Since the Synod of Diamper (1599) there were several divisions and critical periods in the ancient Christian community in India. Although its contact with the Western missionaries had positive effects in many respects, ecclesially it had far reaching negative effects. The first Latin bishop of the Thomas Christians was Roz, s. j., and he was followed by Britto s. j., and the third one was Garcia s. j. By the time of Garcia the people were fed up with the rule of the missionary bishops. There were a lot of reasons for the dissatisfaction of the faithful under the Portuguese rule. The most important reason was the way in which Bishop Garcia handled his office. The immediate reason was the Ahathalla incident. In 1653 almost all the parishes of the St. Thomas community took an oath at Mattanchery that they would never remain under the missionary bishops. This is known as the Coonan Cross Oath. It was in general against the Portuguese missionaries, and specifically against the Jesuit bishop Garcia. Eventually the community was split into two: Pazhayakuttukar (today’s Syro-Malabar Catholics) and Puthenkuttukar (Thozhiyur Church, Mar Thoma Church, Orthodox Church, Malankara Catholic Church, Jacobite Church, a part of the Church of South India). The Coonan Cross Oath was meant to preserve the age-old liturgical and other traditions of the St. Thomas Christians. But in the course of time the Puthenkuttukar lost the full, visible and canonical communion with the See of Peter in Rome, and became part of the non-Chalcedonian Syrian Orthodox Church of West Asia. Thus it lost not only its autonomy, but also its unity and Catholicity. It became a sectarian Church. There were in course of time several divisions in this Puthenkur community. These further divisions in the Puthenkur community were due to the further undue interference of the Syrian Orthodox Church from West Asia and the Anglican missionaries from Europe. The activities of the Syrian Orthodox in the 19th century,
especially of Patriarch Peter III at the Synod of Mulanthuruthy, alienated the Puthenkuttukar and Pazhayakuttukar communities. Since 1844, the Church of the Puthenkuttukar was engaged in constant civil litigations and religious power struggle. It continues even today in another form and has now assumed totally unchristian dimension. The first article tries to explain this sad story of the conflicts and the root causes of the present day crisis in the Malankara Orthodox-Jacobite Church. The second article deals with certain aspects of the reunion attempts of Mar Ivanios, one of the Orthodox bishops (+1953). He saw that his Church lost its full and visible communion with the Catholic Church, that it had no missionary thrust and was counter-witnessing to the cause of Christ because of the endless civil litigations. He, with the support of the other bishops of the Orthodox Church entered into negotiations with the Catholic Church. Finally he entered into the communion with the Bishop of Rome in 1930. He was a great ecumenist of the 20th century and had imbued the spirit of the Second Vatican Council even forty years before the Council. Next year the Church is remembering the 50th death anniversary (July 15, 2003) of this great ecumenical leader of modern times.