable and uncreative. It is this reality that the Indian sages called Brahman, asceticism, divine truth etc. Aristotle called it the unmoved mover and Aquinas as Self-Subsisting Essence.

The foundation of this kind of logical thinking is a specialty of the human mind. The human intellect has an opening and enthusiasm to go beyond the limited sphere of the world. The human mind is longing to go from mortality to immortality and from falsehood to truth.

The proofs given for the existence of God basing on the universe are based on the principle of causality. The things that do not exist by themselves, that is, through their own nature, have received it from an absolute truth, which exists by itself. Worldly things have no existence by themselves. They receive their existence from God. It is God alone who exists without relying on anything else.

### **Considerations basing man's Inner Experiences**

There are different abilities and zones of activities for the human mind. Related to them, man has various kinds of inner experiences. For example, the mind has a realm of knowledge. He experiences an unquenchable curiosity to know more and more. Or else, human mind has the inner views about certain values that are above the material world. Another ability of the mind is the sense of morality and conscience. Another specialty is to earn more and to excel. When we meditate on the inner experiences and make logical thinking, we get the inner views about the existence of God.

Let us make the realm of human intellect the subject of our meditation. All have the ardent desire to acquire knowledge. Without having perfect satisfaction in things known, the mind hastens to know still more. What becomes obvious here is the basic dynamism of the human mind. It is because of the desire towards the ultimate truth is latent in the structure of the human mind that the intellect gets this dynamic nature.

In other words, the human mind has the openness to know the ultimate reality, which gives existence and meaning, preserves everything in its existence, and it is the goal to be reached. Besides, a pre-knowledge about that truth is in the mind of all. How will the mind seek what is not known?

The mind, that having consciously recognized a thing and before accepting the same authoritatively, an awareness, though not clear but certain that is forming in the mind, is called pre-knowledge. It is this pre-knowledge that is the foundation of all searches of the human mind and its power of conductivity. The faith in God is the conscious enlightening of it through logical thinking and meditation.



Now let us think about some ideas in the human mind that transcends the materialistic world. The ideas about beauty beyond imitation, happiness etc., are part of our internal experiences. How did these ideas originate in the limited human mind?, is a question that is asked by Plato and St. Augustine etc. St. Augustine had expressed that these views have entered into the human mind through divine illumination. St. Augustine saw these spiritual encampments that lively exist in man as proof of the existence of God.

The ardent desire to progress endlessly is another phase of these inner experiences. Man always desires not only to know more, but also to reach better situations in life. This ardent desire is an ontological reality that is included in the very construction of the human mind that is universal. This is not a desire that is restricted to the mere physical realm; on the other hand, it is one that aims at the limitless perfection or the perfection of all virtues. This is an inner thirst that is quenched only by God. This kind of ardent desire originated in the human mind just because there exists a basic relationship with God. It is because of this St. Augustine said as follows: " God, you created me for your own sake. I will be worried until I am merged in you". It is this ardent desire that exists as the moving power for every progress of the individuals and of the entire human community.

How did this kind of ardent desire originate in the limited human mind? Logical reasoning inspires us to approve a supreme reality which exists as its source. It is impossible for man or for the material universe to create this ardent desire.

Another side of the inner experience of man is his moral consciousness and conscience. "This is wrong, hence don't do it", "This is good and right, hence do this". There is no man who does not hear this inner voice. This voice of morality obliges man within himself. The source of this is neither the individual himself nor the community. It is only a moral force which surpasses human nature that would bring a man to obligation from within. These thoughts point to the existence of God.

Another reality that is pointed out as proof for the existence of God is the universality of the spiritual experience. Anthropologists give evidence that some kind of spiritual experience is seen in every culture and in those who live irrespective of time and place. It is logical to think that the foundation of the spiritual experience of man is God.

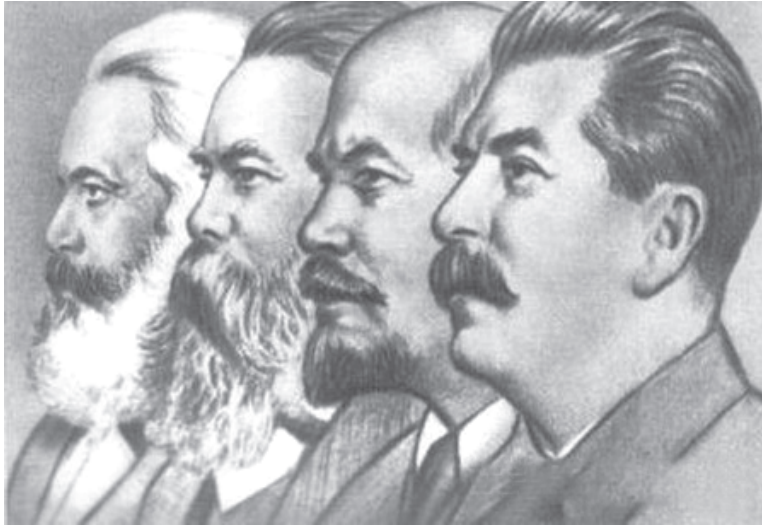
One fact will be made clear when we examine the above-mentioned proofs and signs placed together. That is to believe in the existence of God is more logical than to consider that God doesn't exist. However, the stand point we take regarding the existence of God depends on the attitude we have regarding life more than the logical considerations. Those who have the attitude that the world and life are meaningless and fruitless; there is no point for them to seek God. Their attitude becomes relevant only when say with emphasis that there is no God. Those who decide to lead a meaningful life, accepting the goodness and virtues of this worldly life see the foundation of their life in the faith of God. Besides, the innumerable possibilities of the spiritual life will be opened before them. It is the decision of an individual to lead a meaningful and blissful life that becomes evident through faith in God. This decision is beyond logic. In this decision is included one's entire personality, intellect and will power and all thoughts and emotions.

### Topic for discussion

*God-experience is the experience of each individual. Make this the subject of your discussion and also the special moments when God touched you.*



# Communism



We understood from the previous lesson that atheism is to lose the presence of God in man by denying the existence of God with the intellect and reasoning of man. In like manner, the science that destroys the presence of God in man, having

denied the existence of God through the intellect and reasoning and thinking that man is mere matter, is Communism.

Communism is a philosophy, which influences the world history and make commotion in the history of the world from the beginning to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The meaning of the usage of the alien language 'communism' is, 'that which pertains to the community' or 'all for all'. Communism is the philosophy, which Karl Marx and Fredrick Engel have imagined stressing on the emancipation of the proletariat, who became victims of persecution and exploitation. The 'Communist Manifesto', which Marx and Engels published in 1848, was the clarion call of the freedom fight in order to disrupt the fetters of slavery, ignorance and poverty. Their claim was that they introduced a new social set up, 'scientific socialism', where one does not make another one or a nation does not make another nation slave and does not rob each other. In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Cent., there was decisive influence of communism in about 90 countries. But in the 21<sup>st</sup> Cent., communism was reduced into very few countries and history has proved that what communism has imagined as earthly paradise is wrong in idea and application. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the aim of the ideology, which communism puts forward.

## **Background and Origin**

The thoughts of Renaissance, which spread all over Europe after the 16<sup>th</sup> Cent., marked the beginning of the Industrial Revolution. The products of nature were exploited through modern machines and thus lots of products began to be produced. In this process of production, the one who deposits the capital became the capitalist and the one who works became the labourer. The main aim of the one who invests the capital and begins the business is profit alone. Hence in order to make more profit, the capitalists oppressed the labourers by giving less salary and making them work for more hours. By the 19<sup>th</sup> Cent., the condition of the workers became very pathetic. It is under such social condition, that Karl Marx was born and grew up.

Karl Marx was born at Trier, in Germany in 1818. His parents were converted from Judaism to the Christian Protestant faith. The French Revolution of that age, the ideas of Rousseau and Voltaire, and the then-prevailing social and economic background influenced Marx. It is in this atmosphere of rationalism that Marx grew up. Prometheus, the epic leader, who has raised voice against the Greek deities, was the hero of Marx. The ideas of Epicurus, the Greek philosopher, influenced Marx very much. Epicurus raised the loftiness of man, reaching against the deities. Thus, he extolled the unlimited abilities of man. Epicurus gave back to man the power and glory which the Greek philosophers attributed to God alone. Through Epicurus, atheism got rooted in Marx.

## **Hegel and Marx**

According to the thought of Hegel, the Supreme Reality is the Absolute Spirit. Hegel states that the Absolute Spirit is living and dynamic. The phenomenal world or the visible world, which expresses diversity, is the time-bound manifestation of this absolute reality. The character of the Absolute Spirit is dialectical. The kernel of the theory based on dialecticism which says that any change in the universe is the result of the clash between two dialectically opposite realities and thereby emerges a third reality. Against the thoughts of Hegel, Feuerbach strongly reacted. In the thought of Hegel, since he gave too much importance to the Absolute Spirit, not only that man did not have the state he deserved, but even the very existence of man has been denied. Feuerbach thinks that the absolute reality is not



the Absolute Spirit, but it is man. Hence man is the fundamental truth of everything. According to Feuerbach God is the creation of man's unfulfilled desires.

In the opinion of Feuerbach, man is his own God. Marx liked how Feuerbach responded against the Absolute Spirit of Hegel. In short, the ways of thought of many philosophers from Epicurus till Feuerbach influenced Marx. Marx does not agree with any reality beyond the material world, that is, beyond the worldly realities. The theory based on dialecticism of Hegel and the theory of Materialism of Feuerbach, both became the foundation of Marx.



*Feuerbach*

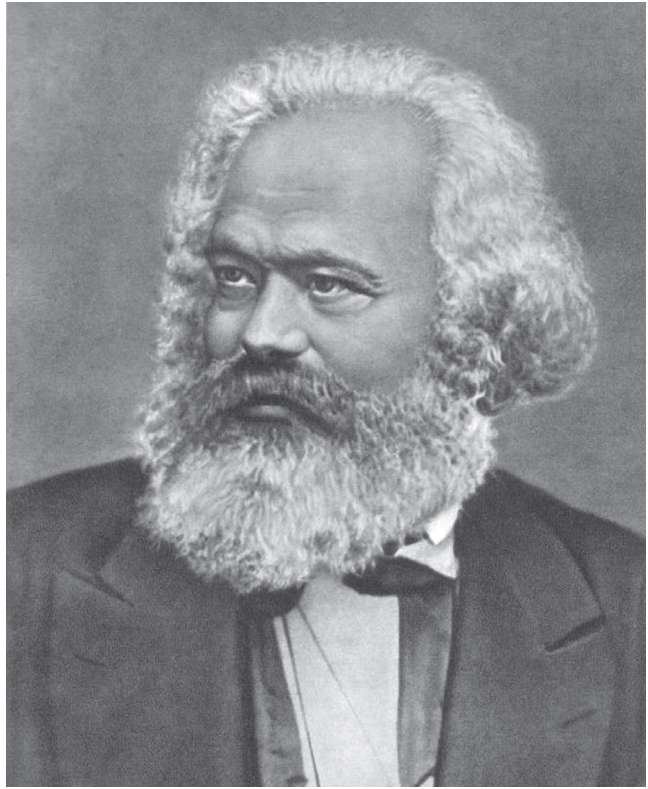
Marx taught that all changes in history arise from the revolt between two groups of people who are economically opposed. Marx expressed as his opinion that the workers and the capitalists are two powers opposed to each other, that the revolt between them is inevitable and as a result of that revolt, a third system irrespective of capitalist or worker, that is, a situation of equality and beauty would emerge and that is Communism. That is why Communism is called dialectical materialism.

### **The Dialectical Materialism of Marx**

Under the influence of Hegel, Marx who embraced the vision of dialecticism, having demolished totally the Absolute Spirit -the spiritual reality which Hegel extols and installs in its place man and the material reality. Man and nature, which he has inherited as his common capital, and the work, which unites him with nature and all the products that are obtained as a result of the relationship of man with nature through work, are changed into the central points of the economic theory of Marx.

Man lives in relationship with nature and other people through work. Thus the community is formed. Likewise, in the process of Marxian

rationalism, it is neither the Absolute Reality nor anything else, but man who is the one who makes history. Marx, who observes history, says in his book 'Communist Manifesto': "What world history is the history of Class-war".



*Karl Marx*

Marx expresses as his opinion, on the basis of the sum total of the mutual relationship of the labourers relating to production, that the history of man passes through the various phases such as ancient communism, the system of slavery, Feudalism, Capitalism and Socialism. In the view point of Karl Marx, who lived under the system of capitalism, each worker becomes victim for fundamental exclusion. Worker is excluded from his own work. Through the selling of goods, the capitalist gets an amount that is much more than what the capitalist has spent for the production of these goods. It is the efforts of the worker that is the source of this gain. The capitalist earns extra wealth from the fruits of the efforts of the workers. The worker is to be satisfied with a low salary. Thus the group of workers is exploited and the capitalists earn enormous wealth. The high and low positions of this economic policy of the social system gave fuel to the communist views of Karl Marx.

### **Common Wealth and the Worldly Paradise**

It is under the circumstance of the selfishness of the minority that became the reason for exploiting the big majority that Karl Marx and his companions put forward the ideas that are helpful for the creation of a new economic-social and political system. Marx opined that it is the private

property that is the basic sin. Marx believed that the source of all social evils is personal wealth. It is this view that he had in the beginning which led towards his later ideas. Thus, 'all for all', the ideal maternity conceived and gave birth to Communism.

The hallmark of the Communist Ideology is the abolition of the private property and to bring about economic equality. For this the means which Marx found out was to overthrow the bourgeoisie, which is the exploiting group in the Capitalistic System. Hence, the first program of Communism was to bring the private property under the control of the State. For that, the workers should organize themselves and make their own the power through revolution and should bring private property under the control of the State. Marx is not bothered, even if this revolution were to end in aggression or slaughter.

### **The Despotism of the Proletariat – Socialism**

The Communist Paradise, which Marx envisaged is not that which originates at the moment of the downfall of the capitalists. In between revolution and communism an interim structure is inevitable. This is socialism. The peculiarity of this structure, politically, is the dictatorship of the proletariat – the nation continues in the social system as a governing sector and a source of unity. But, the workers possess the power through revolution. Marx qualifies this as 'democracy of the proletariat'.

But what Marx prophesied was the communist system, which is the fullness of humanization. The socialistic government, which is led by the proletariat, is the preceding state of communism, the paradise. After that, this socialist government gradually becomes nil and the communist paradise will naturally come into existence. In this view, socialism gradually gives way to communism. The nation thereafter will not exist as a government.

### **Communism**

Communism is the earthly paradise, which Marx contemplated. In this system public ownership prevails. In this, there is no place for private property or class difference. Here, there is no capitalist or proletariat, there is no rich or poor. Production is only for use and not for profit. It is the common distribution of resources that prevails here. "For all according to their need and from all according to their ability", on which this social

situation is based, no one rules over the other. The specialty of communism is the united effort that is helpful to the common good, without considering the private profit of the individuals. The communist paradise which Marx imagined is the social system where all live in equality.

### **The Failure of Communism**

The Communist Movement that grew up fast in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Cent., that multi-storied building collapsed beyond the calculation of everyone by the end of the same century. The greatest historical event of the 20<sup>th</sup> Cent., is the growth and collapse of the Communist Movement. The communist governments of the countries of Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Albania, Soviet Union and Yugoslavia collapsed against the storm of the popular advancement of agitation. In China, the capitalist communism is being experimented. The people of this country are engaged in wiping out the communist doctrines and its signs which thrust excitement to hundreds of thousands of people. In these countries it is not the change of government, but the rejection of the idea of communism, that took place. Why did communism collapse?. It is not from the attack of the capitalistic system from outside; on the other hand, it is through the popular advancement, which brought an end to the persecutions and slavery that the people of the communist countries were experiencing since many years, and began to breathe fresh air.

Firstly, the ideology of communism in its idea was defective and full of mistakes. Secondly, the history testifies that the theory of communism was in practice, an utter failure. The ordeals and the exploitations, which the workers experienced, awakened in Marx a kind of mental agitation. On account of that he was unable to see many fundamental truths. The love and sympathy towards the workers caused to grow hatred and disgust towards the capitalists. Marx and his followers had the only desire to set free the workers from exploitation, even through any kind of injustice. In this thrust of emotions, they could not think about the human and moral values which should be the foundation stone for creating the dream-paradise of the workers. The theory of class-war, the atheistic thinking, the view-point that the end justifies the means, the annihilation of human freedom, the demand of the right to private property, and the dream of communism, the paradise, which makes every one equal, all these under the foundation of some imagination, which are faulty and filled with

mistakes, were like the building, built on loose sand. Thus, the building, built on sand collapsed when the storm and rain arrived. In short, Marx failed in idea and practice.

### **Marx failed in understanding man**

Marx explained, having given to man the position of God, and that man is the ultimate reality and that there is nothing beyond this material world and that there is in man no reality that is divine or spiritual and that man is only a material reality and that all problems of men are related to wealth. We can see that the limitless faith in man keeps apart Marx from the world of reality. Marx failed to enter into the inner chambers of man and to understand the secrets that remain hidden there. The human nature is well dressed and passes away having cheated Marx. He did not find the disfigured figure under disguise. Marx, who considered that the reason for all problems in man and in community is only the economic inequality and that by achieving economic equality all fundamental problems of man will be solved, has committed a mistake. Through the communist reign in Russia and in other communist countries for about a period of 70 years, not only that any of the fundamental problems of man has not been solved, but more sufferings, miseries, lack of freedom and persecutions were there in these countries than before they came under communist rule.

There was nothing in the thinking of Marx to reform the animal characters in man, such as eating, resting, attacking and having sexual relationships and the inclination of man's mind towards evil. The fundamental reason for the failure of Marxism is the degrading of the human individual, having spiritual, mental, emotional, social and intellectual levels, as a mere worldly reality and having interpreted him from the economic view-point alone.

Marx could not understand that the remedy for all problems of human society should happen through the change of the human mind, and thus when the individual is emancipated from evil, the society and the nation will grow towards goodness and hence the revolution should start against the evil of the human mind. On the other hand, Marx tried only to change the circumstances and to create the economic equality through revolution. But history proves that the earthly paradise of Marx will not take shape through suppression and gun.

## **The Theory of Class-war as Unscientific and Defective**

Marx declared that for the salvation of the working class, they should organize themselves and the over all leadership, which they achieve through fighting against the capitalists is needed to form a socialistic community and for that any means including persecution and slaughter is inevitable and that this is a scientific truth. Marx taught that the capitalist and proletariat are two powers diametrically opposed to each other and the third system impartial and beautiful, which arises from the revolt between them, is communism. Thus effort started to organize revolution all over the world. The communist revolution gave public performance in Russia in the year 1917. Communist principles were imposed on Eastern Europe. By this time, crores of people were made victims to persecution and gun. The Figaro publication (a French news paper) certified in 1979 that within the years from 1917-1978, the total number of people who were killed through starvation and shooting by the communist governments of the various countries is 15 crores.

Marx cut down the human race into two groups, the capitalist and proletariat – the oppressed and the exploited. He invited people for taking up the sword, having abandoned the thirst of the human mind for the warm fraternal relationships and having thrust class-hatred into their nerves. Marxian flow of thoughts emerged in the hands of the politicians as ideologies and revolutionary schemes. Justice and love were separated forever. Class-hatred burned vehemently. Violence begets violence, hatred begets hatred, and rivalry leads to maximum rivalry. Marx could not understand this ordinary principle. The way of class-war, in order to create socialistic communities, is not founded on the truth, which rationalism and human history teach. Having promoted disgust and hatred for conducting class-war, there is abandonment of the human being. The fundamental values of the community life, such as love, freedom and justice go hand in hand here. It is but natural that the state of affairs opens the way towards dictatorship and subjugation that is inhuman and cruel. If you accept the doctrine of class-war, the worker will try to destroy the capitalist and the capitalist will try to destroy the worker and there will be hatred and strife between socialism, having supremacy of workers and capitalists having their own supremacy. The world has already understood that if both the groups fight aiming against each other, the missiles of

atomic weapons will destroy the communist paradise of the workers on earth as well as the heaven of the capitalist on earth will perish and become nil. Hence the world has understood that the class-war is a faulty viewpoint and that through that it is not possible to create either lasting peace or paradise in the world. In short, the doctrine of historical materialism, the doctrine of dialectical materialism and the class-war are faulty and unscientific.

### **The Denial of Ownership of the Private Property**

Sri Buddha, who sought the fundamental reason of the sorrow of man: "The fundamental reason of every grief is covetousness". Hence he advised to get freed from desire. To amass wealth for oneself, to appropriate those whom one likes, and to exercise power over every one, all these covetousnesses are the fundamental desires of all men. The reason for the grief of the workers Marx found out in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was the desire to amass private property. The interest of the capitalist to own more private property prompted him to exploit the worker and to make him work overtime at a low salary. Hence Marx taught that the private property is the basic sin and that the private property is the chief reason for all exploitation and that private property is the wealth that has been stolen from the wealth of the society. Thus the abolition of the private property through destroying private property through nationalizing and bringing the wealth under the control of the governments became the basic principle of Marx. Marx taught that in order to abolish private property any means could be made use of.

The amassing of the private property is the reason for all evils of the society and hence the right for private property is denied. That will be the remedy for all problems. History itself proved that this theory of Marx is wrong in the political, economic and rationalistic analysis and that it is impractical and unscientific. In order to bring private property under the government control, it was necessary to use force, violence and murder. Since the right to possess private property is lost to the people, the interest towards work or profession was lessened, product was reduced. People became lazy. They lost the desire for working

Solely for the good of the country, taking of intoxicating drinks became strong. In this circumstance, the people were forced to work under the leadership of the army. Since the production was reduced, when the need arose for importing even wheat from the capitalistic countries, the

communist countries realized the impropriety and defect in denying the fundamental desire of man for the fascination for amassing private property.

The thinking of Marx, that the longing of the individual for amassing private property, is that which leads towards exploitation, is basically right. But to control the great fascination of man for private property, his mind is to be specially prepared. Only an ascetic could achieve this view perfectly. Asceticism is the liberation from personal self-fascination. The vows of celibacy, poverty, obedience are the denial of private fascination. Celibacy is the denial of all bodily pleasures and celibacy is a true and genuine commitment to God. Poverty is the denial of the desire to earn private property. Obedience is to prepare the mind to be under the power of others than to own power for oneself. It is the spiritual values that prompt a sanyasi to accept these three vows.

But a spiritual value which prompts man abandoning private property was absent in Marxism. The means which Marxism used for the common good of the society and for forming the consciousness of renunciation to create a society without exploitation was that of tormenting with whip, gun and brain washing. What Marx tried was instead of annihilating the fascination that is in the mind of man for private property, and sealing them with the title bourgeoisie, making them victims for sacrifice and taking away by force the private property from those who possessed them. In short, what the history of the communist countries teaches is that the idea of Marx for annihilating the fascination of men for private property through power was a failure.

### **Atheism in Marxism**

In his young age itself Marx was attracted in the thoughts of atheism. Against the thought of Hegel that the Absolute is the only truth, the thought of Feuerbach that man alone is the only truth, influenced Marx. The thinking of Marx is that there is nothing beyond the material world and hence there is no place for God, religion or soul and that mere man is the only reality.

God and religion are but the creation of the capitalistic system. God and religion are the effective tools in the hand of the capitalists in order to exploit the proletariat. As long as there exists religion, man is unable to go against the planning of exploitation. The religious faithful is one who has



lost consciousness and power of reacting. Religion destroys man's power of thinking. Religion causes the leaking of the power of fighting against injustice.

Suffering and tribulation will not be in vain. We will have reward in heaven for all that. Hence religion advises us to bear patiently. Thus without being able to react, religion leads man towards some kind of illusory intoxication that Marx says: "Religion is the opium that intoxicates man". The teaching of Marx is that religion ruins man's heroism, that is, to the man who is denied the comforts of this world, giving him the illusion of the other worldly comfort. The aim of Marx was to openly point out the emptiness of religion to take up sword against the exploitation of the capitalists. Marx said: "I hate all gods, Zeus, God, the Absolute Spirit, all these faulty idols who grasped the throne, which deserves to man. Hence what we have to destroy first are not the churches that exist outside and their priests who make ceremonial offerings, but the church and priest which dwell within him. Anything humanitarian is not alien to me". This is the watch word of Marx. Hence Marxism is basically materialism, atheism. The fundamental aim of Marxism is to wipe away God, the Church and its priests from the hearts of man and from the community.

In the early ages of communism, Lenin and his followers made the propagation against religion very strongly in Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. But Stalin took all sorts of persecution to wipe out religion. Churches and monasteries were demolished. The public demonstration of religion was forbidden. Lots of priests were imprisoned and massacred. Even though they tried to wipe away religion and God for about 70 years in Russia and Eastern Europe using all kinds of means, not only that they failed to annihilate religion and God from these countries, but in fact, faith in God has become stronger there. What gave hope to the faithful during communist persecutions was their prayers which they conducted in their secret places of refuge. At the end when communism was destroyed in Russia, Gorbachev confessed the wrongs that were done against religion and the religious faithful saying: "We honor the religious values". In short, the thought of their stand-point that spirituality is mere superstition was wrong, and this idea became strong in communist encampments. The thought that religion would die in the scientific growth of communism slipped away. Persecution did not debilitate faith in religion, but that has

only promoted it. Strong faith in God prevailed in communist countries than in capitalistic countries. This experience has helped to change the policy of communism towards religion.

Communism understands God and religion as vices to be wiped out through fighting. In the vision of Marx, man is only a material being. Marx could not realize the spiritual presence in man. He saw man as merely a materialistic reality. It is here that Marx was mistaken. Man is not only a materialistic reality, but he is one having the image of God and the divine will (Gen 1: 26-27). The communist tactics of liberating man through denial of God was completely defeated. When communism severed apart God and man, soul and body, individual and community, spirituality and materialism, heaven and earth, what the religion tried was, to keep them united with each other.

The human vision that is rooted in materialism alone is mere emptiness. The materialistic progress which has no spiritual foundation will not make man reach anywhere. The communist doctrine that confines man in materialism is totally wrong. Marx could not realize that worldly things alone are not enough for the perfection of human consciousness. Jesus said: "One does not live by bread alone" (Mt. 4:4). Marx could not imbibe through evaluating religions through the economic view points alone without heeding to the eternal truths and profound internal views which religions held up traditionally. From the beginning of the human history itself, there was in the mind of man the conviction of the existence of a divine power. There was a steady growth of this understanding of God in course of time. Never in the history of man, was the reality of God completely denied. In short, it is a reality that the thought about God is continuously existing from the beginning of human history up to now. When we deny God, we are losing the source of moral values forever. "Why should I be good?". This saying of Jayaprakah Narayan is meaningful. There were no criteria of morality and spirituality in the philosophy of Marx. Hence Marxism is basically atheistic. Any approach of compromising with that is not suitable to the faithful. Hence, real communism and faith in God do not go hand in hand.

### **The End justifies the Means is a defective View Point**

The sympathy which Marx felt towards the proletariat and the oppressed, urged Marx to take up arms against the capitalists and the

oppressors. For that the principle, which communism has accepted is "The end justifies the means". In order to realize the attractive aim of the classless communist paradise, having emancipated the workers, who were subjected to exploitation, any means could be made available, such as persecution, imprisonment or slaughtering could be accepted. This approach of the communists led towards the slaughtering of millions of people and the denial of freedom and persecution. Marxism, which began in order to stop oppression, itself let loose oppression. In order to stop persecution, they themselves persecuted. In order to stop slavery, they made others slaves. In short, through the faulty principle, 'the end justifies the means'; communism had to answer for the life of millions of people. The historic lesson that, just as the end, the means also should be just, and that only just means will lead towards a just end, was lost to Marx.

### **The Freedom of Man is denied**

In the communist vision, society is more important than the individual. The individual should be prepared to suffer for the sake of the society and if necessary he should be ready to make self-sacrifice. This supposition is very glorious. We have many great men, who have sacrificed their life for the society; such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King, St. Colbe etc. The path of self-sacrifice, which they travelled, is indeed noble.

But, one should not be sacrificed forcibly for the society. Each individual has the fundamental and undeniable right and freedom. That should not be denied in any way. If some people were to be sacrificed for the communist paradise, that should not be taken seriously. This is the practical principle of Marx. That is why freedom of religions and that of the individual are denied in communist countries. Marx who gave to men the importance of God, and who introduced man as the absolute reality, saying that man is more important than



God and it is an irony that he had to deny the dignity of human individuality, freedom and his fundamental rights. Thus communism has lost human face. It is on this basis that communism was rejected.

### **The approach of the Church towards Communism**

The paradise, which communism imagines, is classless, bereft of exploitation and the social life, with full equality and beauty. This basic desire of Marx is indeed glorious. But, the Church does not agree with the philosophy, which Marx introduced in order to reach the dream of the earthly communist paradise. For, the deduction of the Church is that the philosophy of communism is wrong in idea and practice. It is the clear concept of the Church that materialism, atheism, class-war, the denial of private property, the denial of human freedom and the principle that the end justifies the means; all these are defective and wrong conceptions. The communist history testified that these are wrong in idea and practice. The communist rule in Soviet Union and Eastern Europe for over 70 years has failed, is a truth before our eyes. Since the faulty and defective idealism has mistaken in its idea and practice, the misery that it has bestowed to humanity is inexcusable. Hence it is not possible to the Church to accept communism in its original meaning.

The Church has no hesitation to accept a communist philosophy that accepts the spirituality in man, that accepts the existence of God, that accepts the individual freedom of man, that accepts the sanctification of the end and its means and that accepts private property as the fundamental human right. The revolt or revolution against evil exploitation should begin in the mind of each individual. Therefore Jesus said: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near, repent and believe in the Good news" (Mk.1:15). The one who accepts God, who accepts the sovereignty of God, and who accepts the love of God and fraternal love in the same way, is the member of the kingdom of God. There exists the Gospel values of love, justice, mercy and truth. Here there is no place for exploitation, injustice or persecution. The means Jesus suggested for the establishment of the kingdom of God is that, one should avoid the evil that is in him through repentance and to believe in the Gospel- values. That is, through repentance, one should avoid the ways of evil, injustice and exploitation and instead, one should walk through the way of love, justice, truth and mercy. Hence according to the Christian vision, true revolution should take

place within oneself. One should destroy the evil that is within oneself. Then each individual and community will improve. In short, in order to curb the fascination of wealth of the capitalist that exploits, he should engender repentance over the evil he has. The Church puts forward the ways for that. In the same way, in order to control the excessive greed for profit of the capitalist, the Church proposes that the ruling governments should make laws based on human justice. Similarly, in order to protect the workers, who have been victims for exploitation, the stand- point of the Church is that the government should make rules in the system of democracy. But the Church does not approve the communist system of establishing the communist paradise on earth through annihilating all evil and individuals who does evil through using any kind of means.

### Topic for discussion

*Discuss about the reasons why the Church condemns the idealism of Communism.*



# The Intoxication that destroys



There is a saying about the ostrich, which is seen in the desert and in the museum. That is, this bird, after having ran a long distance, when it is tired, it will lie down burying its head in the sand. For the bird imagines that one's its head is buried in sand, it could not be found out by any one. The same could be said about those who are intoxicated; especially about those who are of the age-group of youth and those advanced in age. Intoxication is a refuge where those who are afraid to confront with the realities in life face to face, hide their head. Realities of life, such as study, crises confronted on the ways of life, the obligations of the elderly people toward their family and society etc., instead of trying to fulfill their obligations bravely, if they succumb to intoxication, they wouldn't need to do anything more. But the grief, difficulty and the worry, of those who yield to intoxication and those who live depend upon him, are great. Through the use of intoxicants one equally destroys one's own humaneness, body and the divine presence in him. The point under discussion in this chapter is intoxication which destroys man entirely as well as the divine wealth that is in him.

Today human society looks at the intoxicants with indifference. A group of people has turned intoxicants as inevitable part of the modern life. The

intoxicant, the devastating power, which makes the frantic and ecstatic dance of Siva, is today an extreme delight and weakness to crores of people. Among the younger generation, it grows as a fashion and an excitement. The culture of getting intoxicated, without being able to render genuine joy and peace in the daily life, gives but momentary consolation has become a curse to the society.

Intoxicant is a big danger that pushes man to the deep waters. The use of the intoxicants becomes cause for disease, dangers and even death. Those who become slaves to the intoxicants are like the winged termites who seek the comforts of burning fire. Many fall down unconscious in the hypnotic power of intoxication. Many have burned their wings and fallen down throbbing; still others are stepping toward untimely death. Still, man likes even today to ruin himself being laid in the slavery of the evil intoxication. This vice destroys individuals and families, ruins love-relationships and moral values and creates in the society irregularities and chaotic circumstances. The reason for looking at intoxicants with indifference is that we don't recognize with discretion the evil problems they produce. The aim of this chapter is to create a detachment from smoking, narcotics, panmasalas, and intoxicating drinks from childhood onwards and to conscientize the younger generation to recognize the destroying culture that is related to the afore-mentioned intoxicants.

## **1. Intoxicants, the source of Addiction**

Addiction is the strong interest or a special kind of affection towards something. The one who becomes slave to addiction shows special interest to things bodily and mentally and the lack of those things will push that individual towards mental bewilderment or dilemma. If an individual becomes a slave to addiction in matters of intoxication, the urge to use them again and again becomes very strong. An individual who lives in addiction will build up a bodily and mental dependence toward intoxicants and he will always experience an immoderate fascination toward these things. The need of the intoxicants becomes necessary even for the fulfillment of his daily affairs.

The one who uses intoxicants habitually will be urged to increase the measure of the intoxicants daily through addiction. The thought that one does not get sufficient intoxication and satisfaction that urges one to

increase their dosage daily. As a result of this, the one who used intoxicants in the beginning once a day only, increases it two or three times daily and through increasing the measure daily, one gets an inordinate attachment towards the intoxicants and at the end, that individual becomes a perfect slave to intoxication.

All intoxicants do not create the same kind of urge in man. Narcotics enslave man more speedily than intoxicating drinks. Narcotics like the brown sugar, once it is used, its instigation to continue will be much more. This urge, which is unyielding and intoxicating, obstructs one's individual and social life. When the intoxicants become inevitable in the life of a man, one wouldn't be able to cover even a day without them. When they are unavailable their addicts show bodily and mental uneasiness and tensions. In the absence of these things, the ordinary activities of his body and mind become impossible. When it is not possible to use intoxicants at the proper time, the difficulty one experiences is called the withdrawal symptoms. The reason for these agitations is the reaction of the body when the measure of intoxication reduces in the blood. The signs such as mental agitation, head ache, shivering, nausea, vomiting, blood pressure, breathing speedily, weariness, lack of concentration of mind, sleeplessness, muscle pains, all these are signs of withdrawal symptoms. These signs indicate that an individual has become a perfect slave of the intoxicants. These people are choosing for themselves the way towards death.

## **2. Panmasala**

The society is aware that drinking of alcohol and the use of narcotics are harmful. There is an understanding about smoking too, especially that causes cancer. But about panmasala such an understanding is not yet arrived at. Panmasalas are considered to be used for chewing. Hence they are considered as mouth-refresher and through constant use, become a habit. Mingled with the tasty and smelling ingredients of ordinary refreshers the big companies make panmasala available in the market. Once it is begun to use, it is on par with the status of narcotics which subdue man. It is with great haste that the consumers of this are attracted and subdued to its attachment. Intoxicants are mixed with panmasala in great measure. That is why once its use is begun, that it becomes a habit which cannot be avoided. Many begin to chew panmasala just for fun. But after a few days it becomes a part of them which cannot be left out.



Panmasala is easily made available in the markets. The mixture kept within packets is rubbed in the palm and are placed under lips or under the tongue. Its intoxication spreads soon in the body through saliva. If there is any wound in the mouth, its parts will enter into the blood and will soon intoxicate the person. The longer these are kept in the mouth, the larger its harm increased. Poisonous things like arsenic and hydrocarbons are included in pasmasalas. They lead one to fatal diseases.



Their over-dose is the chief reason for cancer in the mouth. The mouth cancer which is seen in an Indian is in the first place. There are about 400 brands of panmasala, such as panparag, the sweet basil, samblaviry, paspas, ganesh, F.I.R, super hit etc. When they are examined in laboratories, it is found out that they contain very many chemicals: nickel, cadmium, lead, bad aracnut that is roasted in the oil of ganja, the powdered sleeping pill, gasier, D.D.T., B.H.C., and powdered glass. On account of the use of these, boils in the shape of coli-flower and white scars, the fore-runner of cancer, are seen in the mouth.

We could easily recognize those who have made the use of panmasala a habit. Sleeplessness will annoy them. Also the following signs will be seen in them: tainted teeth, hollow eyes, and cheeks without flushing, always with an agitated mind, careless dressing, spitting out frequently and quick-temperedness.

### **3. Narcotics**

The abuse of narcotics has grown as a social problem in developed as well as undeveloped countries. The availability of narcotics as a by-product of globalization has grown immensely in markets. Those who are slaves to narcotics, slip and fall down into mental health-problems, perversities of

character, fatal diseases and suicides. The life of those who use excessive narcotics will be in loneliness, sadness and in mental conflicts.



Youth is a period of time, which is very dangerous. They will maintain a curiosity for knowing and examining everything. Investigations have

pointed out that 30% of the young people are under the slavery of narcotics. Many have been enslaved due to excessive use of narcotics. Besides, the younger generation looks at this as a means to lessen the mental conflicts and as a medicine which gives momentary happiness. Also there is great possibility for those who are slaves to narcotics to become mental patients through hallucination and being caught in economic difficulties, to enter into criminal activities.

The reasons are many for becoming slaves to the narcotics, which slowly eats the body and mind of man. The following are the main reasons that encourage man to use narcotics and later on to make it a habit: the ruined families and family relationships, the alienation from family, the urban life, the loneliness, the relationship with those who live immorally, the amassing of excessive wealth, the style of modern living and the excessive influence of the media.

#### **There are different kinds of Narcotics**

They are mainly opium, morphine, brown sugar, kodin gardinal, luminal, Valyam, Librium, Cocaine, Amphitamars, Pethodin, L.S.D., Gancha, Marijuana, Charass and Hashish.

#### **4. Liquor**

From time beyond history intoxicating things were known in the name 'soma rasam' (sura). 'Manusmuthi' had declared liquor to be forbidden.

Buddhist regulation had prohibited liquor. In the 4<sup>th</sup> Cent., Kaudillian had made strict statutes for the making and marketing of liquor. In the five instructions of the Buddhist mendicants, one is the untouchability of liquor. In the year 1527, Beber or Baber took the final decision of the avoidance of liquor. Fryer,



the European traveler of the middle ages had written that the Indians live longer than those Europeans, who came over here, because of their habit of the denial of liquor.

In the later ages, liquor got the imaginary honour in society as it is the beverage of the European authorities. It is they who having imported liquor, gave universal publicity and made it a commercial article. The later history tells that its easy availability that increased the dosage of the use of liquor. The reason of this detailed history is to remind that the roots of the liquor-culture are very deep and that great anticipated-precautions are necessary to avoid the habit of drinking.

Liquor is a drink that transmits intoxication and enjoyment to man. The enjoyment of liquor and the number of its consumers are increasing day by day. Drinking that was considered to be forbidden earlier, has acquired the halo of nobility today in the society. Today, liquor is served in the community with the easiness of serving tea or coffee. Irrespective of age, the use of liquor in society is increasing universally. It is a dangerous inclination that not only those who are old and young, but even those who are of the age of boyhood and girlhood are turning towards liquor. The abuse of the intoxicant will certainly push man towards fatal danger and decadence.

In order to make the eye-lids more beautiful, a powder made from antimony sulphate, was told in the Arab language 'alcahal'. It is from this word, the term 'alcohol' originated. Chemically, liquor is a component of

carbon, hydrogen and oxygen. The chemical name of liquor is 'Ethyl Alcohol'. Since it contains poison, its use in excessive measure and continuously, creates danger in a human being.

Any kind of liquor is dangerous to the human body. Toddy, wine, whiskey, brandy, jinn, rum, alcohol; all these liquors are different in taste and color. According to the kind of liquor, the alcoholic content will be more or less. All these liquors are pictured as synonyms of poison. The reason is, their place is among poisonous things that weaken or stiffen the central system of neurology. The continuous and excessive drinking of liquor will affect the main limbs of the body harmfully.

In 1956, the World Health Organization (W H O) declared the fascination of liquor as a disease. In 1957, the American Psychiatric Association (A. P. A) confirmed it. The World Health Association defines the fascination for liquor thus: "If anyone's dependence of liquor, brings remarkable mental difficulties and obstructs mental health, interpersonal relationships and the easy fulfillment of the social and economic duties, such drunkards are the patients of the fascination of liquor. They are to be treated and cured".

The common society gives us different answers to the question: "Why a man drinks liquor"? The reasons for consuming liquor generally are the following: 'to shine before friends, to promote companionship, to enjoy the fun, to increase self-confidence, to remove one's guilt-feelings, to erase inferiority complex, to grant leave to grief, to appropriate attention through curiosity, to please friends, to honor the visitors and to get things done by people concerned etc. But it is very clear to us that these answers have no backing up. In fact, the things that lead one to the habit of drinking are certain instigating powers and circumstances. It is but natural that the members of the family, who are addict to liquor turn toward the same. The reason is that they get the occasion to know liquor closely. It is the nature of the human mind to have a fascination of overcoming what is prohibited. Since there is a prohibition for liquor, some feel a kind of special attraction towards it, try to overcome the same and at the end, turns towards the habit of drinking. Yet, another reason is, fascination of imitating others and the influence of the media. The advertisements about liquor, those who shine as heroes in intoxication and the literal writings that extol intoxication will lead the human mind towards the habit of drinking. The influence of friends, the encouragement given to drinking in society and

its availability are the factors that lead one to the habit of drinking. Besides, the mental conflicts, the personality defects, loneliness and the lack of love, all these perhaps may lead one towards the drinking habit.

There is a renowned proverb: "First, man consumes liquor, at the end the liquor consumes man". The meaning of this is that once you become slave to liquor, liberation from it will not be that easy. Liquor sows the seeds of disease and uneasiness in the body and mind of man. In the journey towards the path of destruction, the body of the drunkards declines daily, one loses the ability of the tongue to know taste, causes wounds in the stomach, swelling of the pancreas, paleness caused by the reducing of red corpuscles, cancer of the mouth, throat, food pipe, stomach, cardiomyopathy, which causes decay to the muscles of the heart, sexual disability and sleeplessness. Besides, the drinking habit paves the path for diseases such as asthma, tuberculosis, heart disease, diabetes etc. Excessive drinking affects most harmfully the lungs, brain, heart and kidneys. Liquor also causes mental disorder and the disease of sadness. Disease of doubt and despair are also the effects of drinking.

Liquor affects not only individuals, but also communities. The evils that liquor brings about are very many. Behind the evils of family strife, marriage liberation, attacks, homicide, suicide, poverty, incurring of loan, fatal diseases, deaths, breaking of homes, stealing, snatching of people, rape, road accidents and law suits; we could find the backing up of liquor, the Satan. The drunkard destroys the family, society and the love-relationships, forgets the obligations, duties, rules and goodness and above all makes friends and relatives sorrowful.

The fascination for intoxication is not merely a bodily and mental disease, but is a disease that torments the entire sphere of human life, namely the family and society. There are certain fundamental facts, which the drunkards should remember:

(1) The fascination towards intoxication is a disease and not its signs alone.

(2) The more one consumes liquor; the more its fascination is getting increased.

(3) Once one is a slave to intoxication, he will be its slave forever.

(4) Liquor is a fatal disease. Once you spoil your lungs through consuming liquor, you wouldn't be able to recover it.

(5) The fascination towards intoxication is a disease that needs medication. It could be controlled through medication. Yet, there is possibility to start it again.

## 5. Smoking

The threats which smoking materials raise to the humanity are tremendous. The smoking materials are qualified as 'the silent killer'. The reason is that according as each cigarette is being burnt, the life of the smoker also is burnt out. The number of those who die due to smoking is daily increasing. It is in under- developed countries more than in developed countries, that the smoking materials like cigarette, beedi, pipe, cigar etc, are used.

Investigations indicate that out of the whole world-population 1/3 of those who are above the age of 15 are smokers.

We should be aware about the diseases and other ill-effects that accrue through smoking. It has been found out that there are about 4000 chemicals which are harmful to the body in the smoke that rise up from the burning smoking materials. Out of this, nicotine, carbon monoxide and tar are the most important ones. Nicotine is one of the most poisonous things known till now. Death will certainly occur, if one consumes 60 m.g. of Nicotine at a time. Smokers escape death just because they smoke intermittently and because some of the nicotine is oxidized and is evicted through urine. Nicotine contracts the vein of the heart and the other parts of the body. Nicotine raises the blood pressure and deviates the rhythm of the heart-beat. When the measure of nicotine increases in the body, it causes nausea, vomiting, obstruction of breathing, lack of digestion and wounds in the intestines. The poisonous element – carbon monoxide, which is in the tobacco, mixes with the hemoglobin of blood and diminishes the ability to carry oxygen to the blood. The lack of pure air causes the state



of death of the bodily cells and muscles and as a result of which, health is declined and the individual is lead to death immediately. Tar, which is another important part of tobacco inflicts fatal disease to the trachea and obstructs the breathing of air. The strings that wipe away the dust particles from trachea is debilitated by tar and later on through the mixing up of tar and dust particles causes cancer.

Although smoking affects all limbs of the human body harmfully, it affects more the trachea. The disease that is commonly seen in the smokers is the tracheal cancer. One of the most important reasons of heart-disease is smoking. The possibility for heart attack in smokers is very high. Wound and cancer are made in the food pipe, stomach, small intestine, bladder and kidneys through smoking and becomes cause for asthma, tuberculosis, pneumonia and sterility through smoking.

The misery that other innocent people have to suffer on account of the smokers is very complicated. The smoker does harm not only towards his own body, but to the whole community. When one smokes, more smoke is spread in the atmosphere around him than the smoke that enters into oneself. When he exhales, the smoke that he breaths out and the smoke which mingles with the atmosphere, reaches the lungs of those who do not smoke. This is called 'passive smoking'. In the smoke which the smoker breaths out toward those who do not smoke, contains nicotine three times more than what he inhales. The passive smokers inhale from the smoke 50 times more carbon monoxide than the smoker himself. Little children, women, old people, nay even the baby in its mother's womb experience the bad effect of this evil. That is why smoking is prohibited in educational institutions, hospitals, cinema theaters, places of entertainments, public transportation vehicles, places where the public gather and public roads. 30 % of the lung cancer occurs through passive smoking. Asthma and the allergic diseases are seen more in the families of smokers. From this we could see how big is the misery that a smoker causes to others. From the cigarettes and beedies, that are thrown out carelessly, fire spreads out and even buildings, vehicles and factories are burnt to ash. This too is a social problem arising from smoking.

Even though the number of women who smoke is less than that of men, the use of intoxicants is considerably increasing now a day among women folk also. Young ladies who consider the use of intoxicants as fashion are

not less in number. These intoxicants become cause for easy going in a world without borders and seek new pastures. The excessive use of intoxicants in women will cause abortion, to give birth to children with deficiency of body and mind, to cause unexpected death among the newly born children, to have cancer in the womb and to cause undue menopause.

## **6. Do not pollute the Life of God**

We have understood that the use of cigarettes, besides panmasala, liquor and morphine, badly affect human body and the life of others. Each man is the sign of pouring out the immense love of God. God has created man, the crown of creation, in His own image and likeness. It is this vigor in him that differentiates him from animal. Man has the duty and obligation to nourish this divine spirit. But when man goes after his selfishness and momentary pleasures, he disfigures the divine life and consciously destroys his body, which is the gift of God. Man, abusing his own freedom and loses the presence of God within him. It is on the intoxicants that man depends to wipe away the presence of God in him. These intoxicants lead man to every kind of evil and having lost mental restriction, sobriety, moral attitudes, makes him equal to the animal. Man is called to grow towards God. It is a spiritual evil to destroy the body and to defile the soul through using intoxicants.

The use of the intoxicants is equal to suicide. Those who commit suicide destroy their life in a moment. Those who use intoxicants are destroying consciously their life gradually. We have no right to destroy life, which God has given gratuitously. One who destroys life oneself is committing a sin against God, the author of life. Whatever that is evil to oneself and others are sin. The use of the intoxicants is sin, since it becomes evil to the one who uses them and to the others. Liquor and narcotic incite in man the tendency of violence and induces him to do any crime. Here, man degrades himself below the animal level. Here, the words of St. Paul are meaningful. "But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells in me". It is a naked truth that the intoxicants will lead to sin and to the circumstances of sin. Hence, we must take a strong decision that we will never give a chance in our life for these intoxicants. Then only we will become the children of God, led by the spirit of God. (Rom. 8:14).

Those who continuously depend upon liquor will not be thinking and acting consciously. They lose the expectations of life and end their own



life. Anyone who has understood that we are the temple of the God-given Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19) will not destroy one's own life through consuming liquor. Instead of that he will consciously rely on God and offer himself to the presence of God.

Instead of trying to cure through treatment after having been enslaved to the intoxicants, it is better to foresee the danger and avoid the same. On account of the abuse of liquor, narcotics, smoking, panmasala etc., we have seen the painful losses that the family and the community have undergone and those some of us are still experiencing. This tragic life style of the elderly people should open the eyes of the children. We should make firm resolution never to become promoters of intoxicants. Then only we will be able to build up a new society, where there is peace and joy. The responsibility to lead the community is entrusted to us, children. Hence, we ought to prepare ourselves now itself to fight against the evils and raise voice against them. Instead of having been enslaved by intoxicants and without sobriety to destroy oneself and the family and society, we should turn ourselves as signs of goodness, love and peace. "You are children of the light, and children of the day; we are not of the night or darkness.....hence let us be sober..... for those who are drunk, get drunk at night....but since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation (1 Thess. 5:5-8). These words of St. Paul should become to us strength and inspiration.

Those who are in teenage meet their joy in bodily happiness and become slaves to the intoxicants, which inspire bodily pleasures. Bodily pleasures are momentary. They are like bubble in water. In order to get joy, we need to do only one thing, i.e., to earn God. He, who carries God in his heart and do everything according to the will of God will always, is happy. When the first parents were with God, their life was happy. When they lost the presence of God through sin, their life became filled with grief. It is the presence of God that makes one a perfect man. We should grow towards Christ, the fullness of the presence of God. We should see him as part of our life. then, you will be able to welcome Christ, who renders eternal joy, instead of going after intoxicants, which pours out only momentary pleasures. "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will become in themselves a spring of water

gushing up to eternal life” (Jn. 4:13-14). The one who grows towards Christ will not run after bodily pleasures. For, Christ did not give importance to bodily pleasures. He has shown us the example of pain, abandonment and sufferings. For the word testifies thus: “But, he was wounded for our transgressions and for ours sins he was crucified” (Is. 53:5). It is this mentality of Christ that should lead us. “Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same intention; for whoever has suffered in the flesh has finished with sin, so as to live for the rest of your life no longer by human desires but by the will of God. You have already spent enough time to do, living in licentiousness, passions, drunkenness and rivals....For this is the reason the gospel was proclaimed” (1 Pet.4:1-6).

We, who are children, could help those who are slaves to intoxicants and to make them get rid of them. We could give them the urge to stop consuming liquor and to give the instruction about the evil effects of the intoxicants. There are many centers in our country, where cure is given through medical treatment of the body and mind. We will gradually be able to lead those who are slaves to intoxicants to these centers, to make them take decision not to consume liquor any more and to inspire them that liquor is not an essential thing for human beings. Again, we will be able to bring the drunkards to freedom by giving them individual and common counseling against intoxication.

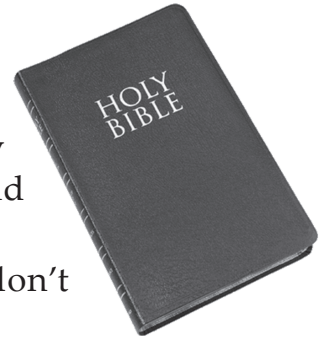
A union that receives and accepts again those who are temporarily liberated from liquor is ‘Alcoholic Anonymous’ (AA). This is a society that was established in America in 1935. This union which meets generally once a week in all centers of freeing from intoxicants, is very helpful to reinstate the temporarily liberated ones. Prayer, meditation and communion are very helpful to stabilize these temporarily liberated ones.

## **Noble Sayings against Liquor**

### **Bible**

- “The drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty” (Proverbs 23:21)
- “For, liquor will make misery, grief, quarrel and wounds without cause” (Pro. 23:29)
- “Your eyes will see strange things, and your mind utter perverse things” (Pro. 23:33)

- "Wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler" (Pro. 20:1).
- "Let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy" (Rom. 13:13).
- "If you see your brother as a drunkard don't associate with him" (1 Cor. 5:11).
- "For a steward of God should not be addicted to liquor" (1 Tit. 1:7).
- God told Aaron, "Drink no wine or strong drinks, neither you nor your sons. When you enter the tent of meeting that you may not die; it is a statute forever throughout your generations" (Leviticus 10:9).
- "Misery to you who are heroes in drinking wine and valiant at mixing drinks" (Is.5:22)
- "Wine is filled with deception" (Haba.2:5)
- "Be on the guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life and that day catch you unexpectedly" (Lk.21:34).
- "Don't get drunk with wine from that is debauchery" (Eph. 5:18).
- "The drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor.6:10)
- "There is intoxication and fascination for sensual pleasure in wine" (Rev. 18:13)

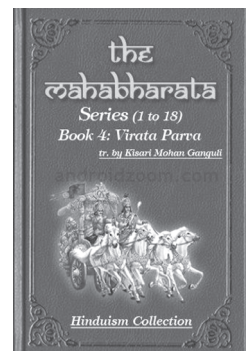


## The Epic, Mahabharata

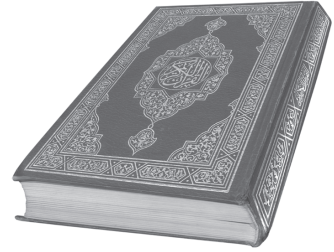
- 'The drinking of liquor is a sin equal to the killing of Brahman'.

## Currant: Islamic Scripture

- Liquor is the key of all sins. Liquor is the fatal thing that makes man an animal.
- There are great evils in liquor and gambling. ( 2:219)



- Liquor, gambling, erection and consecration of idols, omens are devilish filthiness. Hence you abstain from them in order that you may win. (5:90).



## Great Men

- If I were made the supreme authority of India for an hour, what I would do first will be to close down all liquor shops without giving any remuneration. (Gandhi)
- The tax for liquor is the wages for sin. (Gandhi)
- Liquor is poison, don't make it, drink it or give it to others (Sri Narayana Guru)
- Drinking of liquor is conscious suicide (Karl Meniger)
- Each time the consuming of liquor is same as committing temporary suicide (B.Russel)
- Liquor will make one happy. But that will never make one acceptable to others. (Samuel Johnson)
- O! Evil spirit that is hidden in liquor, if you don't have any other name, I shall call you Satan. (Shakespeare)
- The burial of the corpse is the after effect of liquor-culture (Sukumar Azhikkodu)
- Rum is good in its place, but its final reward is hell. (John Billings)
- Allah has cursed 10 classes of people. But liquor is cursed as it is: i.e., the drunkard, who makes others drink, who sell liquor, buy the same, who makes it, who helps to produce it, who carry it, to whom it is taken to, who make profit from it. (Mohammed Nabi).

## Topic for discussion

*Discuss the evil effects of liquor and propose instructions to help those who have become slaves to liquor.*



# Towards Hope



We learnt in the previous chapters the various ways of earning God and about the different circumstances and possibilities of losing Him. But in this chapter we consider that under any circumstance, if we have lost God, without despairing, we are able to regain God and without collapsing under the sufferings and problems of life, the inevitability to living, placing hope in God.

## **Hope and Despair in the Modern Man**

When we compare with the past age, we could say that the circumstances for the existence and development for hope are more in the modern age. We are able to find out day after day solution for the problems that confront us. The contributions of science and technical methods are wonderful. Today time and distance have shrunk within the reach of human hands. The growth in the economic, medical, scientific, technical and intellectual zones are enviable. Hence we are living in an age, which is suitable and hopeful for the basic expansion of the human individual and for the well-being of man as such in this worldly life.

But there is an alternate side for this. Just as it is an age of hope, it is as well an age of the lack of hope. In the measure in which the zones of hope

are increasing, dissatisfaction and as a result of which despair also are increasing. On the one side when we take pride in the economic and scientific progress, on the other side, a large group of the world population is still in poverty and ignorance. Even when we say that human freedom and democracy is strong, slavery, exploitation and dependence in new form and aspect are strong today. Though the global union is strong today, the circumstance for war and threat are not lacking. Though the progress of man in the basis of scientific and technical fields is wonderful, many have lost the consciousness of their aim because of not being able to promote their life-vision in proportion to the scientific progress. Another specialty of this age is the crisis that the moral values confront. Today decline has happened to the virtues such as justice, truth and fraternal charity. Corruption in political levels is today in its new state and form. Murder, violence and oppression of the women folk have increased today. Family relationships collapse instantly. Divorce is becoming common. More people succumb to disease on account of the specialty of the living circumstances. As in every age, death stands questioning all expectations before man like a question mark.

In short, the modern man is at the same time strong and weak. He is at the same time filled with hope and despair. The very worldly scientific achievements, which engender hope, have brought man to the verge of despair. In short, all welfare and prosperity of the modern world do not give man ultimate and entire satisfaction and hope. Every man desires immortality. We desire and expect light without darkness, life without death, truth without falsehood and virtue without vice. What we explain here is the Christian aspect of hope which leads forward man continuously.

### **The Disturbances of the Teenagers**

The things that disturb the boys and girls appropriating the specialties of the modern world are very many in their daily life. Whenever there arises some kind of difficulties or crises there are those touchy ones, who are unable to confront them. There are lots of people in our society who are in difficulty with regard to study, who take pleasure in being lazy, who see life without any interest, who are engaged in evil friendships, who suffer due to the urge of the parents in study matters, and who are in despair when they don't get what they hope for. There are those who are of the age-group of boyhood/girlhood, who are suffering from problems due to

excessive sleep, from family problems, who don't have anybody to talk with freely, who have the thought of not having anybody to love, who have the fascination for excessive use of television, who are slaves of the mobile phone, and who have unnecessary worries. In this age, there are many teenagers, who lost life being slaves to the ideologies of Marxism, who are slaves of liquor and intoxication, who are unable to complete studies being engaged in love-affairs, who have the guilt-feeling thinking that they are disregarded in the name of beauty, wealth and nobility of family, who are maimed and having diseases, who are entwined by wrongs and evils and who have lost the presence of God within them due to sin. It is under these circumstances, hope or the awaiting for, is inevitable.

### **The Importance of Hope**

In the journey of life, it is hope that prompts one to live in the right way. The hopes of the daily life go as follows: the hope to pass if one studies well, to get cured when one is sick, to win good friends, to secure a good job, that there is hope for building up a good future, and there is remedy for limitations and sufferings. It is this hope and waiting for, that enable us to live well. 'It is when one could wait with hoping or only when the taper of hope is burning in his heart, that one is living'. Thus says the Holy Father Benedict XVI. If one recognizes oneself through one's hope, the moral and spiritual status will be understood, depending upon how we wait for or hope for. The French poet Charles Pegui says: "The faith which I like most is hope".

### **What is Hope?**

Hope always indicates the future. It is a waiting for. The aim of this waiting for may be, the person whom we are going to meet, the thing that we are going to get or the status that is going to take shape in the future. The one, who hopes, desires that the aim should approach at the earliest. One will not have satisfaction without attaining the end. It is thought that the subject of hope will be realized that will prompt an individual for his waiting. The period of waiting is at the same time the occasion of non-satisfaction as well as satisfaction. When the aim is realized, satisfaction will ensue and when not realized, unsatisfaction. We call the reality 'goodness' that gives us satisfaction. Hence the possibility of the aim of hope should be goodness itself. In short, the awaiting for goodness is hope.

Since hope exists in relation to the future, for those who deny the importance of future, it is not possible for them to sustain hope. To the man who has lost hope, life becomes impossible. According to the Christian vision, the horizon of hope is very extensive. This indicates the ultimate future, which contains the entire future of human race and history. In short, the ultimate future or the



ultimate end is related to God. That is why St. Augustine prayed thus: "God, we are created for you; our soul will be disturbed until we merge in you". The ultimate aim is God. Hence God is the source of hope. Hope is waiting for God, who is goodness itself.

### **Hope which is the Divine Virtue**

Hope is one of the three divine virtues: Faith, Hope and Charity. The divine virtues are directly related to God. These prepare the Christians to live in relationship with the Holy Spirit. The source, aim and topic are the Triune God.

"The divine virtues put foundation to the moral activities of Christianity; take them more lively and noble. They give knowledge to all moral virtues and give them life. They are inspired in the soul of the faithful by God. They are meant to enable the faithful to act as children of God and to earn the worthiness for eternal life" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1813).

In whatever virtue we rely on, such as relying on the promises of Christ, on the help of divine grace of the Holy Spirit without relying on our own strength, that we desire the kingdom of God and eternal life as the state of our prosperity, that is hope, the divine virtue (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1817).

The virtue of hope responds to the ardent desire for the future, which God has placed in each man's heart. Hope includes the expectations, which urges the activities of men and protects man from down-fall. Whenever one is rejected, hope will support him and will cool down his heart in the



expectation of eternal bliss. The urge of hope will protect one from selfishness and will lead him towards prosperity.

## **Hope in the Bible**

The whole of the Old Testament history is an invitation towards hope. It is the promise of Yahweh that has become the foundation of the hope of the Israelites. It is as the God of promises that God calls Abraham from among a people who adored multitudinous gods and reveals Himself: "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation and I will bless you and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed" (Gen. 12: 1-3). The gist of the promise is that the progeny of Abraham will become a great generation and that he will give them lots of fortunes. This promise of God influenced their history. The assurance that God will be faithful to His promises amidst every crisis gave them hope. The very name of God itself is "One who is faithful". It is to Moses that this was revealed, when there were lots of sufferings and threats in the life of Abraham, the promise that Yahweh will be faithful in His promises, led Abraham forward continuously. Moses got the strength to liberate the people of Israel, who were slaves in Egypt, It is not the abundance of the number of the Israelites or their physical strength but the hope that God will liberate the Israelites.

The people of Israel, who were liberated from Egypt, made a pact with God. They were also ready to accept Yahweh alone as God and to obey His commandments. (Exod. 34:10-11). The rest of the history of Israel moved forward centered on promise, liberation and covenant. When Israel committed sin and got separated from God, they became slaves and lost their hope. On all these occasions the prophets gave them the assurance that God is faithful in His promises and therefore to live relying on God (Hose 2:17). The Israelites held the confidence that God will save them from every critical juncture that they confront with. The expectation and hope that the Savior or the Messiah will come to rescue the people of Israel, was universal. In short, it is the hope in Yahweh that led the people of Israel forward in their history of crises. "It is one who lives, who hopes, one who has lost hope is similar to the one who is dead" (Is.38:18). "The just man is filled with hope. The hope that is founded on God cannot but be realized" (Ps. 25:2; 28:7; 32:10).

The promise that God gave to Abraham, is fulfilled through Jesus, the Messiah of Nazareth. Thus, in the New Testament, hope got new depth and breadth. Jesus has proclaimed the kingdom of God, which is the fulfillment of the promise, and has invited all towards the same through repentance. (Mk. 1:14). St. Paul makes it clear that those who believe in Jesus are those who accepted the Spirit of God, and those who received the Spirit of God, are the members of the kingdom of God and the children of God: (Rom. 8:9; 8:14). St. Paul says that the kingdom of God is a reality which will be realized in the present time itself and that we could reach its perfect fulfillment only after death and that we should live in expectation until that time. Jesus Christ is the personification of the promises of God and every hope of man. In the fulfillment of time, all those who believe in Christ, will reach the kingdom of God or in the perfection of the kingdom of God. In this way, the Church, the people of God, is in the journey filled with expectations.

In short, Israel expected a life filled with satisfaction, believing in the promises of God. They thought that if they have a fruitful country and food materials, they would get satisfaction. But later on, they understood that the human desires couldn't be satisfied with worldly provisions alone. They placed their hopes in the following virtues: justice, freedom, love and equality. Thus, they became strong in political freedom, victory over enemies and patriotism. The people who experienced the better fruits of the political powers began to place hope in nobler things. The thought of evil disease, poverty, sufferings and weeping which enslave them will never cease, slowly grew in them. Thus, the worldly hopes came changing and the measure of hope developed and they were able to put their hope about the eternal life, which exists beyond this earthly life. This hope is realized in Jesus, who resurrected from death. The New Testament teaches that heaven or the kingdom of God, which Jesus preached, is the real region of Canaan, where honey and milk flow and that, it is the ultimate aim of the hope of man.

### **How could we earn Hope?**

We have understood that hope is one of the three Cardinal Divine Virtues and that the foundation and ultimate aim of hope is God. We see in daily life many, who having lost hope have to live in despair. We also understood the problems of those who are in the age-group of boyhood/

girlhood and their circumstances of their losing hope. In this background, what is the way to live in hope without being immersed in despair? How could we grow in the virtue of hope?

Since the virtue of hope is related to the divine virtues of faith and charity, the way to grow in hope is to grow in faith of God. The means to grow in faith is to grow in profound knowledge of God and in divine experience. The faith of an individual in God should grow as his individual and love-relationship with God. A child recognizes its parents as mother and father who gave birth to it, and believes so. This knowledge and faith of the child are not merely a matter that exists in the realm of its intellect alone. It is a conviction that the child achieves from its deep love-relationship toward its parents. In the hands of my mother and father, I am secure. This conviction of the child is the deep faith, which the child earns from its love-relationship. In short, it is only on the basis of a child's deep love-relationship towards its parents, that it is possible for the child to place its expectation and faith in its parents. Likewise, only when one could form a deep personal love-relationship towards God, one could place hope in God. A baby, in the hands of its mother embraces its mother when it is afraid of. That baby completely believes its mother; it places its complete trust in its mother. Hence, through the love-relationship with God, the deep faith which we own is that which leads us towards hope.

The deep faith he had in Yahweh gave Abraham hope and courage in all the crises and sufferings of his life. It is the strong faith that gave strength to the people of Israel to live continuously in hope. It is the sturdy faith in Christ that gave courage to the early Christians to stand in front of



martyrdom and persecutions. In accordance with the growth of the personal and love-relationship with God, our faith in God will increase and it will become hope and thus faith and hope will grow toward the love of God and love of our brethren. If there is deep faith and hope in God, a person will be able to go forward confronting the difficulties, sufferings and opposed circumstances in daily life.

Just as a child finds dependence in the parents, an individual could place his complete hope in God. The psalmist prays thus: "For God alone my soul waits in silence; for my hope is from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation" (Ps. 62:5-6). Jesus taught to place one's hope in God, being not exhausted in sufferings and problems of the daily life. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus clearly said: "Therefore do not worry. God who protects the birds of the air and the lilies of the field will protect you. Because you are of more value than they. Hence, "Do not worry saying: what will we eat or what will we drink? Or what will we wear? For, it is the Gentiles, who strive for all these things. But strive for the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well". (Mt. 6:31-33). Jesus gives us a great certainty that God will protect one who places his hope in God, having believed in Him. Cardinal Joseph Sunens has declared: "I am a man of hope neither due to any human reason nor faith that everything will end in prosperity. But because my Lord is always engaged in my life, my Church and in my world".

### **Hope, the Gift of the Holy Spirit**

Through Baptism, Confirmation (Anointing with Myron) and Holy Eucharist, the sacraments of initiation, each individual gets the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is this presence of the Holy Spirit that gives to every person the grace to grow in faith, hope and charity. Hence, in order to grow in hope, what we fundamentally need is the growth in the Holy Spirit. When a person grows in the Holy Spirit; faith, hope and charity will be strengthened in him. If a person loses the Holy Spirit through sin, faith, hope and charity will be lost to him. We have understood in the preliminary chapters, the means to increase the presence of the Holy Spirit are the three-fold means of the spirituality based on Bible, spirituality based on Liturgy and the spirituality based on Life Witness. Thus when an individual is able to grow in earning the Holy Spirit, and to grow in faith, hope and

charity, he will become a real Christian and will grow towards the image of Christ.

Since human nature is weak, there is possibility for losing the presence of the Holy Spirit and the virtues of faith, hope and charity. Jesus clearly teaches that such a person who has degraded himself to the status of an animal, there is possibility for him to regain the Holy Spirit and to grow in divine virtues and to live in hope, having resurrected from despair. The means, which Jesus teaches for regaining these, is the way of repentance and conversion. Jesus said: "The kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the Good news" (Mk. 1:15). The picture of God who takes pleasure in the return of the sinner or that of the one who has gone astray is very clear in the Gospel. The picture of the shepherd who, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, leaves the ninety nine in the wilderness, and goes after the one that is lost and when he has found it rejoices immensely" (Lk. 15: 3-7), the picture of the woman who having ten coins and loses one of them searches and when she finds it calls all and rejoices (Lk.15: 8-10), and the picture of the father, having two children and the prodigal one abandons home and later on repents and when he returns rejoices immensely (Lk.15: 11-32). All these show the face of God, who rejoices in the repentance and conversion of the sinner and in his return.

The Holy Scripture teaches us that the one, who goes away from God through sin, loses the Holy Spirit and hope, could regain the Holy Spirit through repentance and conversion and live in hope. In short, the Church clearly teaches that no one should morally sink into the state of an animal through losing the Holy Spirit and the presence of God and that if anyone has declined to that state, it is possible that one could confess one's sins in the sacrament of Penance and having reconciled with God could live as a man of God.

### **Hope in the Practical Life**

Hope leads us towards God, who loves and takes care of us. God leads us towards hope not through granting us instantly the joy and bliss that we desire for; but by granting love, care and life at ease in the turbulent state and amidst destruction like a lamp that will not be put out by a whirl wind. "We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28). Hope is to be

able to sit before God like a baby sitting safely in the lap of its mother, when it is undergoing severe temptation against hope. "Trust in him at all times, O! people, pour out your heart before him, God is a refuge for us" (Ps. 62:8).

An individual, having faith and hope, who- ever he may be, will never be plunged in despair. He will never surrender to worry. Form a good mind to live according to your knowledge. Build up good love-relationships. Beware that an irregular life is dangerous. Maintain a spirit of abandonment; don't miss opportunities to see, say and act the good always, do hard work ,avoid laziness, know and approve everyone and be happy in the goodness of others. Put bridle to the evil desires and control the emotions in a healthy manner. Above all, if we could grow in the Holy Spirit, danger and worry will never subjugate us. Thus we will be able to experience joy and peace and we will be able to convey them to others. In order to own this kind of life, each young man and woman has the obligation to strive honestly. Each one should undertake the challenge to form a shining personality and thus to give goodness, tranquility, peace and prosperity to the family, Church, society and to the country. Our spiritual and moral life should be on this basis.

It is not because of the fault of religion that evil, injustice, lack of peace, murder and persecution of women grow in the society. But, because man degrades himself to the level of animal by not living according to the precepts of religion and through losing the presence of God in him. Hence the true religious life will lead us towards the fullness of the Holy Spirit, goodness and hope. Victory and failure are very common in the life of man. Let us earnestly try to live continuously in hope, with the view that failures are the stepping stones towards victory in life. Let us arrange the daily life, understanding that the ultimate hope is to reach God, who creates and protects us, even after our death.

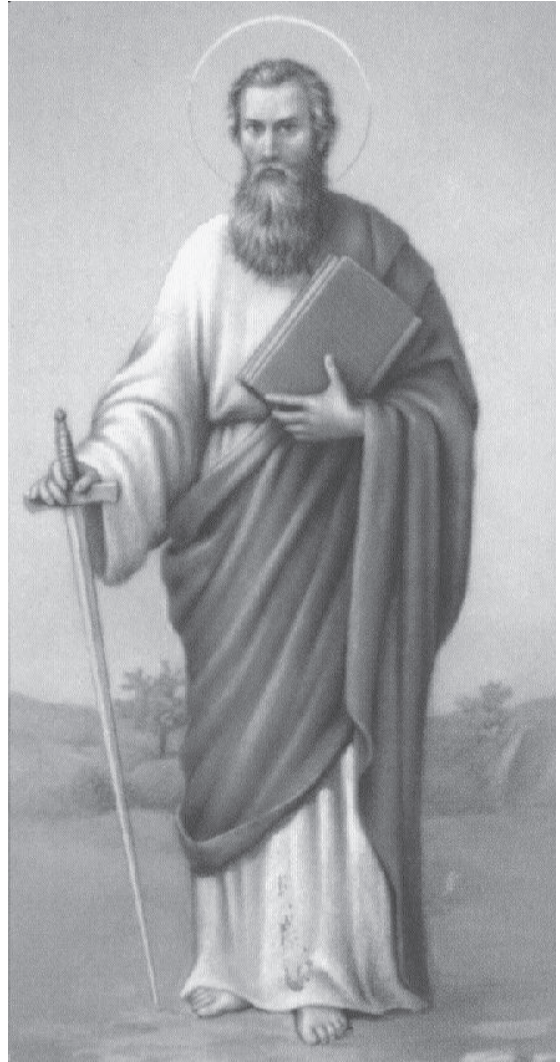
### **Topic for discussion**

*Discuss about the various means of growing in the divine virtue of hope.*



# St. Paul, the Example to Christians

We understand that man is created in the image and likeness of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Hence to live as another Christ aiming at Him and to be able to merge in Christ after our death is the aim of each Christian. The object of this chapter is to introduce a true Christian, who, having accepted the call of Jesus, followed Him to live as another Christ, having fully submitted his life for Christ. "It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). St. Paul who said this is the true Christian. Under the background of the completion of 2000 years after the birth of St. Paul, the universal Church had celebrated the year 2009 as the jubilee year of St. Paul. In the 2000 years of the history of the Church, St. Paul, the apostle, is the greatest gift God gave to the Church. If Jesus Christ is a mystery as true God and true man, St. Paul, as a man is a mystery in the level of a man and a Christian. St. Paul's love for Jesus and his dedication to Jesus are beyond comprehension of man's intellect and the analysis of an ordinary man. The aim of this chapter is to introduce St. Paul, the true Christian in few words.



## 1. Who is St. Paul?

St. Paul's father was a Jew, who migrated to Tarsus from Kilikkia of Palestine. Paul, known as Saul, was born in Tarsus in A.D. 9. Paul writes about him as follows: "Circumcised on the 8<sup>th</sup> day, a member of the people of Israel of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews, as to the Law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the Church, as to righteousness under the Law, blameless" (Philip. 3:5-6). Paul introduces himself as a Jew, having the sense of honor: "Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they descendants of Abraham? so am I. Are they the Israelites? so am I. (2 Cor. 11:22; Acts 22:3; 23:6). Paul says thus in the Epistle to the Galatians: "I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors" (Gal. 1:14)). In short, Paul took pride in being a real Jew and he did the religious matters of Judaism in very zealous manner.

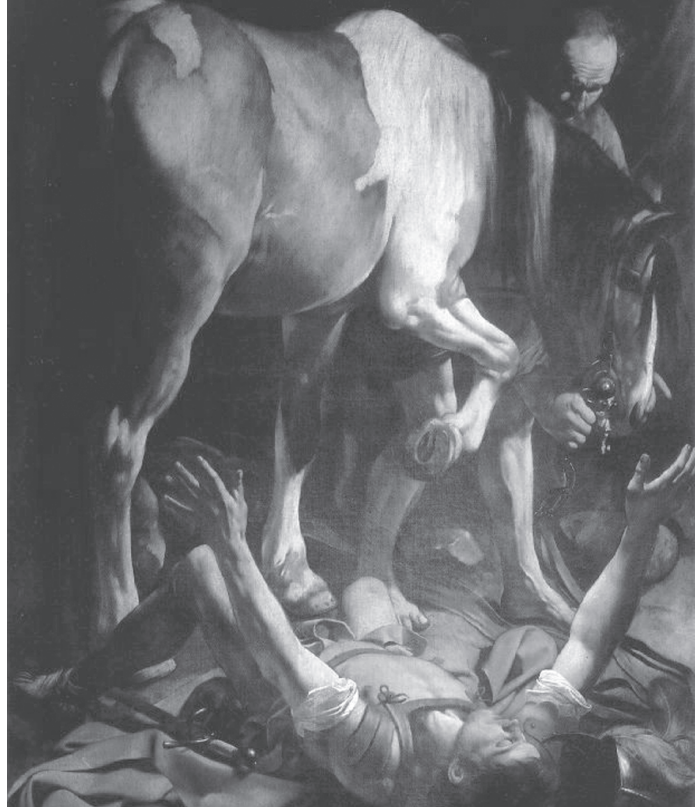
As all other Jewish boys, Paul too began his education at his very young age. He was raised to the dignity of 'Son of the Decalogue'. He learnt the Jewish Laws and the traditions of the Old Testament for 7 years under the guidance of the illustrious master Gamaliel in the school of Hillel in Jerusalem and acquired his higher education. Thus at the young age itself he became a Jewish Rabbi. In the respect of a Pharisee, who studied and obeyed the Law, he deserved the respect of many. Paul got the training that is helpful to acquire sanction of all the Jews of the world and the formation according to tradition. For the service which any Rabbi does as instructor, he was not permitted to receive any remuneration. Hence Paul earned his living through making tents. "We worked day and night so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the Gospel of God" (1. Thes.2:9). In short, Paul was a Hebrew born from a Hebrew, belonging to the clan of Benjamin and he was one who got higher education and was a Jewish Rabbi, one of the Pharisees, the pride of the Jews, acknowledged by all and that he had the Roman citizenship, that he was born and brought up in Tarsus, a harbor town, and had wide contact with foreigners and had acquired thorough knowledge in different languages.

## 2. The Damascus Incident

The number of Christians increased after the 'Pentecost' incident. In those days, Paul gave leadership to the persecution of Christians in



Jerusalem. Paul had specially cooperated in stoning to death, Stephen (Acts 8: 1-3). Paul had determined to wipe out Christians through whatever means. Paul, while going to Damascus, having credentials from the king to put in chain the Christians of Damascus and to bring them to Jerusalem, he had the vision of Christ and falling down from the horse became blind. He heard the sound: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" He asked "Who are you Lord?" The



reply came thus: "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9:5). Paul, who was blind for three days, was cured by Ananias, a disciple of Christ by placing his hands on Paul's head and Paul received baptism and became a Christian (Acts 9: 10-19).

What happened on the way to Damascus? Was it the conversion of Paul, or an exchange of party, or rejecting a leader and accepting another instead? Nothing of this happened there. It was Paul's face to face vision with Jesus or meeting that happened there. In this incident, we could see God's action and his selection. After this meeting, since the blind Paul regains sight, he got a new vision and his inner eye was opened and he received a fresh inner vision. Paul firmly believed that Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah and Jesus who was crucified and died, has resurrected.

After the Damascus incident, we could see the ruin of Paul, the Jew and Pharisee. Paul, who said that he was flawless before Law, regarding matter of justice says after the Damascus incident: "I am the foremost of sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15). Paul, who boasted in the Jewish tradition and in the nobility

of clan, says after the Damascus incident: “Yet, whatever gain I had, there I have come to regard as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. For his sake, I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ. And be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the Law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith” (Philip. 3: 7-9).

In short, Paul became quite prepared to earn Christ and in order to be seen with Him to completely reject his own achievements and greatness.

### **3. The Preparation of Paul and his Initial Services**

Paul, who had the vision of God, does not go for the preaching of the Gospel in haste. On the other hand, he prepared himself in meditation and prayer for 3 years in the Arab desert. We read in the epistle to the Galatians: “I did not stop to seek the advice of anyone; nor did I go to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once to Arabia and afterwards I returned to Damascus. Then after 3 years I did go to Jerusalem to visit Cephas” (Gal. 1:17-18).

Paul, who started the preaching of the Gospel, began his service with enthusiasm. Paul considered that the knowledge he received from the background of the Jewish religion and the higher education he received from Gamaliel and the multi-linguistic proficiency he received from the harbor city of Tarsus, will make his service easy. Paul who boasted in his ability, who considered his vision of Christ as everything, fails in the service of his early stage. People did not receive him in many places. He met with problems wherever he went. We read in the Acts of the Apostles: “So he went in and out among them in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. He spoke and argued with the Hellenists; but they were attempting to kill him. When the believers learnt of it, they brought him to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus” (Acts. 19:28-30). In short, Paul, who failed in his early service, returned to Tarsus, his native place.

### **4. Paul’s Second Conversion**

Although Paul considered that he earned everything through his vision of Christ and through his preparation for 3 years, having understood that the service of his early stage was a failure, he again submitted his life for prayer and preparation for a period of 14 years. We read in the epistle to

the Galatians thus: "Then after 14 years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me" (Gal. 2:1).

Paul might have seen Jesus again through long preparation for 14 years. We see change coming in the view points and attitudes of Paul. Paul says this in the Acts: "When they came to him, he said to them: You yourselves know how I lived among you the entire time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears, enduring the trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews" (Acts. 20:18-19).

In the second conversion, Paul is coming to a fresh awareness. Paul, who boasted in his achievement and knowledge became perfectly humble and tried to serve the Lord with tears. Under this background Paul says: "But I do not count my life of any value to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the Good news of God's grace" (Acts. 20:24).

In short, Paul becomes an unblemished preacher of the Good news only after 17 years of preparation. Paul reached the conviction that his life has no value compared to the preaching of the Good news. The life of Paul should become an exemplar to all modern preachers of the Gospel. Those who think that they have received the charisma of tongues and have met with Jesus through attending a retreat and thus set out to lead the preaching of the Good news should deeply understand these two conversions of Paul. Paul reminds us that one should not claim that one has owned Jesus in a day or having attended a retreat.

## **5. The Suffering of Paul**

Paul often passes through the experience of segregation in his service. Paul grieves saying that all go away abandoning him. We see Barnabas, who was with Paul in his service and who had been helping Paul very much, leaving him (Acts.15:36-40). Paul says in his epistle to Timothy that all abandon him denying his preaching of the Good news; "At my first defense no one came to my support. All have deserted me. But the Lord stood by me" (2 Tim. 4:16-17). 'The awareness that the Lord is with me' even if all else deserted me. This awareness has given great strength to Paul in his service. The experience of God's presence during one's adversity is one's greatest strength, wealth and power. The conviction that the Lord is with him, gave Paul in advance under any circumstance without fear.

Paul describes a list of his sufferings to the Church of Corinth. When Paul takes pleasure in boasting about himself, he takes pride in the sufferings that he had undergone. "Are they ministers of Christ? I am talking like a mad man. I am a better one; with far great labours, far more imprisonments, with countless floggings, and often near death. Five times I have received from the Jews forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I received stoning. Three times I was shipwrecked; for a night and day I was adrift at sea; on frequent journeys, in danger from rivers, danger from bandits, danger from my own people, danger from Gentiles, danger in the city, danger in the wilderness, danger at sea, danger from false brothers and sisters; in toil and hardship, through many a sleepless night, hungry and thirsty, often without food, cold and necked. And besides other things, I am under daily pressure because of my anxiety for all the Churches" (2 Cor. 11: 23-28).

We could see that over and above the sufferings from outside, Paul suffers very much in his own body. Paul says about a thorn that is given in his flesh. Paul had entreated God that this thorn might be removed. "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. 12:8). Many interpret this thorn that continuously tormented Paul, to be his bodily disease.

The attitude of Paul towards suffering will amaze us. Paul says: "Therefore I am content with weakness, insults, hardships, persecution and calamities for the sake of Christ; for whenever I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Cor. 12:10).

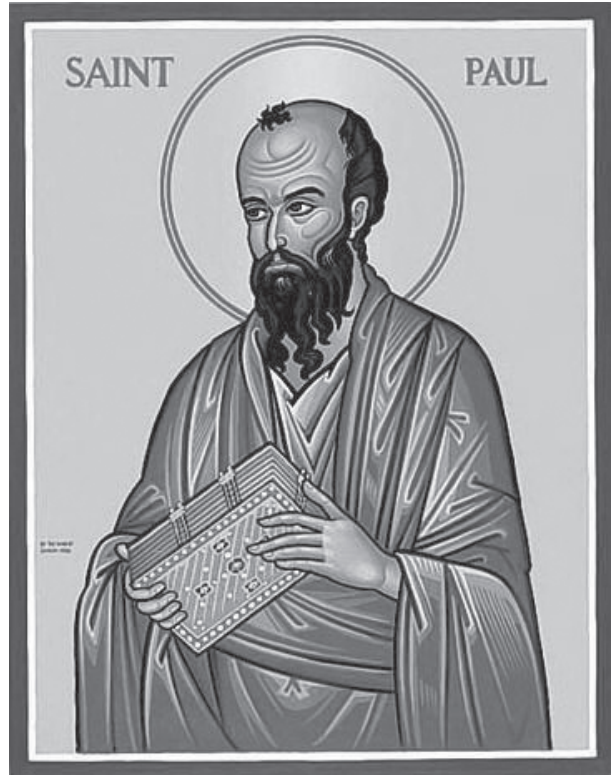
Paul often writes his epistles while he is imprisoned and in chains. "I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you" (Col. 4:18). Paul often found suffering as a blessing. "For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for Him as well" (Phil.1:29). Paul, who completely shares the suffering of Christ, says thus: "I carry the marks of Jesus branded on my body" (Gal. 6:17).

## **6. Paul's Love for Christ**

Paul's love for Christ will make us amaze. We do not know whether there is another disciple of Christ who desired so much as to be one with the person Jesus and to be identified with Jesus and offered his own life to

achieve this aim. Paul, who considered all his gains as loss and who regarded them as rubbish says thus: "In order that I may gain Christ and to be found in Him" (Phil.3: 8-9).

Paul, in the fullness of Christ says: "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? As it is written, 'For your sake, we are being killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered' ....For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to



come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God, in Christ Jesus, the Lord" (Rom. 8:35-39).

Paul says thus: "It is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be put to shame in any way, but that by my speaking with all boldness, Christ will be exalted now as always in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, living is Christ and dying is gain" (Phil. 1: 20-21).

Paul says: "Even though to preach the Gospel for the sake of Christ is very joyful, it is all the more noble to be dead and to be one with Christ" (Gal. 1:23). Paul, who desires to be one with Jesus, when he realizes that it will be possible through death, he considers that death is gain and to be one with Christ through death, is noble. In the fullness of love towards Jesus, Paul says: "I do not count my life of any value to myself....but only that I may finish the ministry that I have received from the Lord Jesus" (Acts. 20:24). In the fullness of his love for Jesus, Paul says: "I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:19-20).

In short, the love of Paul, after he has met Jesus Christ and completely offered his very life for Jesus, is an example for all Disciples of Christ. The enthusiasm of Paul, who had traveled 15,000 kilometers for the love of Jesus to fulfill the missionary activity, amazes us. At the end of his missionary journey, Paul arrived in Rome and preached the Gospel of Jesus. During the reign of Emperor Nero, they cut off the head of Paul in A.D. 67. The body of Paul was buried in Rome. Thus Paul is enlisted in the big community of martyrs. "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge will give me on that day" (2 Tim. 4:7-8). Thus St. Paul completely showed his love to Jesus through his martyrdom and went to the presence of Jesus to receive the crown. The more we know the person Paul; he stands in front of us as a person beyond comprehension of ordinary human intellect. The missionary zeal, love, approach towards suffering of Paul, the apostle should be a model and strength to us.

## **St. Paul the Model of the Missionaries**

The risen Christ told to his apostles: "Go into the entire world and proclaim the Good news to the whole creation" (Mk. 16:15). The history of the revelation of God or the perfect love of God, which began in the creation of the universe and marched forward through the history of Israel and completed in Jesus Christ is the history and message of the salvation of the world and the liberation of man. In order to proclaim the Gospel of this salvation or the Good news, the Lord entrusted the apostles or the Church. It is the first and important duty of any disciple of Christ to proclaim this Gospel of the salvation to all the people till the end of the world. Paul, the apostle, who had the vision of Christ, is a disciple of Christ, who had fulfilled this message of Christ hundred percent. In the history of the Church over the past two thousand years, there will not be found another person, who had dedicated life for the proclamation of the Gospel like Paul. Hence, St. Paul is the exemplar and inspiration to all the missionaries. What we discuss here are some special qualities of the missionary leadership of St. Paul, fit to be imitated.

### **1. The Enthusiastic Missionary**

Paul was born in a family which was filled with religious observances. Paul grew up in his infancy, teen age, and youth as an enthusiastic religious



faithful. That is why Paul could become a Jewish Rabbi at a young age and having studied the Law becomes a Pharisee and could study in Jerusalem, the capital under the guidance of Gamaliel. It is the spiritual enthusiasm of Paul that urged him to persecute the Christian Church, while he was a member of the Jewish religion. "A persecutor of the Church due to his enthusiasm" (Phil. 3:6). Paul says that he persecuted the Church 'on the basis of his fidelity towards the Jewish religion and since he acted ignorantly in unbelief that God showed him mercy' (1 Tim:1:13).

Paul begins his epistle to the Romans basing on his conviction about his missionary message. "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the Gospel of God" (Rom. 1:1). A church, unlike other places, is a place specially set apart for God. When we say that a church is consecrated, we mean that it is set apart and is sanctified for God. Unlike other men, a priest is set apart for God. Likewise, the conviction that he is set apart for the proclamation of the Good news, one entrusted with the Gospel, sanctified one, influenced Paul continuously. Paul proclaimed the

Gospel of Jesus, traveling a distance of about 15,000 kilometers. The fact that Paul traveled this long distance for the various activities of the promulgation of the Gospel during an age when the facilities for travel were very much limited shows his missionary zeal. Paul proclaimed the Gospel and became witness to Jesus with the enthusiasm of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus throughout the world; he went to Rome, which is considered to be the capital of the whole world and till Spain, known as the border of Rome. "If I proclaim the Gospel, this gives me no ground for boasting for an obligation is laid on me and woe to me if I do not proclaim the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16). Paul had understood that the proclamation of the Gospel is his fundamental obligation and not proclaiming the Gospel in any way, is his great lack of interest and adversity.

We know that the word of God has the creative strength that cures, sharper than the double-edged sword. It is when this word of God is preached that it resounds as the real word and voice of God. Hence it is when the word of God is proclaimed, that becomes action-oriented, fruitful and lively. Paul says about the need of the proclamation of the word of God: "But how are they to call one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, how beautiful are the feet of those who bring Good news!" (Rom. 10: 14-15).

The enthusiasm of Paul, who is ready to offer his own life for the proclamation of the Gospel will make us wonder. "But I do not count my life of any value to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the goodness of God's grace" (Acts. 20:24).

## **2. The Courage that does not Yield**

The mode of Paul, who pleads some fundamental convictions and who with courage proclaims it helped very much to the growth of the Church. After the feast of Pentecost, lots of Jews received baptism and became Christians. But when the Gentiles became Christians, many taught that they will not be saved unless they are circumcised. Many disciples, including Paul, argued that the Gentiles should become Jews through circumcision and then should receive baptism. When this idea became



strong, Paul defied the same most powerfully. Paul argued that one is justified not by the works of the Law, but through faith in Jesus Christ. (Gal.2:16). When the Synod of Jerusalem was held to take decision in this subject, the arguments of Paul turned even the minds of Peter and the other apostles. (Acts.15:1-15). The stern stand-point in his convictions and his unyielding courage made it possible to spread the Christian religion beyond Palestine and even to the whole world.

We could see Paul objecting even Peter face to face when fault is detected. "But when Caephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face; because he stood self-condemned" (Gal. 2:11). When Peter was sitting and eating along with the Gentiles, certain Jews came there. Peter retracted from there fearing the circumcised Jews. Along with Peter other Jews too dealt hypocritically. When Paul found that the dealing of Peter does not agree with the Gospel truth, he told to Peter in front of others: "If you, though a Jew live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how could you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?" (Gal. 2:14). In short, the undaunted courage of Paul could be considered as a symbol of his bearing witness to truth and of his firm conviction.

### **3. Suffering for the sake of the Gospel**

It is impossible to find in the history of the Church another disciple of Christ who has undertaken sufferings to such an extent as Paul for the sake of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus. During the course of the proclamation of the Gospel, traveling 15,000 kilometers, Paul explains a long list of the sufferings and miseries he had to confront with, in his epistle to the Corinthians. The abandonments he suffered for the sake of the Gospel, imprisonment, throwing of stone, beatings, dangers, fatal circumstances, poverty and cold; all these Paul accepted with pleasure' (2 Cor.11:21-29). Paul found all these sufferings as blessings. "For, He has graciously granted you the privileges of not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for Him as well" (Philip. 1:29).

In short, nothing is able to dissuade Paul from the service of the proclamation of the Gospel and his conviction that even in front of death that he wouldn't hesitate is clear in his epistles. "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword?" (Rom. 8:35). "For to me, living is Christ

and dying is gain" (Philip.1:21). Paul proclaimed the Gospel often facing death. "I do not count my life of any value to myself, I desire to fulfill the message that I have received from Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:24). Under the conviction that God has called him to proclaim the Gospel among Gentiles, Paul is one who has not given any value to his own life. This attitude is a perfect example to any missionary.

#### **4. The Openness of Life**

The openness of personal life or purity is very much discussed today. When a person writes his diary, he writes on each page the events that take place in his daily life. When one finishes writing the three hundred and sixty-five pages of his diary in an year, he will advance an year in his age. The heart of Paul is like a book, bound together with many such diaries. The life of Paul was one that any body could open and read at any time. Paul says that there is nothing in his life to hide and that it is an open book. "We have spoken frankly to you Corinthians; our heart is wide open to you. In return, open wide your hearts also" (2 Cor. 6:11-13). Paul says about the purity of his heart: "Make room in your hearts for us; we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. I do not say this to condemn you" (2 Cor. 7:2-3). Paul says to the Thessalonians, how much the nobility of his dealings towards the faithful was: "You are witnesses and God also, how pure, up right and blameless our conduct was toward you believers" (1 Thess. 2:10).

Whenever Paul refers to his life, he doesn't say: 'I know about my life, but instead, he says, 'you know', 'God knows'. "You yourselves know how I lived among you the entire time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears, enduring the trials that came to me through the plots of the Jews" (Acts. 20:18-19).

In short, people knew about the open life of Paul. The mode of activity of Paul was with such openness of mind. In reality there is only one Paul; Paul, whom the people see. Paul had no individuality other than what the people knew. This is the basic virtue that any missionary should possess.

#### **5. Warm Friendship**

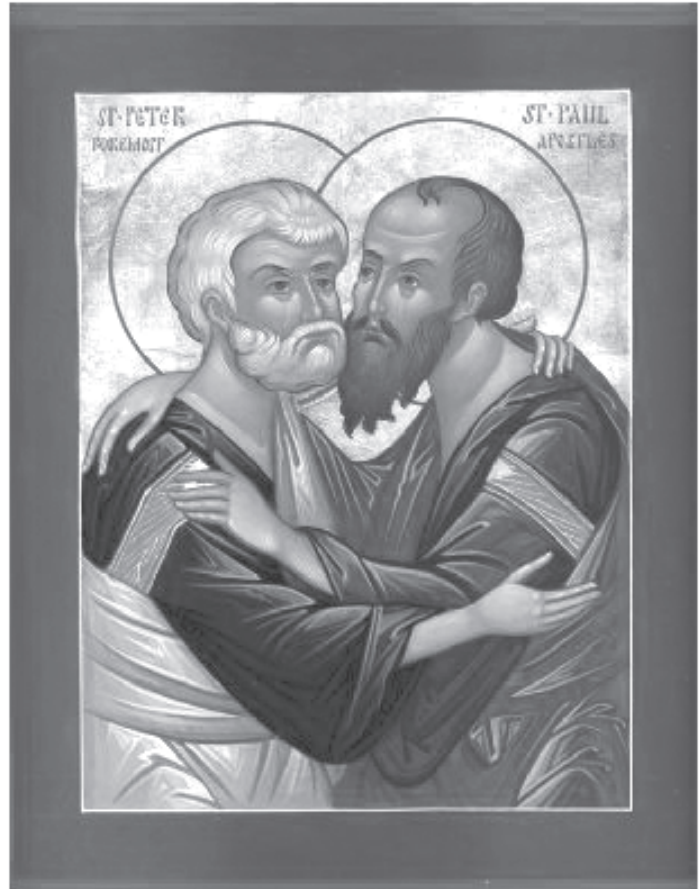
Paul, throughout his service, had cherished good friendship with many people. Paul had deep relationship with all kinds of people; ordinary ones, scholars, poor people and wealthy ones. Paul had very much respected

and honored all his co-operators. Paul, who had been converted and received baptism after the Damascus incident, fostered deep love-relationship with Barnabas, who led Paul toward the service of God. Paul had also honored Titus, who was his co-worker. (2 Cor. 2:13; 2 Cor.8:23). Paul maintained warm friendship with Timothy also ((Philip. 2: 22, 1 Tim. 1:2, 1 Cor. 16:10-11). Besides, Paul had maintained good friendships with Judah, Silas, Eodoia, Mark, Luke, Aquila and Priscilla. There were many women too as his friends in his service. (Philip. 4:3; Rom.16:16; Acts. 16: 11-15). Before going to Rome for the proclamation of the Gospel, a long list of the friends in Rome is introduced by Paul in his letter to the Romans and informs his greetings to them (Rom. 16:1-16).

In short, the warm friendship of Paul had strengthened him very much in his service of the proclamation of the Gospel. This specialty of Paul is a model to all missionaries.

## **6. Intellectual Ability**

From ancient time onwards, the thought of giving education to the boys existed among the Jews. "Let the city having no school perish. It is the breathing of the school children that is more pleasing to God than the fragrance of sacrifices". These kinds of good sayings have been spread among the Jews. Paul got basic education in his infancy and youth. Afterwards when he desired to become a Rabbi, Paul studied for about seven years in the higher education center in the very



city of Jerusalem under the discipleship of Gamaliel. Since he was born in the harbor city of Tarsus, Paul knew the Greek language. Paul grasped the Greek thoughts and its mode of interpretation through Greek language. As a Pharisee, Paul acquired clear knowledge about the Jewish Law.

Under the background that an ordinary fisher man gave leadership to the Church, a person like Paul, who had the strength of thought, knowledge and practice, was needed to the Church. For that, God prepared Paul even from his early age and had appointed him for His service. This conviction had influenced Paul. "But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace was pleased to reveal his Son to me" (Gal. 1:15).

Who is Jesus Christ? The apostles had explained to the ordinary people in a manner they could understand, about the meaning of the incarnation of Jesus, death on the cross, his resurrection, the salvation and justification through believing in Jesus etc. But we see in Paul the ability to interpret the mystery of Christ clearly and deeply, irrespective of Jew, Greek, wise or ordinary man. It is the Christ-experience and the intellectual caliber of Paul that gave to the Church of Christ a theological foundation. It is said thus about the epistles of Paul: For they say, "His letters are weighty and strong, but his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible" (2 Cor. 10:10).

The speech of Paul at Ariopagas reveals his intellectual caliber. While Paul was passing through Athens, he observed their objects of sacrifice. There Paul found the altar on which is written 'To the unknown God'. He told them: "I am preaching to you about that unknown God himself and it is he, who is the unseen heavenly Father, who has created the universe all things that are in it and that His Son, God, through his incarnation, death and resurrection has saved us. But, Paul said the residents of Athens that he will once come to judge us. Some people believed in him, but others did not. Peter says that the epistles of Paul are incomprehensible and difficult to understand; (2 Peter. 3:15-16).

It is the deep intellectual skill and his far-sightedness that brought the Synod of Jerusalem to the decision that circumcision is not necessary for the Gentiles to become Christians. On account of that, the Christian religion grew up very strongly among the Gentiles.

Jesus spoke to the villagers in their villages in village-language. The style and language of the speeches of Jesus were that of the villagers. The

subject of the instruction of Jesus was about the land of agriculture, field, sheep and shepherd, the sower of the seeds, sea, catching of fish etc, things which are related to the village life. But, Paul went from one city to another. Paul centered his work in the important cities of the ancient world. The language of war, athletic performers, the runner in the race-field, commander in chief who celebrates victory etc., is that of the city. The language of Paul was that of the city dwellers. What Paul adopted was the tactics of war i.e., once you are able to defeat the cities, the villagers will automatically surrender. Hence, if the Gospel reaches Rome, the capital of the world, then the Gospel will reach the whole world. It was this thought of Paul that prompted him to go over to Rome as a prisoner and to proclaim the Gospel there. That is why today Christianity is spread all over the world. The view-point, far sightedness and the style of activity of Paul in this regard, was the reason for the big growth of the Church.

Hence, those who set out for the spiritual service of the proclamation of the Gospel should be like Paul, intellectually skillful and smart. When things like religious contradiction, rejection of religion, atheism, materialism and avoidance of priesthood get strengthened in society, young people, having spiritual strength like Paul should come forward to reply these. Hence, we should send members of our family, both men and women, who are clever, for priesthood and the religious life.

In order to interpret the Gospel of Jesus to the modern generation, individuals like Paul, who are deeply erudite and filled with the love of God, should come forward. This thought should emulate our parents, children and young people in particular. The children, in their young age, should foster great enthusiasm and interest like Paul in the religious affairs. The parents should take upper hand in this matter.

## **7. One who sides with the Poor**

Paul had great interest to side with the poor during his missionary travels. When they visited the apostles in Jerusalem, they advised Paul and Barnabas to side with the poor. "When James and Cephas and John, who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they, to the circumcised. They asked only one thing, that we remember the poor, which was actually what I was eager to do" (Gal. 2:9-10).

The deep interest of Paul toward the poor had influenced him very much in his service. Paul worked with his own hand in order to help the poor and with the amount he thus earned, helped the poor and showed example to others. "You know for yourselves that I worked with my own hands to support myself and my companions. In all this I have given you an example that by such work, we must support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, for He himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive', I remind you these words of the Lord.(Acts 20:34-35).

If he found anybody who belongs to the various Church communities, the solicitude which Paul showed to help the poor people and the Church communities by raising funds from churches that could afford, indicate the love of Paul towards the poor. (1 Cor. 16:1-4; 2 Cor. 8: 1-15; 2 Cor. 9:1-15; Phil.4:10-20). Paul showed interest not only to those who were financially poor but even in those who were lacking in knowledge. (1 Cor. 8:7-13). In short, the attitude of Paul to take side with those who were weak in any manner is an example to any missionary.

### **8. The Preaching of the Gospel without Remuneration**

At the very young age, Paul acquired the worthiness to be a Jewish Rabbi. But, for the service of the Rabbies as advisors, they were not allowed to accept any remuneration. They ought to find savings by doing work for their own livelihood. To receive money for instructions was generally understood by the Rabbies as wrong. The saying among the Jews goes thus: "The father who does not teach his son any job is teaching him to steal". In short, the Rabbies lived doing some kind of work. The status of the Rabbi was no profession for income. Paul learnt the Tent work like his father and through that earned his livelihood. Under this background should we understand that Paul made his proclamation of the Gospel "Is it a mistake that I proclaimed God's Good news free of charge for your prosperity? (2 Cor. 11:7). "When I was with you and was in need, I did not burden any one....So I refrained and will continue to refrain from burdening in any way" (2 Cor. 11:50).

Paul has indicated several times that he worked hard day and night and proclaimed the Good news: "You remember our labor and toil, brothers and sisters, we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the Gospel of God" (1 Thess. 2:9). "For

you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you and we did not eat any one's bread without paying for it; but with toil and labor we worked day and night, so that we might not burden any of you" (2 Thes. 3:7-8). Paul says as follows: "You know for yourselves that I worked with my own hands to support myself and my companions. In all this, I have given you an example that by such work we must support the weak" (Acts. 20: 34-35).

Paul argues that basing on common justice, he who works has the right for remuneration and that he has the right for remuneration for his spiritual service as well. (1 Cor. 9:7-12). Paul says thus: "Nevertheless we have not made use of this right, but we endured anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the Gospel of Christ. Do you not know that those who are employed in the temple service get their food from the temple and those who are at the altar, share in what is sacrificed on the altar? In the same way, the Lord commanded that those who proclaim the Gospel should get their living by the Gospel. But I have made no use of any of these rights...what then is my reward? Just this: that in my proclamation, I may make the Gospel free of charge, so as not to make use of any rights in the Gospel" (1 Cor. 9: 12-18). In short, even though Paul had all the right to receive remuneration for the preaching of the Gospel, he left out that right intending to receive the satisfaction alone for proclaiming the Gospel. This attitude of Paul is an example for all.

Paul's idea of the proclamation of the Gospel without remuneration is a challenge to the modern proclaimers of the Good news. There is no doubt that these arguments of Paul will ignite the hearts of those who are set apart for the proclaiming of the Gospel. Without receiving the right of the proclaimers of the Gospel like Paul, if any one could consider that the very satisfaction of the preaching of the Gospel will suffice, that is a great blessing of God. Under this background, we should understand that to consider the proclamation of the Gospel as a business and a means for acquiring wealth is the greatest mistake.

When we consider the specialties in the missionary leadership of Paul, we could see in him many other specialties besides what is mentioned above. Paul, who is ready to undergo exceptions in trivial matters (Acts. 21:17-26), the leadership that corrects like a mother or father or brother (1 Cor. 4:14; 1Thess. 2:12), one who gave importance to united actions (Gal.

2:1-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Eph. 4:11-13), the one who has offered fully for the Gospel (Philip. 2: 17); we could see all these qualities of leadership in Paul.

When we bid goodbye to the 2000th anniversary of the birth of St. Paul, he is a living example to each individual, who is a Christian through baptism and for those who are specially called for the service of the Gospel. Even though he is dead, he is a living missionary. Paul lives in the hearts of people through his epistles, theological thoughts and through his examples. Since 2000 years, crores of people still read the epistles of St. Paul, meditate upon and make use of for explanations and receive spiritual strength from them. The epistles of St. Paul are being read in hundreds of thousands of churches each day. Hence there is no death for Paul. St. Paul is an example and a challenge to all the missionaries, both living and are to come.

Perhaps we are not able to manage missionary activity like St. Paul, unmarried and who traveled 15000 kilometers, in order to conduct missionary activity facing death daily and amidst severe sufferings and imprisonments. But, we should not forget that each Christian who received baptism has the obligation to proclaim the Gospel. It is the greatest missionary activity to love Jesus and to live approving the Gospel- values Jesus taught, in one's own home, in the educational institution, in places where one works, in the parish community and in relationship with the neighbors. The foundation of the missionary activity is to live as a true Christian. Along with that, when we do the missionary services, our activities will be more blessed. The words of Mahatma Gandhi: 'My life is my message' give us instigation to the missionary activities through life. Let us entreat St. Paul's arbitration so that we become true missionaries.

### Topic for discussion

*Discuss about St. Paul's love of Christ and his intense missionary activity. Also how will I be able to work as a missionary.*





# Why am I a Catholic?



Holy Father Pope Francis

Who is a man? Who is a Christian? The clear answer to these questions is given in the first chapters. But, only when we give answer to the question: 'Who am I'? We will get the meaning of the above-mentioned two questions.

First of all, I am one having the basic characters of an animal, at the same time having divine participation and the presence of the Holy Spirit of God. Likewise, I am one created in the likeness of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, saved by Jesus Christ and a Christian, who is a member of the Church, which is the mystical body of Jesus Christ. Secondly, I am the member of the Catholic Church, having the perfection of the basic signs of unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity; the Church, which is

instituted by Christ, entrusted to the apostles through the leadership of Peter, which has the apostolic leadership of the Pope of Rome, the successor of St. Peter and which is one, holy, catholic and apostolic.

Among the 120 crores of Catholics in the world today, the majority are born to catholic parents, received baptism in their infancy and thus became members of the Catholic Church. But, we have very many illustrious members, who were born and brought up in non-catholic churches and when they studied about the Catholic Church and having been convinced that the Church of Christ is the Catholic Church and thus became Catholics.

G. K. Chesterton, the renowned English Literary Writer, Cardinal Avery Dulles, son of John Hoster, Dallas, the former American State Secretary, Cardinal John Henry Newman, who became a Catholic after having been a resplendent star of the University of Oxford and Tony Blair, who in recent times, retired from the position of the Chief Minister of England; all these came to the Catholic Church from the Protestant Church. In our own country, Mar Ivanios, who had a high rank in the Orthodox Church and his co-workers Mar Theophilos and Mar Severios and Mar Dioscoros, the head of the Knanaya Jacobite Church and Mar Philexinos, who was the head of the Independent Thozhiyoor Church and very many priests and lay representatives are all those who studied about the Catholic Church and became Catholics. All these have answered the question: 'Why am I a Catholic?' with their life. The aim of this chapter is to explain the reasons why the non-Catholics, having entered the Catholic Church and led genuine life of the Catholic Church and that of those who being born and lived in Catholic faith and observed the catholic faith through sacrifices. 'Why am I a Catholic?'. Each catholic faithful is bound to answer this question conscientiously. The answer to this question is explained in this chapter.

## **1. The Church of Jesus Christ is existing in the Catholic Church**

It is Jesus Christ, the only person, who is the founder and the head of the Church. The Church is the body and continuation of Jesus Christ. Hence the Church is basically one. But the one Church of Christ has become different church-communities, having no communion and relationship during the course 2000 years. Today, when different church- communities exist, where could we find the real Church of Christ? Where could we find the perfection of the Church of Christ? It is the Catholic Church, which is founded by Jesus Christ, which the apostles proclaimed and which is being led by their successors, the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. We are trying to explain this claim of the Catholic Church through this chapter.

### **The Church of Christ**

It is in the incarnation of Jesus that the love of God the Father is seen visibly. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (Jn. 3:16). After the death and resurrection of Jesus the love of God the Father for mankind is continued through the ministry of the Church. That is, Jesus

who died on the cross and resurrected, loves man till the end of the world and lives with him through the Church. Hence we cannot see and interpret the Church standing apart from the person Jesus Christ. The Church and Christ are so much related to each other. The Church has no light other than that of Christ. According to a comparison that is pleasing to the Church- Fathers, the Church is like the moon. The moon has no light of its own. The whole light of the moon is reflected from the sun.

The Church is the project that is formed in the desire of God, the Father. From the beginning of the world, the Church was present symbolically and that took it's from through the various stages of human history, and that the Church was prepared in an astonishing manner. Through the incarnation of Jesus, the beginning of the Church was marked. The teaching of Jesus about the kingdom of God indicated the existence of the Church (Mk. 1:15). Having understood that the Church needed a firm foundation and existence, Jesus appointed the twelve apostles making Peter as their head. Thus they became the twelve pillars of the Church. Jesus gave birth to the Church through his last supper and his death on the cross. The blood and water that flowed from the Sacred Heart of Jesus symbolically indicated the birth of the Church and its growth. St. Ambrose says that just as Eve was formed from the side of the sleeping Adam, the Church took its birth from the split heart of Christ who was crucified and dead. On the 50<sup>th</sup> day after resurrection, on Pentecost day, Jesus sending down the Holy Spirit made the Church visible and he sanctified her.

The mission of the Church is till the end of the world. The Church acquires her perfection only in the glorious second coming of Christ. In short, the foundation of the Church is not something that took place on a special moment, but we will be able to understand about the Church of Christ only in relation to the different incidents of the salvation history. That is to say, the Church is the visible body of Jesus Christ in this world. At the same time she is the temple of the Holy Spirit. The Church is the way and means towards the kingdom of God which Jesus visualised. The Church has the obligation to lead all men to the kingdom of God till the end of the world. What the Church has to perform till the end of the world are the missions, which Jesus, as the anointed one or the Messiah had performed: the prophetic, priestly and the kingly missions, i.e., to teach, sanctify and to lead through witnessing.

The meaning of the term “Church” is ‘the community of those who are called together’. Each individual, having believed in the divine revelation, which is perfected in Jesus confess and respond to the same and receive the Holy Spirit through baptism and become part of a society. Thus the term “Church” indicates the local community and the universal community that are called together by God, and which have received the Holy Spirit through baptism.

The Holy Scripture explains the Church through different symbols. Church is the people of God, Church is the bride of Jesus, Church is the body of Jesus, Church is the sheep fold, Church is the field of agriculture of God, Church is the house of God or the temple, Church is Jerusalem above and Church is the mother.

### **The Four Signs of the Church**

We profess in the Nicene Creed, ‘We believe in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church’. These four signs are the foundation of the Church of Christ. Either the loss or the limitation of any one of these will be considered as the loss or limitation of the Church. Today, there are many Churches that recite the Nicene Creed. Even though there are these four signs in these Churches, they are perfectly seen only in the Catholic Church. Let us try to understand these four signs.

#### **a) The Church is One**

The unity of the Church could be understood in three ways. Firstly, the Church through her source is one. The source and model of the Church is the unity of the Triune God, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. It is from the will of the Holy Trinity that the Church was formed. Secondly, the Church is one through her founder. The Church is founded on Jesus Christ, the only Son and the Word of God. Jesus united all people through His death on the cross and reconciled them with God. Hence the Church, the body of Christ, is one. Thirdly, the Church, through her soul is one. The Church is the temple of the Holy Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit, through His dwelling in the faithful and filling up in the whole of the Church, it is the Holy Spirit who creates and protects the communion of the faithful and their unity. Hence, to be one, is the fundamental need of the Church.



Moran Mor Baselios  
Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos

St. Clement of Alexandria says thus: “How amazing a mystery! One as Father of all, a Word for all, one Holy Spirit, who is everywhere, a sole Virgin Mother! I wish to call her the Church.(P. G. 8: 300).

St. Paul, the apostle says: “You are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” (1 Cor. 12: 27). “For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (1 Cor. 12:13) and St. Paul teaches: “There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:4-5). St. Paul says that all are one in Christ: “There is no longer Jew or Greek, there no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female: for all of you are one in Christ Jesus” (Gal, 3:28). We see in the Prayer for Unity thus: “That they may all be

one, as you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (Jn. 17: 21). Jesus made it clear that it is this unity that is the hall mark of the followers of Christ.

When we say that the Church is one, she is conscious about her diversity and unity. The continuity of the Church took form in different countries and in different cultures through the proclamation of the apostles. Various Church communities originated in each place. There was diversity in each Church, in Liturgy, Theology, and Spirituality and in the structure of Canon Law. The Church understood that this variety won't affect the unity of the Church, for what is meant by unity is not uniformity. “From the very beginning, there were different local Churches having diversity. But all the Churches held unity in three things. Firstly, confessing of one faith, which they got from the apostles; secondly, the common faith in the Sacraments

and their explanation and celebration; thirdly, the apostolic succession through the sacrament of the Holy Orders or the apostolic authority. In short, it is clear that the unity of the Churches is not uniformity, and what the Church aims is the unity, accepting the diversity of the Churches. The fact that different individuals live in the same faith and same sacraments, that they eat from the same bread and grow under the apostolic leadership of the same bishop, is the visible sign that the Church is one. The bishops of the universal Church are in unity with Pope, the successor of Peter, indicates that the Church is one. Hence the Pope, the successor of Peter, is the sign that the entire Church is one, and that he is the visible sign, the center of unity and the custodian of unity. Under the leadership of the successor Peter, 23 Apostolic Churches are united as one Church. That is the Catholic Church. Throughout the history of the Church, there arose division and sectarianism in the Church. Different Churches, going away from the unity, began to exist separately. Among the Churches that exist today, the qualification that 'the Church is one' could be clearly seen only in the Catholic Church.

From the beginning of the Church up to now, different groups separated themselves from the perfect communion of the Catholic Church. This has inflicted wounds to the body of Christ. For this, those who belonged in both groups are not free from guilt. Origen, one of the writers of the early age, says thus: "Where there is sin, there will be divisions, schisms, heresies and contradictions. Where there is virtue, there will be unity and solidarity. From them will arise one heart and one soul of all the faithful". The Catholic Church accepts the Church-Communities that are separated from her as Sister Church-Communities. In the Church-Communities that are outside the Catholic Church; although there are the presence of Jesus and the signs of salvation, all that are needed for salvation, in their perfection, are not found. Hence unity with the Catholic Church is necessary for perfect salvation. The Decree of the Vat II Synod on Church Unity, explains as follows: "For it is the universal Church that is adorned with all the means of salvation. Therefore, through her only, it is possible to earn all that are needed for salvation in their perfection. We believe that our Lord has entrusted all the treasures of the new Covenant to the community of apostles, headed by Peter. This is to build up on earth the only body of Christ. All those who are worthy of the name of the people of God should

have unity with this” (Church Unity, 3:5). The Synod teaches that the perfection and sign of unity is the Catholic Church and in order to come to the perfection of salvation, the unity with the Catholic Church is necessary. It is for this unity that Jesus prayed till his last hour (Jn. 17:21).

### **b) The Church is Holy**

The basis of the sanctity of the Church is the sanctity of Jesus Christ, the visible founder of the Church. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is holy with the Father and the Holy Spirit, sanctified the Church, his bride, giving her his own body and blood. Likewise, through giving her the Holy Spirit, he stabilized her till the end of the world as a holy people. The early Christians were called ‘the holy people’. (1 Cor. 6:1; 16:1; 1 Pet. 2:9). The Church, which was united to Christ, the Church, the body of Christ, is sanctified through Christ. Each Christian shares the sanctity of the Messiah through the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Myron and the Holy Eucharist. Since the perfection of all the gifts, which are required for the presence of Jesus and salvation exist in the Catholic Church alone, the perfection of the sanctity of Jesus also is in the Catholic Church.

When we say that the Church is holy, the truth should not be forgotten that the Church is the community of sinners also. Just as Jesus Christ has the human and divine natures, the Church, his body also has these two natures. What is meant by the human and visible structure of the Church, are the community that includes individuals, its compositions of organizing, its institutions and its groups. But the divine or unseen factor is the living presence of Jesus Christ, who sanctifies the Church. The human factor of the Church is always weak and sinful. Even when we say that the Church is holy, the Church has the conviction that the children of the Church who are sinners, are to be sanctified continuously, that all the faithful are called towards the sanctity of God, the Father and that the human factor of the Church is to be sanctified continuously. This is being carried out regularly by the sanctifying acts of the Church.

### **c) The Church is Catholic**

The term ‘Catholic’ has the following meanings: perfect, complete and universal. It has also the meaning, universal according to perfection or completion. Since Christ is present in the Church, the Church is catholic. St. Ignatius of Antioch says: “Where Jesus Christ is present, there is the



Catholic Church” (Apostolic Fathers II/ 2, 311). In the Catholic Church the perfection of the body of Christ exists its unity with the head. The Church receives the perfection of the means for salvation from Jesus. (Church Unity, 3). In the fundamental meaning of the concepts that the confession of the flawless and perfect faith and the integral sacramental life and the service of those who have received the Holy Orders in the apostolic succession, the Church was catholic from the day of the Pentecost. The Church will be like that till the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of the Lord. (The Catechism Text of the Catholic Church, 830).

St. Ignatius of Antioch taught that ‘Where the Bishop is, there the Church is’ and that the local Church-community, that offers Holy Qurbano in the presidentship of the bishop, is the Catholic Church. A local worshipping community, under the leadership of a bishop, is integral in itself or catholic. The catholicity of the Church becomes perfect when a local church, having catholicity maintains communion in Holy Qurbano with the other local churches. Hence the local churches that do not maintain communion and unity and remain alone are not catholic in its real sense. Since the Church maintains unity and communion, she is catholic.



“Go into the entire world and proclaim the Good news to the whole creation” (Mk. 16:15). This instruction of Jesus means that the Church is basically spread all over the world. The Church that is spread all over the world is called the Catholic (catholicity) Church. Hence the Catholic Church could be understood as the universal Church.

The Church is called to include all people and to go forth into all cultures. The Church is instituted for mankind. The Church invites all races of people towards salvation. Thus the Church of the Messiah is capable of including all human races and cultures in all their diversity. Hence we could understand that the Church is catholic (Col. 1:18-20; Mt. 28:18-20).

In the early Church, in order to see the true Church apart from the false instructors, the term ‘catholic’ began to be used, to express the meaning ‘the Church that teaches true faith’. Thus the Fathers taught that the Church which teaches the true faith is the Catholic Church. Gradually, the Catholic Church was known to be the true Church. What is known as Catholic Church today, are those Churches that have the canonical relationship with the Pope. Vat. II teaches that the Church of Christ exists in the Catholic Church. Pope, the successor of Peter and the Bishops, who maintain unity with him together, lead the Church. (The Holy Church, 8). Today in the world, there are several Churches. But the intimacy which Christ desired is more clearly seen only in the Catholic Church. ‘Catholicity’ is a special attribute of the Church. It is the Church which includes the characteristic of catholicity that is called the Catholic Church.

In short, it is that Church wherein Jesus Christ dwells, where there is the perfection of the body of Christ, where there is the confession of the perfect true faith, where there is the integral sacramental life, where there is apostolic succession through the Holy Orders, where the communion and unity are preserved and that is spread all over the world and that includes all cultures, the term ‘catholic’ is used in its true meaning.

#### **d) The Church is Apostolic**

The qualifying term ‘apostolic’ is derived from the word ‘Sleeha’ of the Syriac language. The origin of the word ‘Apostle’ is from the word ‘Apostolas’ of the Greek language. The word ‘Sleeha’ or ‘Apostle’ has the official meaning of ‘the one who is sent’. Hence the two words ‘Slyhikam’ or ‘Apostolic’ are used in the same meaning.

Jesus chose twelve apostles to be with Him and to continue the works of His salvation. They were the witnesses of all His works. The foundation of their Christ-experience was, what they saw, heard and experienced. "God sent the apostles into the entire world and they proclaimed the Good news to the whole creation" (Mk. 16:15). Having received this commandment of the risen Jesus, the apostles went to different parts of the world and preached the Good news, which is Jesus. Thus, the Church was founded by the apostles in different places. A Church that is formed, having received faith in relationship with any one of the apostles is an apostolic Church. Because, the Church is built up on the foundation of the apostles. St. Paul says: "You are built upon the foundation of the apostles, with Christ Jesus himself as the corner stone" (Eph. 2:20). It is the basic faith of the Church that the Church is built upon the foundation of the apostles. It is the exhortation of Christ and the message that he has entrusted to the apostles, that the Church still continues.

In short, what is understood by the term 'apostolicity' is the authority of the Christ-experience of the apostles and their exhortation. Bishops, the successors of the apostles, are the continuation and symbol of apostolicity. When Peter, the head of the apostles, and the other apostles are one in Jesus, the fullness and perfection of the apostolicity becomes clear. When all the bishops, the successors of apostles together with Pope, the successor of Peter become one in Jesus Christ, the apostolicity will be complete and full. Since the communion and unity of the apostolic Church exist only in the Catholic Church, the perfection of the apostolicity is only in the Catholic Church.

## 1. The Catholic Church

From the early age, it was known that the Church of Christ is the Catholic Church. The



disciples of Christ were first called Christians in Antioch. (Acts.11:26). It was St. Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch (A.D.110), who called the Church of Christ, 'Catholic Church' for the first time. After that, almost all the Fathers of the Church, called the Church of Christ, the Catholic Church. Since the Synod of Chalcedon (A. D. 451), the universal Christian Church was known as Catholic Church. Those who left the Catholic Church in A.D.451, were known as Jacobites, (later on as Oriental Orthodox), and the Eastern Greek Churches, which left the Church in A.D.1054 were called the Orthodox, and those who left the Church in the 16<sup>th</sup> Cent, were known as Protestants or Reformers. Thus, those who left the Catholic Church were forced to receive new names.

In short, the Church, which Jesus Christ founded, which the apostles proclaimed, which is being led by their successors and the Church which is the one, holy, catholic and apostolic is the Catholic Church. There is no theological foundation for the thoughts that the Church of Christ is divided and became many and hence it is not possible to find out the real one and that the Church is destroyed through division and that a new Church should arise in order to reinstate the Church. Even when the divisions occurred, The Catholic Church maintained the views of the unity of the Church. Fathers like St. Cyprian, St. Augustine and St. Gregory Nyziansen teach that the Church, the body of Christ, is not divisible that the Lord Christ has not founded many Churches and the Church, which he founded shedding his own blood is one and that she is not torn and brought to nil in history.

The Synod of Vatican makes the conviction clear that the true Church of Christ is the Catholic Church thus: "The Church which we confess in the Creed as one, holy, catholic and apostolic; the Church which our Lord, after his resurrection, entrusted to Peter to feed (Jn. 21:17), the Church which he entrusted to Peter and to the other apostles in order to spread and rule the same; this is the Church of Christ, which is one. He instituted the Church as the pillar and support of the truth forever. (1 Tim. 3:15). As a community that is founded and controlled in this world, it is in the Catholic Church that the above-mentioned Church of Christ becomes visible. The successors of Peter, along with the bishops who foster unity with him lead this Church. Even outside the frontiers of the Church, there are several factors of truth and sanctification seen. But, actually they are

the virtues belonging to the Church of Christ. In that respect, they are the prompting truths towards unity with the Catholic Church (Holy Church 8.2).

The Synod gives clear answer to the question: 'Where could we see the true Church'? The Church of Christ is realized in the Catholic Church, which is presided over by the successor of Peter. This Church is led by the bishops who maintain communion with him.

Although those who stood apart from this Church in course of time, diminished this unity, the unity was not destroyed. Yet, the Church was not destroyed substantially. The living body of Christ is existing without division. If it is divided, it will die. Since the Lord is faithful in his promises, he will continuously make his body lively. Hence, instead of saying the regaining of the unity of the Churches, it should be said, the regaining of the unity among Christians. (Holy Church, 8; Ecumenism 1).

Although there are several Church- Communities outside the Catholic Church, the Catholic Church has very close relationship with the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Greek Orthodox Churches. With regard to faith and sacraments, the Catholic Church has almost complete communion with the afore-mentioned Churches. But, it is with regard to the Apostolic authority that there exists certain differences of opinion among both these Churches. Perhaps, God could open the ways towards unity through constant discussions and prayers. Let the ecumenical- prayer- sessions be occasions for the same. It is the view points of the Catholic Church that are explained here. Likewise, the Catholic Church too looks upon with respect the view points and claims of the other Churches. In short, since the signs of unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity are completely seen only in the Catholic Church, I am a Catholic faithful.

## **2. The Catholic Church that sees Man and respects him as such**

The life-breath of the limitless God is mingled in the earth (Gen. 2:7) and he created man in his own likeness (Gen 1:26). Thus there is in man an element of God and it is this that is the foundation of Christian humanism. Man is different from angels who have no elements of humanity. Man is different from beasts that cannot love or suffer or share or forgive. To see man as an angel or to see him degraded to the level of an animal, is not

Christian humanism. The Catholic Church is that which sees man as man and regards him as such. His life is the most valuable divine element that is in him. Life should not be belittled. The divine law that life should not be played with, has turned into a natural law for man through the commandment 'Do not kill'. Only to the Church, it is possible to raise the voice strongly against murder, any kind of robbing of human life, suicide, foeticide, in a word, the culture of death that is rampaging today all over the world. The Church is not only raising her voice strongly, but she promotes any kind of pro-life advancement. It is not the detached attitude, but the zealous activity, that is the style of the Church. The common policy of the Church is not only to protest against these kinds of evils, but to form the human conscience against them. I consider it a great good fortune to have imbibed the spiritual blessings that are obtained through the Church and to respect one's own human life and to try to preserve the same in the life of others.

### **3. The Greatest Protection of Humanism - Service to the Afflicted**

'Service to man, service to God' so goes the adage. That is, the service to man itself is the service to God. What Jesus emphasizes is: 'You go into the entire world and proclaim the Good news to the whole creation, cure the sick'. Jesus himself had taught and cured those who were sick. Often his time table was to preach and to heal. Jesus, while teaching healed and while healing taught. From the first day of the history of the Church, the command of Jesus for the service of the sick was taken up by the Church. The children of the Church have come forward for the same. There was difference only in its vigour. But the self-dedication for service to the sick has been seen throughout in the Church. There were thousands of Fr. Damians and Sr. Damians in the Church. Thousands of different kinds of Mother Theresa have existed in the Church. Even when the experts of Medical Science say that leprosy is being wiped away from the face of the earth, more fatal diseases like the AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), HIV positive, are spreading like wild fire. The Church is being turned as foster mother of the rejected mental patients, new born babies for whom the waste baskets of the hospital and of the road- side become homes as soon as they are born, and of the mentally retarded ones. It is indeed a very big sin to create so many destitute, to impose their care on

the community, and to put on the shoulders of some of the members of the public or the Church Community the duty of bringing them up. The reason for very many children becoming mentally or physically handicapped more than ordinary



children in certain countries, are due to the prowess, their mothers have shown not to accept them or the medicines they have taken when they were carrying the children in their womb. If the child who is born is handicapped, either it is killed or the duty of its bringing up is being entrusted to some other people. The children of the Church who undertake such obligation has logic of their own. Ordinarily, those who serve are its own user. But the reward of those who serve in the Church, is God alone. Mother Theresa replied to the one who enquired her when he found her nursing the wound of someone, whom she found in the street, that she wouldn't do the job even for a remuneration of Rupees ten thousand , but that she does it for the sake of God. She continued that she does such a job only because she saw clearly the thirsty face of the crucified Lord reflected on the face of the unfortunate wounded man. I take pride in being the member of such a Church-Community in which such kind of divinity is shining and where such humanism is being preserved.

#### **4. The Catholic Church, which is the Voice of the Voiceless**

The service to the afflicted does not shrink in merely taking care of the sick. Along with the curing of the sick, Jesus preached the Gospel to the poor. Jesus proclaimed freedom to the oppressed and released those who were bound. Tax collector (Levi), sinners (Mary Magdalene), group leader, those of the other religions (the Canaanite woman); all these segregated people from their own community, were the friends of Jesus. Likewise, those

who were rejected from the approved religions, those who were segregated, those who were forbidden to enjoy the pleasure of their own glory, those exploited of their own rights (widows), were all dear to Jesus. Often these people were forbidden to raise their voice. Even if they were to raise their voice, they need not be heard by others. The voice of these people today is only the Church. Today the Church has turned to be the voice of the voiceless. The voice of the individual may not be heard by anyone. But the voice of the Church cannot thus be ignored. The problem of the Palestinians is a good example. Those who are expelled from their own land, have a right for their own native country. It is only the Catholic Church that has argued without failing for the Palestinians. Today, countries like America support this plea of the Church. The world-conscience takes pride in such a Church.

## **5. The Catholic Church that fights against the Atheistic Movement-Communism**

After the 17<sup>th</sup> Cent., as a result of the Industrial Revolution(1760 – 1910) that took place in Europe, the workers were made victims to very much exploitation. The capitalist exploited the worker and increased his capital. Thus, the situation of the worker became very pathetic. Under this circumstance, Marxism originated from the basic thought of saving the worker. Marx considered that the fundamental reason of all exploitation is the private property and if only the private property is abolished, the exploitation will stop. Thus, Marx saw the private property as the original sin. Marx taught that the entire right for the wealth of the country belongs to the State, that all that is necessary for each individual should be supplied by the State, and in order to make the State the owner of the entire wealth, revolution is necessary, for that any means could be utilized, that religion and God are the opium or intoxication to destroy the excitement of revolution and hence they are against Communism. Marx also taught that if communist rule were to come through revolution, all will be equal without any exploitation and that there will originate a paradise on earth.

Thus, communist regime came into power in Russia, China, Cuba, Vietnam, Eastern Europe and in various other countries of the world through revolution. But the communist paradise that was visualised by Marx, not only did not become a reality any where, but having heard the

bitter experiences the people had to undergo under the communist regime, the people of the world were shuddered . Marxism which came to rescue the workers, who were subjected to exploitation denied the basic individual freedom of man, denied the freedom of opinion. Dailies and the other media were put in fetters. Hundreds of thousands of people were killed under the pretext of revolution. Religious freedom was taken away.

Churches, ashrams and convents were locked out. Dictatorship without any fellow-feeling was established in communist countries.

The Catholic Church had shouldered a large part for the downfall of communism. The teaching of the Church is that the thoughts of Karl Marx about man are not perfect and not integral. Marx interpreted man as merely a worldly being. Marx formed his thought on the foundation that wealth is the only reason for all the problems of man. Marx did not take heed to the measures: either sentimental or mental or spiritual or intellectual. Hence the Church had taught even from the beginning that the Marxian philosophy will not give any ultimate goodness to man, basically. History proved that all the countries, which tried to establish Marxian theory, met with failure, and that the earthly paradise of Marx was merely a dream or utopia, and that those who tried to establish the real paradise, gave hell on earth instead.

In short, the Catholic Church had resisted from the beginning the faulty thought of Marxism about man, its negation of God, the negation of human freedom, and the revolution through blood-shed. The Church, which understood Marxism is always a threat to mankind, it stood strongly against it. Thus the Catholic Church became the biggest enemy of Marxism. In this way, in order to defeat communism, which has turned out for the destruction of mankind, the Catholic Church came forward through the means of suffering and martyrdom. It is the Catholic Church that has saved mankind from the great calamity, which is communism. I take pride to be a member of that Church.

## **6. The Catholic Church which approves the Holy Scripture and the Holy Qurbano equally**

The risen Lord lives till the end of the world in the Church, his mystical body, through the symbols of the Holy Scripture and Holy Qurbano. The chief means through which the faithful experience the presence of Jesus



Christ are the Holy Scripture and the Holy Qurbono. Hence the Catholic Church clearly teaches that these two are to be honored and respected. The Vat. II Synod clearly teaches that just as there is the presence of Jesus in the Holy Qurbono, there is His presence in the Holy Scripture also and hence the faithful are to be given nourishment from the Table of the Word as well as from the Table of the Bread.

It is the proclamation of the Protestant Churches after the 16<sup>th</sup> Cent., 'For salvation, faith alone is enough', 'Holy Scripture alone is enough' (sola fide, 'sola Scriptura'). From the beginning of the Church till the 16<sup>th</sup> Cent., all Christian Communities gave importance to the Holy Scripture and to the Holy Qurbono equally. But, from the beginning of the Protestant Churches, it was taught that Holy Scripture alone is enough and Holy Qurbono is not necessary. Saying that the Holy Qurbono is neither the sacrifice of Christ nor the sacrament and that Holy Qurbono is only the commemoration of the event of the Lord's Pasch, they denied the presence of the Lord in the Holy Qurbono and had degraded the same. Having demolished the altars of many big churches and instead of the Holy Qurbono, they started the proclamation of the Bible alone. Thus the Christian religion was degraded as a written book alone. During the Last Supper, Jesus gave the command to the apostles: "Do this in remembrance of me" (Lk. 22:19). Jesus foreshadowed the sacrifice on the cross at the Pasch through breaking the bread and giving the same as His body and through giving wine as His blood. The Catholic Church is one, where the commemoration of the sacrifice is being offered daily in 23 different rites, in 400 different languages since the past 2000 years. It is the presence of the Lord in the Holy Qurbono that gave to the faithful and still continues to give the power and strength in their various religious persecutions and difficulties. The Catholic Church is a sacramental Church founded on the Holy Qurbono. The life and the strength of the Church is the Holy Qurbono. Hence there is no group in the Catholic Church, where there is no Holy Qurbono.

The Catholic Church believes and teaches the presence of the Lord in the Holy Scripture as it is in the Holy Qurbono. It is the Protestant Churches that have spread the printed bible more. But today, the bible is read, taught and explained more in the Catholic Church. The importance that the Catholic Church gives to the bible today will amaze even the Protestants.

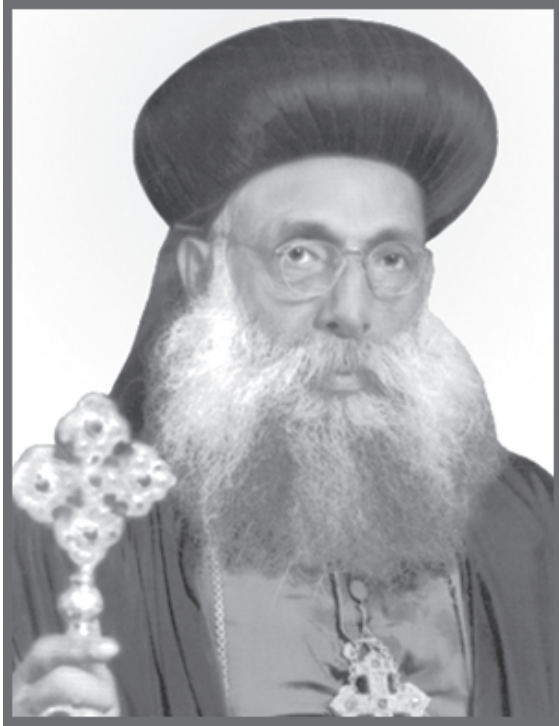
In the Protestant Churches, since the bible is interpreted according to the likes and dislikes of the individuals, they lost the authority of the bible-interpretation. But in the Catholic Church the bible is authentically interpreted according to the tradition of 2000 years and in accordance with the faith of the Church. Hence, since the presence of God is given continuously to mankind through the Holy Qurbono and that the bible being interpreted authentically and without mistake and thereby Jesus is given to the faithful, I take pride in this Church.

## **7. The Catholic Church, having the Intercession of the Saints and Martyrs**

The Catholic Church grew up and strengthened by the blood of thousands and thousands of Christian martyrs who shed their blood for the sake of Christ. Hence the Church honors and respects all martyrs who dedicated their life for the sake of Jesus and seeks their intercession. Since they have borne witness to Jesus with their life, they are in glory along with Jesus. The strength of the Church is their constant intercession and prayer.

The Saints of the Church are those, who have obeyed without blemish the Commandments of God, and who have courageously lived according to the Gospel values. During the course of 2000 years of the life of the Church, there were hundreds of Saints in the Church. There were lots Eastern and Western Fathers of the Church, who lived in the first seven centuries. Their sanctity, erudition and exemplary life are a great wealth to the Church. After the Protestant Revolution, those who gave leadership to the Church through their sanctity are St. Dominic, the founder of the Dominican religious order, St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, St. Therese of Child Jesus, the intercessor of the missionaries, St. Max Millian Kolbe, who offered his life for his co-prisoner, Fr. Damian, who living among the lepers, became a leper and died, and Mother Theresa, the mother of the destitute, who was considered to be a Saint even during her life-time, St. Alphonsa, who was the first canonized Saint of India, St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, the Servant of God Mar Ivanios, the prophet of Reunion, who suffered a lot for the communion of the Church.

Thus, there are many Saints in the Catholic Church. The Church remembers them and the Church imitates their example and entreats their



Servant of God Mar Ivanios

intercession. The Protestant Churches neither approve of their intercession nor show respect to them. I take pride in the Catholic Church, which pays respect to the martyrs and saints and honors them and imitates their good example and entreats their intercession.

### **8. Catholic Church, the Custodian of Morality**

The Catholic Church has the obligation to safeguard till the end of the world the collection of faith, revealed through Christ and the moral truth introduced through the Gospel of Christ. That is why the Catholic Church tried to hold fast to the true faith when there arose false teachings in the Church

against the true faith in course of time. It is a historical truth that on that account there arose dissensions in the Church. Likewise, the Catholic Church maintains keen interest to safeguard the Gospel and moral values. The Catholic Church is very strict, having no compromise with regard to matters of morality. Many evils, which the common society sees quite lightly, the Catholic Church has opposed and



St. Alphonsa

takes stern step against them. On account of the stern step, the Church has taken against feticide, mercy killing, unbridled sexuality, denial of personal freedom, disrespect towards human life, wars and nullification of marriage, the Catholic Church has turned to be the guardian of world-morality. I take pride in the Catholic Church, which controls the moral conscience of the world.

In short, I believe in the Holy Catholic Church that has the perfection of the Church of Christ, that approves and perfects humanity that responds as the voice of the voice-less, that fights against Atheistic Movements, that gives to the faithful the Word of God and Holy Qurbano maturely and authentically, having the intercession of the Martyrs and Saints and the custodian of the world-morality. I praise God for being a member of this Church.



St. Francis Assisi

### Topic for discussion

**Share and discuss what are my Catholic faith-experiences when I say that I take pride in being a Catholic faithful.**



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