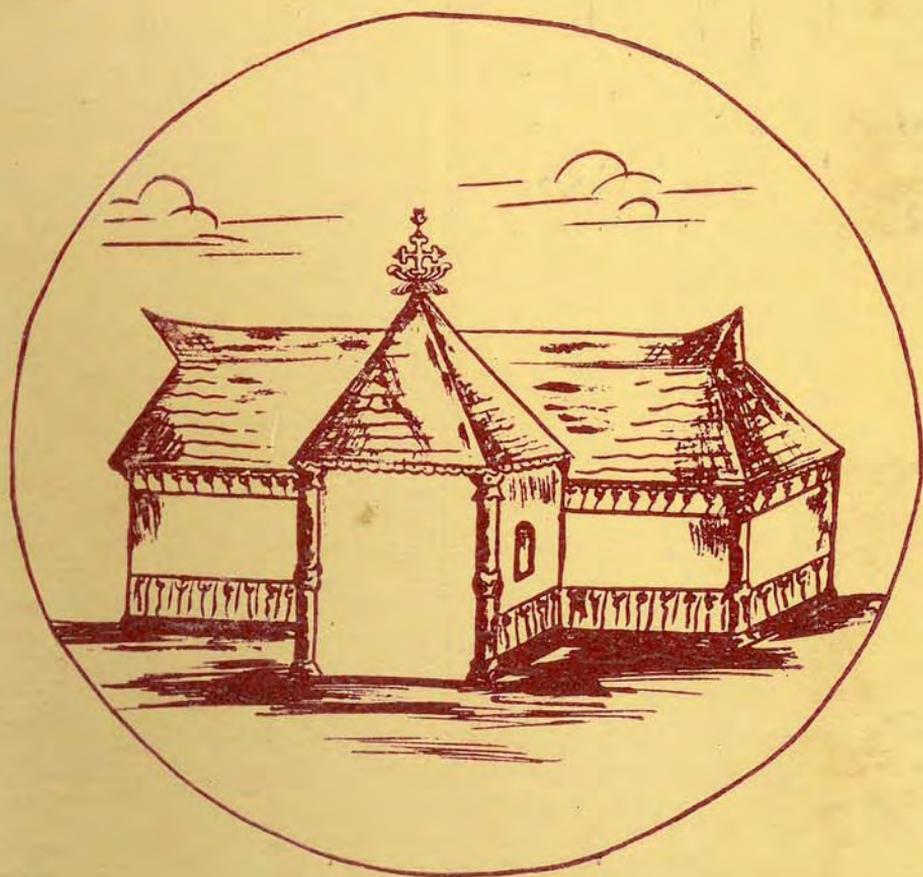


CHURCH
AND
CELEBRATION



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**CHURCH
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**The Interior of a Church or Chapel in the
Chaldeo-Indian Tradition**



DENHA SERVICES

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KOTTAYAM

1986

CHURCH AND CELEBRATION

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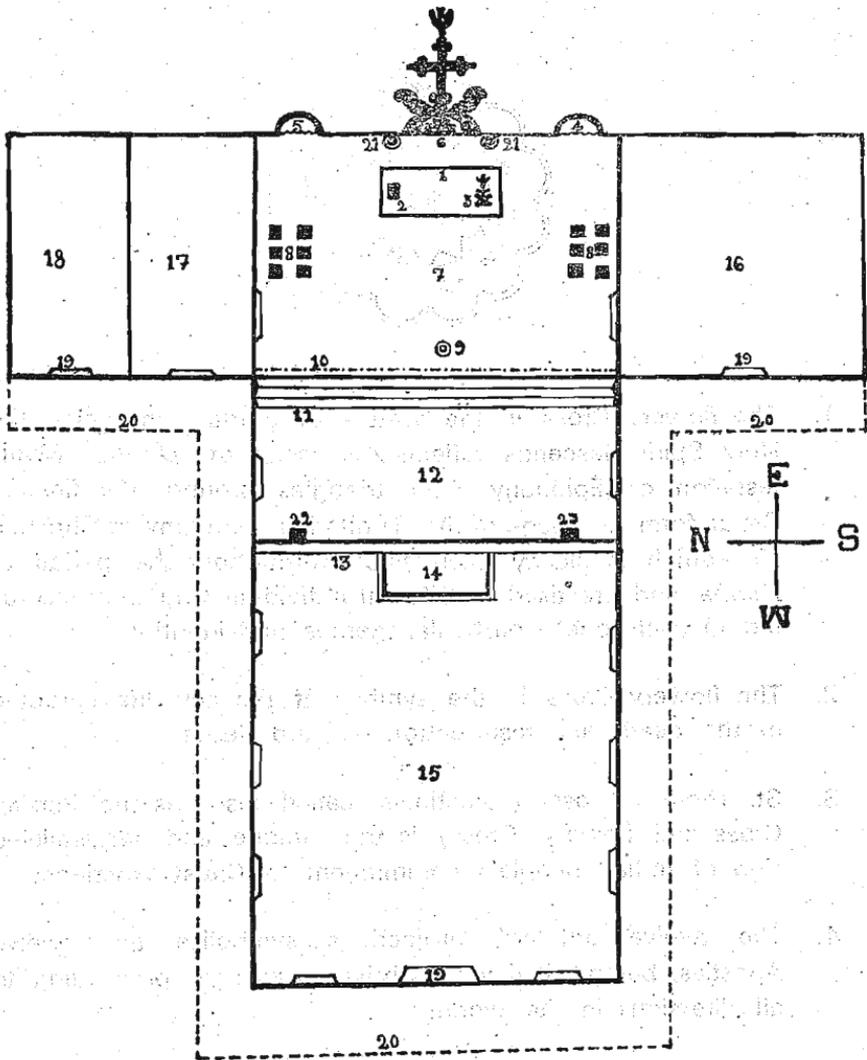
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INTERIOR OF A CHURCH IN CHALDEO-INDIAN TRADITION

1. Altar 2. Evangalion (Gospel Lectionary) 3&6. St. Thomas Cross 4&5. Bet-Gazza 7. Sanctuary 8. Seats 9. Sanctuary Lamp 10. Sanctuary Veil 11. Steps 12. Qestroma (chancel) 13. Step 14. Bema 15. Haikla (nave) 16. Baptistry 17. Sacristy 18. Bet-Sahde (martyrium) 19. Doors 20. Veranda 21. Oil Lamps 22. Lectern for OT readings 23. Lectern for reading the Apostle.



1. The flowery Cross in the waters of Jordan on which the Holy Spirit descends reflects the scene of *Denha*, Manifestation or Epiphany. The triangles around the flowery Cross form an image of the Trinitarian economy of Christian life, which is clearly manifested throughout the period of *Denha* and practised in different individual Churches according to each one's particular genius and identity.
2. The flowery Cross is the symbol of the new life sprouted in the death and resurrection of Lord Jesus.
3. St. Thomas Cross (sometimes called also as the Persian Cross and flowery Cross) is the unique and unparalleled sign of Indian people's commitment to Christ-experience.
4. The twelve outward projections symbolize the twelve Apostles, being filled with Christ-experience, proceeding to all directions in the world.
5. The outward as well as inward jettings jointly form the image of the Church, which is essentially a communion of different individual Churches, always turned to Christ the new life, and at the same time trying to reach every corner of the world.

(Continued on page 8)

CONTENTS

PREFACE	9
CHURCH AND CELEBRATION	14
Altar	14
Evangelion	16
St. Thomas Cross	17
Bet-Gazza	21
Sanctuary	22
Qestroma	23
Bema	24
Haikla	25
Baptistry	26
Sacristy	27
Bet-Sahde	28
RAZA OR QURBANA	29
The Mystery of Salvation in the Celebration	31
THE MIND OF THE HOLY SEE	34
Pope Pius XI	35
Vatican II	35
Pope Paul VI	35
Pope John Paul II	37
S. Congr. for the Or. Churches	40
Remark on the General Directions	46
General Observations on the Text	47
Particular Observations on Enarxis	48
Observations on the Liturgy of the Word	49
Obs. on the Preanaphoral Rites	50
Obs. on the Anaphora	55
Obs. on the Rite of Communion	55
Conclusion	56
A RETREAT PLAN	58
Appendix I : Covering Letter	62
Appendix II : Final Judgement	67
Appendix III : Decree of Approbation	79
Reflections	81

(Continued from page 6)

6. The different languages in the emblem proclaim the universality or catholicity of the Church (of all individual Churches), which is not at all limited to any particular language or culture or country. At the same time they declare her unique capacity to integrate herself to and transcend from any given language or culture or country.
7. "Nine" languages is a reference to the liturgical year of the Chaldeo-Indian Church, which celebrates and experiences the Mystery of salvation invariably according to this liturgical cycle, having "nine" periods, and at present in all these languages and even more.
8. The *star* is first of all an image of the star which led the Magi to the Infant Jesus, the true light, and thus also an image of the Church which leads the whole world to the risen Lord. Secondly, it is also an image of the Mother of Christ, the type and mother of the Church.
9. This emblem, as a whole, resembles a beautiful flower, again an image of the Church which gladdens the whole world in the new life of the risen Lord. The thick and thin outer lines of this ever fragrant and radiant flower manifest the stability and vitality of the internal man even when he is fully involved in external affairs.

PREFACE

There is the testimony of Antonio de Monserrate and several other western missionaries of the 16th century that the churches and chapels of the Thomas Christians in India were exactly like the temples of their Hindu brethren. A St. Thomas Cross on the roof and another one in the open square in front of them distinguished the Christian churches from Hindu temples. Even to the present day there are in Kerala some such models.

From researches and tradition it becomes clear that the Thomas Christians made use of the religious architectural style which was around them or in which they themselves were, for the construction of their own places of worship. But by necessity they had to re-adjust the interior of temple structure, where the individual aspect of worship was stressed, in order to accommodate the community of Christian worship. Thus, they consciously added the spacious *Haikla*, "Nave", in the construction of churches. At the same time, most of the other elements they preserved together with the Mystery sense in Hinduism, which was also constituent of Christian faith.

The Thomas Christians used to construct their churches and chapels in East-West direction, the sanctuary being always at the east end. In this they were always faithful to the universal tradition of all Eastern Churches and that of the early tradition in the west. Only for a few decades in the recent past have they become insensitive to such constructional style, and that too only the Chaldeo-Indians or Syro-Malabarians among the Thomas Christians. All the others, both those who are in union with Rome and not, are very faithful to this age-old custom to the present day.

Very often people may scorn at this practice as something of Oriental fanaticism and uncompromising conservatism. Is it true? This criticism, it appears, arises from the lack of appreciation for the value of symbols and their working in Christian worship. Modern psychology gives sufficient substantiation for this. Man is not purely a philosophical or theoretical being. He has his own sentiments and feelings, mostly inborn and part of his own self. When religious values are harmoniously integrated into them, they become elevated and ennobled. Only from this existential and experiential aspect of being, one can appreciate and feel the value of symbols.

The Church in the west in her frantic race after the so-called 'modernization' of worship, has tried to peel off the symbols and rites in the Liturgy and thus reached at a very dry metaphysical mode of worship, which immediately, they began to complain as non-experiential. Due to several reasons many of the Chaldeo-Indians have come under this western influence. In spite of all these, most of the Thomas Christian families even to the present day keep up that healthy and salutary custom of turning towards the East during their family prayers.

East was supposed to be the source of life and light. A famous German author, Friedrich Heiler quoting an ancient Latin proverb, *Ex Oriente Lux* "from the East the light", wrote once thus: "The Christian Church on earth began in the East. In the East lay Paradise, the location of the 'primitive Church'; out of the East came the ancestor of Israel, Abraham, led by the great promise of God; Jesus was born in the East; out of the East came the Magi to the manger of Christ as the emissaries of the entire Gentile world".

The early Church, both in the east and in the west was fully aware and deeply conscious of the importance of the east. The eschatological note of the early Church was very remarkable, and the Church at all ages has to rely on it to lead an authentic Christian life. The fact that the Nativity of our Lord, the first appearance of God in the world, was announced by a star in the east, induced the first Christians to think of a sign in the east announcing also the second coming of the Lord, i.e., the eschatological fulfilment of Christian existence. The authentic Christian existence whose fundamental dimension is the "already and not-yet", demands that all the faithful fix their eyes always on the "not-yet" when they are in the "already". Hence it is only natural to a Christian, whether he is in the east or in the west, that he celebrates his Christian existence, namely, the Divine Liturgy, fixing his eyes on eschatological realities, i.e., the second coming of the Lord, namely, looking east.

In the course of time, as a westerner himself has remarked, the Christians in the west began to be tempted and distracted by this world, its desires and attractions. Consequently, they turned their attention away from the "not-yet" and fixed it on the "already". They were also trying their best to substantiate this change through several argumentation, since they could not resist in any way the

force of worldly attractions. It is unproportionate to enter into such discussions at present. Orientals who have been latinized and westernized also think, speak and act in the same way. The Christian approach in such situations is to practise forbearance and to live one's own faith authentically.

Several western theologians have already begun to rethink about this new situation in the west. "Towards God or to the World?" was the title of a serious article, recently published in one of the German periodicals. This is only one among many such writings.

The interior of the Thomas Christian churches was always designed in such a way as to suit the proper celebration of their Divine Liturgy. We never hear of people adjusting the 'drama' according to the stage-setting. Normally the stage is to be set according to the nature of the 'drama'. But most of the Chaldeo-Indians, including, even some of their bishops today, without any hesitation are ready to adjust their Liturgy to any setting or construction made according to anybody's whim and fancy. In most of such constructions, they have imitated the western structures, and very often under the pretext of 'indianization'!

The architectural style of a church, both of the interior and of the exterior, and its ornamental decorations, when there are, must be according to the cultural and architectural style of the place. Even from outside, it must have the appearance of a holy place, a house of prayer.

In Chaldeo-Indian tradition, the whole interior of the church is liturgical space and hence considered holy. The reverence due to a holy place must fill the atmosphere. The internal structure and arrangements will help much in achieving this aim. There is no spectators' gallery in an Eastern church and hence no spectators too during the liturgical celebrations. All are actors there, each one in his or her own role.

The liturgical space is divided into three, one for the heavenly choir—the Sanctuary, another for the earthly choir—the Nave, and the third for the intermediary choir—the Chancel. The Sanctuary being

the symbol of heaven, even its roof is built a bit higher than the other parts, and inside, it is the most raised space among the three divisions of liturgical space.

According to several eminent scholars, who have done researches into the architectural style of churches and chapels in the Chaldaic tradition, both in India and in the Middle East, this particular tradition has assumed, from the very origins, a wonderful indigenous integration. The Christian architecture all over the world was supposed to be more or less influenced by the *Hellenistic* or *Greek* architectural style. But the Chaldaic Christian architecture stands by itself, completely different from others and without any influence from the Greeks.

It is truly and properly *asian* infused with a pure "*asiatic*" spirit. This is a field where much is to be explored. The identity of this particular tradition in Christian architecture, and its contribution to the universal Church, are not at all mentioned in any book that deals with such subjects! Hence, this must be a challenge to all Thomas Christian researchers and archeologists.

What I intend through this humble contribution is to give a general picture of the liturgical structure of a church or chapel in Chaldeo-Indian tradition. This may help the Chaldeo-Indians to experience their liturgical celebrations more intimately. For so many years now, this aspect of celebration was almost neglected in this Church. This contributed to the tragic overturn to a monotonous celebration. Let us reflect on ourselves. Those who are, perhaps, very lavish and even extravagant in spending for external structures and appearances of churches, are very often indifferent or insensitive to their internal furnishing or even in arranging the necessary liturgical vestments and utensils. In this context it may be good to reflect on the words of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Letter, *Dominicae Cenaee* ".....*in normal conditions* to ignore the liturgical directives can be interpreted as a lack of respect towards the Eucharist, dictated perhaps by individualism or by an absence of a critical sense concerning current opinions, or by a certain *lack of a spirit of faith*".

A church or chapel is the centre of our Christian and religious life. Let us not be stingy but generous when it comes to furnish it

nobly and neatly. At the same time, let us avoid all kinds of extravagance.

In the second part of this booklet are given a few passages from relevant *Vatican Documents*, which may help the readers to understand the mind of the Holy See in ecclesial and liturgical matters. We know for certain that the Holy See is the supreme authority in such matters. Finally, may I confess my indebtedness to several persons in this humble effort and I thank them all most sincerely.

Feast of Assumption
August 15, 1984

Varghese Pathikulangara cmi

Note to the Second Printing

I am very glad that the booklet *Church and Celebration* has been received by the people of God with great enthusiasm. The copies were exhausted within three months' time. In the meantime, I was trying to publish its Malayalam translation; but the matter is not yet ready for the press. Since many are on demand for this book, I am arranging for a reprint, but with some additional documents (Appendices I - III) from the Holy See, finalizing the liturgical disputes in the Syro - Malabar on Chaldeo-Indian Church. For these documents, I am indebted to several friends, especially, to Mar Abraham Mattam and Dr. Thomas Monnooranparambil for what they had published through *Satna Samachar* and *Syro-Malabar Qurbanayude Charithrapaschathalam*.

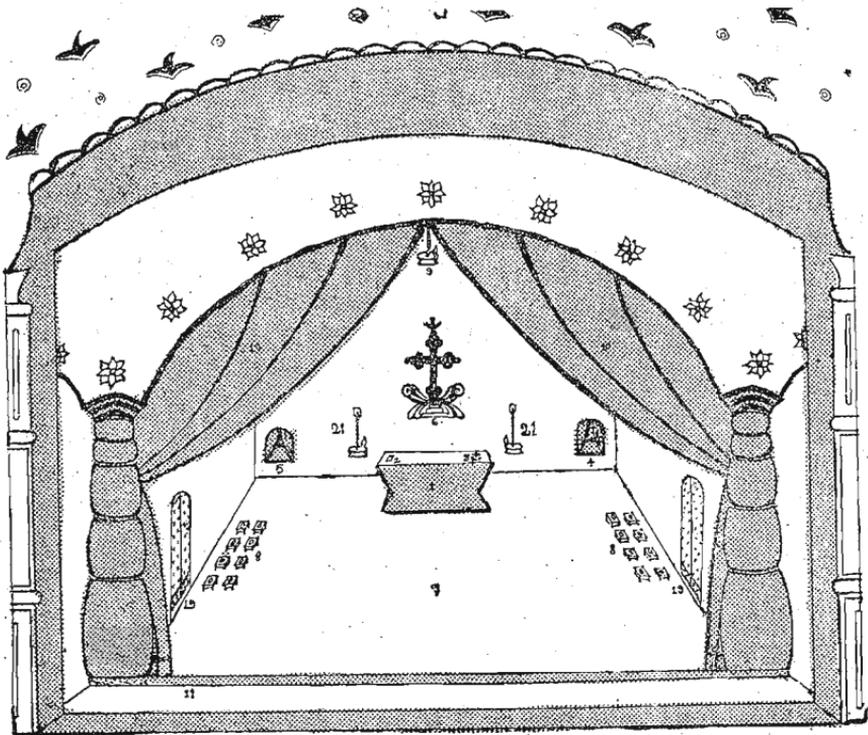
Nativity of our Mother
September 8, 1986

Varghese Pathikulangara cmi

CHURCH AND CELEBRATION

1. ALTAR

The altar is the centre of attraction and the most venerable part of a church or chapel. According to the evidences brought out by most of the scholars, the first altars, in all ecclesial traditions, were all made of wood. The Latin Church gradually turned to stone altars. "Stone has in fact a double symbolism in the Bible, where it is a type of Christ. First there is the theme of the stone itself, the rock from which Moses caused the water to flow, 'and that rock was Christ' (1 Cor 10, 4), the foundation and cornerstone of the whole building. Then there is the theme of the altar of stone, the first intimation of which is found in *Genesis* (28, 18) and which is more exactly indicated in the legislation of *Deuteronomy* (27, 5-7) as the altar for the



Sanctuary

offering of holocausts. In the New Law Christ is the unique altar just as he is the unique temple. Just as Christ its prototype, the altar in Latin tradition carries as it were the stigmata—five engraved crosses—and receives anointing". (A. G. Martimort (ed.), *Introduction to the Liturgy*, New York 1968, pp. 170-171)

The Chaldeo-Indian Church seems to have continued the use of wooden altars for a long time. Even their present Pontifical has recommended most precious kinds of wood, such as teak-wood, ebony, sandal-wood, etc., as the material for making the altars and the *dapas*. Whatever be the material used to make the altar, its symbolism is very important for our liturgical experience.

In Chaldeo-Indian Church, the altar is the *Sepulchre* of our Lord, the empty tomb, the symbol of our Lord's Resurrection. Her liturgical text itself is the witness to this symbolism. In the rite of incensing just before the elevation in the *Qurbana*, while incensing the altar and the Mysteries on it, the celebrant prays: "Make fragrant this altar, O Lord our God, erected as a symbol of the *Sepulchre* of our Lord, and his throne, and his propitiatory body and blood". Although borrowed from the Maronite tradition, the farewell to the altar at the end of the *Qurbana*, expresses the same idea: "Remain in peace, altar of forgiveness; remain in peace, *Sepulchre* of our Lord. May the *Qurbana* which I received from you avail unto me for the pardon of offences and the forgiveness of sins. I know not whether I shall come again and offer another *Qurbana* upon you, or not".

According to the custom of the Chaldeo-Indians, only the *Evangelion*, "Gospel Lectionary", and the St. Thomas Cross, both the symbols of our Lord Jesus, are kept on the altar. Every thing else, candles and flowers when used, is to be arranged never the altar, as if we are decorating it. The altar is never used a pedestal for candles or as a table to set flowers. Usually, steps arranged on the eastern wall to place candles and to set flowers. Oil lamps may be hung from clamps fixed to the eastern wall as shown in the given sketch (21).

The *Evangelion* is kept on the altar in the northern side, while the Cross on the south. During the celebration of the *Qurbana* or other liturgical celebrations, the necessary liturgical books, vessels,

etc., are brought to the altar and removed from it at the end of those celebrations. The paten and chalice are not to be prepared on the altar, but in the *bet-gazze*, "treasuries", and to be brought to the altar during the *Onita d-Raze*, "anthem of the Mysteries". Similarly, after the communion, they are to be taken to the *bet-gazza* in the south, where they are purified.

The altar is always made in the model of a tomb, and never as that of an ordinary dining table.* Usually, there are no extra steps near the altar on the sanctuary floor.

In short, the Altar in the Chaldeo-Indian tradition remains as a symbol of the risen Lord, the *Messiah*, the anointed One. The complete anointing of the altar and the *dapa* during their consecration ceremony reminds us of this anointed One.

Dapa: In the Chaldeo-Indian tradition, the Holy *Qurbana* is not celebrated where there is no consecrated altar. When there comes the necessity of celebrating *Qurbana* outside churches and chapels, a consecrated *dapa* is used always. *Dapa* is a small wooden piece, square in size, consecrated according to the prescribed rites, and kept in all churches and chapels. After its consecration, it is always kept in a sheath made of white cloth, having three cross-signs over. It is placed on a table to make a temporary altar where there are no consecrated altars.

2. EVANGALION

The *Gospel-Lectionary* remains as the symbol of Jesus Christ during the liturgical celebrations. The gospel pericopes to be proclaimed during the Divine Liturgy are printed separate, usually in letters of bigger size in order to make an easy reading, and is to be beautifully bound and decorated. On several occasions, the Chaldeo-Indian Church prefers a mixed reading, namely, passages joined together from different parts of the same Gospel and also from different Gospels themselves. Hence such a special Lectionary is a must for liturgical use. This individual Church uses the *Psitta* version of the Bible for liturgical purposes. Everybody knows the importance of *Psitta* version as a common treasure of Syriac traditions. Generally, the St. Thomas Cross is also printed or embossed on the front cover of this Lectionary.

The *Evangelion* is always kept closed on the altar in the northern side. For the proclamation of the Gospel in the liturgy, it is carried to the *Bema* in procession by the celebrant or the archdeacon. He takes the Lectionary with both hands, raises it to his forehead in such a way that his face is hidden behind it, and the St. Thomas Cross on the Lectionary is visible to the community, and proceeds to the *Bema*. This Gospel Procession, at least on solemn occasions, must be conducted with the accompaniment of the Cross, the thurible, and two candles. The president of the liturgical assembly proclaims the Gospel. At the end of the gospel-reading, he closes the Lectionary and shows reverence by kissing or touching it with his forehead. The reverence shown to the Gospel Lectionary at this liturgical moment is the reverence shown to Jesus Christ, who is represented in and by it. Then he entrusts the Lectionary to the deacon to be carried back to the altar.

3. ST. THOMAS CROSS



A St. Thomas Cross, inlaid or embossed on a wooden or metallic plate, almost equal to the size of the Gospel Lectionary, and beautifully decorated, is kept on the altar in the south. The St. Thomas Cross is, in fact, the symbol of the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. It is a summary of the whole Mystery of Christ. This Cross on the altar is carried in solemnity during all liturgical processions especially that of the Gospel Lectionary. According to Tradition, the St. Thomas Cross is to be used for all liturgical purposes in the Chaldeo-Indian Church. In this connection, it is good to describe briefly the symbolism of the St. Thomas Cross.

This is the Cross engraved on the rock on which the Apostle St. Thomas is believed to have fallen down as he was wounded by

his enemies and obtained a martyr's death. Thus this particular rock is smeared with the Apostle's blood. Most probably this particular Cross was engraved on it in the seventh century. Later on in the sixteenth century, it was discovered among the ruins on the St. Thomas Mount near Madras by the Portuguese missionaries. They came across this Cross accidentally, but it attracted them very much. Hence they placed it over the altar against the wall in the chapel on the St. Thomas Mount. On December 18, 1557 during the proclamation of the gospel in the Divine Liturgy, this particular Cross sweated blood. This miracle continued for several years. Hence the missionaries informed the Holy Father of this miraculous event and got a feast day approved in its honour. Till today December 18th is celebrated among the Thomas Christians as the day of the miraculous invention of St. Thomas Cross. Ancient models of this particular Cross is seen in several places in Kerala, the home-State of the Thomas Christians.

This special Cross is a perfect symbol from different aspects of our Lord's Resurrection. First of all, the very shape of it announces this Mystery. The four ends of the Cross, just like blooming new buds proclaim the new life which we have gained through participation in Jesus' Resurrection. The flowery Cross remained always as a mark of the early Christianity and its victory over death through Jesus Christ.

The empty Cross, the Cross without the crucified body of Jesus, just like the empty tomb, is a perfect symbol of our Lord's Resurrection. Upto the end of the Patristic age, the formative and normative period of Christianity, we never come across a crucifix in any of the churches, whether they are in the West or in the East.

During the post-Patristic period, the Western Christianity began to lay great stress on the passion of Christ, sometimes risking even the primacy of resurrection over passion and death. Thus different sorts of crucifixes appeared in the Western Church. It affected both the theology and spirituality of this Church, very often even adversely. A Western author, Gerald O' Collins SJ, who became convinced of all these from his researches into the matter, writes thus in his book, *The Easter Jesus*: "Western Christianity, however, has manifested a long standing preoccupation with Good Friday at the expense of Easter Sunday..... Looking back on much Western theology we might

parody Paul and cry out: Resurrection is swallowed up in crucifixion, O Resurrection, where is thy victory? O Resurrection, where is thy sting?"

Several of the latinized Orientals, especially the Chaldeo-Indians, were encouraged and sometimes even forced to subscribe to all these changes in the West, in and after the 16th century. But now they are free. They are to take courage and repair the damages that have once happened. Of course, the crucifix is the symbol of the passion and death of the Lord; but the flowery Cross, in our particular case, the St. Thomas Cross, is the symbol of our Lord's Resurrection. As the same Western author writes, "first thing first; we may face an irreversible sequence and may not go behind the Resurrection to make the Cross (crucifix) paramount. As it lacks any autonomous or absolute significance, death must be understood only in the light of Easter". Hence, the authentic Chaldeo-Indians need not by any means hesitate to substitute the St. Thomas Cross for the crucifix in all liturgical purposes.

The descending Holy Spirit on the St. Thomas Cross is another symbolical expression of our Lord's Resurrection. According to the theological vision of St. Paul, when the Lord Jesus was buried in the tomb, the Holy Spirit descended and filled his 'flesh body' and transformed it into the 'spirit body'. Thus the Lord rises up from the tomb; the risen Lord imparts to every one who comes in contact with him, his Spirit, the new life.

According to different scholars who have studied about this unique symbol, what is at its bottom, is the cross-section of a lotus flower. Lotus is the symbol of Buddhism which was so wide-spread and predominant in India in the early Christian era. The Cross set on the lotus flower signifies the spread of Christianity in India, which was under strong Buddhistic influence.

Finally, a word also about the three steps on which the Cross stands. Three steps form a liturgical symbol in Chaldeo-Indian tradition, used always in the construction of church and chapels. This liturgical symbol signifies both the *Gagulta*, the place from where the Lord radiated his glory during his death and the heavenly Jerusalem where he remains always in glory. Thus there are always three steps for the *Bema* and three steps between the nave and the

Sanctuary in the Chaldeo-Indian churches and chapels. In this particular context of the St. Thomas Cross, it signifies the *Gagulta* and thus the symbol of our Lord's death.

In short, the St. Thomas Cross remains as the unique and unparalleled symbol of the original Christianity in India. The Chaldeo-Indians are the real heirs of this original Christian synthesis or faith-synthesis in India. Let them, at least, take pride in distinguishing themselves, their institutions, churches, chapels and homes with this living and life-giving symbol.

The Chaldeo-Indians must always have a St. Thomas Cross of bigger and proportionate size fixed to the wall on the East in the Sanctuary (6). Today what is generally seen is a crucifix. They are not to be afraid to substitute it with a St. Thomas Cross. As we have mentioned above, we do understand the symbolism of the crucifix and venerate it. But the authentic liturgical genius of our Church demands us to prefer the St. Thomas Cross for all liturgical purposes.

Also, the statues are to be removed from our churches and chapels, where the Holy *Qurbana* is regularly celebrated. By no means can they be kept in the Sanctuary. The best place for them, if there were enough space, is the *martyrium* (18). They may also be placed becomingly along the veranda (20) around the church building. Ordering of new statues are to be strictly forbidden.

The Eastern Tradition prefers *icons* to statues. *Icons* are a special category in the history of liturgy. Because of the limitation and the nature of this work, I do not try to discuss the theology of *icons* at present. But it may be good to give some necessary information. The *icons* are drawn after deep study and prolonged meditation on a phase of the Mystery of Christ or some sálvific theme. Sometimes the artist spends even years for that. First the artist acquires an internal or supernatural vision of the Mystery and then he tries to copy that experience using natural colours. Hence very often the *icons* are supra-natural in appearance. From the merely natural angles of vision one may not understand anything of it. One needs real knowledge and supernatural vision in order to understand the meaning of an *icon*. The Byzantines and several other Eastern traditions use a number of *icons* in their church building and in all liturgical celebrations. But the Syriac tradition, especially the Chaldeo-Indian, uses them rarely. Their most important

icons are those of the Mother of Christ and of their Apostle St. Thomas.

4. BET-GAZZA

The *Bet-Gazze*, "Treasures" (4 & 5) are arranged on both sides of the altar. Usually they are made as niches or recesses in the northern and southern walls of the Sanctuary. There are also cases of ancient churches in Kerala, where they are made in the eastern wall on either side of the altar. It is also customary to cover them with decorated doors or curtains. The *chalice* is prepared in the *bet-gazza* on the southern side and the *paten* in that on the northern side. In ancient days, the Holy Body of our Lord also used to be preserved in the northern *bet-gazza*. In the present context, I think, we can very well set or fix the tabernacle in this *bet-gazza*.

The age-old tradition in the East is to preserve only a few particles from the consecrated Body of Christ in the treasury. All of us know that the modern Eucharistic theology in the West also emphasises the same. The particles needed for the communion of the faithful are to be consecrated in each Eucharistic celebration. Holy communion is the culmination and the natural conclusion of every Eucharistic celebration, and hence, as far as possible all the participants are to communicate. Communion cannot be considered merely an act of piety, outside the Eucharistic celebration. Hence the practice of preserving a large amount of consecrated hosts, sometimes even in several *ciborium*s is to be very strictly discouraged. The ecclesiastical authorities themselves are to take actions in such cases.

A small tabernacle set in the northern *bet-gazza* or the *bet-gazza* itself having a strong door can very well be used to preserve these few consecrated hosts. In this case, the custom of having *bet-gazza* in the eastern wall on either side of the altar, is to be preferred and encouraged. Hence the location shown (4 & 5) in the present sketch.

Generally the Gifts are prepared in the *bet-gazze* by the deacons. When there is the Archdeacon or concelebrating priests, they

may also help the deacons to prepare them. The preparation of the Gifts is usually done during the *Karozuta* prayer after the gospel. But when there are no deacons or other priests, the preparation may be done either before the *Qurbana* begins or immediately before the transference of the Gifts. Whatever be the option, the preparation of the Gifts is always done together with the prescribed rites and prayers.

5. SANCTUARY

Sanctuary (7) which is the most raised and protected area within a church or chapel is at its eastern end. Even the roof of this part is built a bit raised above the other parts in traditional Chaldeo-Indian architectural style. Sanctuary remains as the heavenly Jerusalem, in all liturgical celebrations. Usually this is the place for priests and deacons, the "heavenly choir" or the "upper choir", as it is said in the liturgical books. The floor of the Sanctuary must be three steps (11) above the *Qestroma*.

Seats (8) are conveniently arranged on either side of the Sanctuary for concelebrating priests and other ministers. It may be more convenient to provide a stand too in front of each seat so that the priests and ministers can keep their liturgical books on it.

According to the Chaldeo-Indian tradition, there are three possibilities as to the positions of the concelebrating priests. They may either accompany the celebrating priest (the president of the liturgical assembly) to the *bema*, remain there up to the Great Entrance, enter the Sanctuary together with the president, go to their seats (8) as the president goes to the altar and remain there till the end of the celebration; or they may remain near their seats (8) in the Sanctuary through out the celebration; or they may remain in the *bema* together with the community all through the time of celebration.

Certain *slawata*, "Orations", as determined in the liturgical books, are distributed among the concelebrants. They may also help the deacons to prepare the Gifts in *bet-gazza* and to transfer them to the altar. Usually, the preparation of the Gifts, their transference to the altar, presentation and deposition on the altar, are the duties of

ordained deacons. But when there is the Archdeacon or concelebrating priests, it is recommended that one of them does the Presentation of the Gifts and their deposition on the altar.

Usually, there is a lamp (ܐܘܪܝܘܬܐ) at the entrance of the Sanctuary (9), hung from the roof and lit always as a sign of the holiness of this place. Electric lamps could very well be used for this purpose.

In Chaldeo-Indian tradition, there must be an opaque veil (10), which separates the Sanctuary from other parts of a church or chapel. Generally, the Sanctuary is kept veiled. This brings to our mind the real nature of heaven which is beyond our human perception. Only if and when the Lord wills can we have a look into the heaven. Similarly, at appointed times the veil is drawn aside and the liturgical assembly is given a vision of heaven.

A St. Thomas Cross or the scene of Annunciation is usually painted or stitched on to the Sanctuary veil. St. Thomas Cross represents the risen Lord, the culmination of the salvific Mystery; while the Annunciation is the beginning or inauguration of it. According to the prescriptions of liturgical books, at least during the celebration of the Solemn and Most Solemn Forms of the *Qurbana*, the Sanctuary veil must be used. We think very often that the veil is used to hide things; but in the Liturgy it is used to reveal the glory of God.

6. QESTROMA

The *Qestroma* (12), "Chancel", is the space in between the Sanctuary and the Nave in the internal structure of a Chaldeo-Indian church or chapel. This is, in fact, the place for the trained choir. This intermediary choir is usually divided into two, one group helping the 'heavenly or upper choir', namely, those who are in the Sanctuary, and the other group, the 'earthly or lower choir,' i.e., those who are in the Nave. In all Eastern traditions, the whole assembly, divided into two choirs, the upper and the lower, will be singing and praying during the Liturgy. They can never think of a trained choir monopolizing the

whole singing in the Liturgy. They use only the necessary instruments. Vocal singing, the real praise of the mouth, is important for them. They sing only those hymns and songs given in the approved liturgical books during the Divine Liturgy. The liturgical hymns and songs are to be composed in such a way that the whole community can easily sing them.

In case that an intermediary choir becomes inconvenient in the *Qestroma*, trained personnel may be distributed in the community itself. If somebody is invited to the Sanctuary to help the Sanctuary choir, they are to vest themselves in *Kottina* and *Zunara*, "sash". In Eastern traditions, we never come across celebrations without some kind of singing. Hence, simple and easy tunes are always preferred in these traditions. Tendencies in the choir to monopolize singing during liturgical celebrations are to be strictly discouraged.

The *Qestroma* is built one step (13) above the Nave and often there are rails at the separation of the *Qestroma* and the Nave.

7. BEMA

The *Bema* (14), "Dais", is a raised platform in the middle of the Nave in Chaldaic churches and chapels. For the "Liturgy of the Catechumens" in the *Qurbana* and for several other liturgical celebrations, the celebrant remains on the *bema*. During the *Qurbana* of the Faithful also, certain hymns were sung from the *bema*. Thus, there is the *onita d-Bem* or *d-Bem*, the hymn sung immediately before the communion.

Chairs for the bishop, priest and other ministers are conveniently arranged on the *bema*. A small table is set in the middle of it. *Qerjane*, the Lectionaries containing Old Testament readings and the *Sliha*, the Lectionary containing readings from the letters, are kept on this table. The readings from the Acts of the Apostles, if there are, are usually included in the Lectionaries of Old Testament readings. A St. Thomas Cross of smaller size is placed in the middle of this table.

Bema may sometimes signify the altar or throne. In the Chaldaic tradition, it is the symbol of earthly Jerusalem and the table on it, the *Gagulta*, "Calvary". It is constructed in such a way that its floor is three steps raised above the Nave.

Two lecterns are arranged on either side of the *bema*, for the readings. *Qerjane*, the readings from the Old Testament are read from the northern lectern (22), and *Sliha*, the reading from the Letters is done from the southern (23).

In the modern context, the place most appropriate for *Bema* appears to be at the eastern end of the Nave, close to the *Qestroma*, and at a height equal to it. Hence the adaptation made in our present sketch.

8. HAIKLA

The *Haikla* (15), "Nave", is the place for the community at the western portion of a church or chapel in Chaldaic tradition. Symbolically it is the earth, the place for the 'lower or earthly choir' in the Liturgy. According to ancient custom, women used to occupy the rear and men the front of this space. Very often there were also rails to separate the place for women from that for men. But today it is not uncommon that women occupy the northern or southern side of the Nave and men the opposite.

Although the inner space of a church is divided into three—the Sanctuary, the Chancel and the Nave—in the Chaldeo-Indian tradition, the whole inner space is recognized as the liturgical space. Hence every place inside the church is holy for the Chaldeo-Indians. There is no spectator's gallery in this tradition. The dedication ceremony of a church or chapel itself is a witness to this understanding of this tradition. In the dedication ceremony, after anointing the altar, the bishop anoints all the four inner walls of the church—east, north, south and west—setting the whole inner space of it apart for the dispensation of the living and lifegiving Mysteries.

Eastern traditions in general, and by that very fact the Chaldeo-Indian tradition, never consider the Divine Liturgy as something merely clerical. The whole community celebrates the Liturgy, but each one in the community in his or her own capacity and identity. There is a clear recognition and proclamation of the common priesthood on one side and of the ministerial priesthood through the special imposition of hand on the other. They would never tolerate making confusion in roles, especially regarding the priestly ministry

and the role of the laity or disregarding the sense of the sacred or of the Mystery, or losing the ecclesial character of the celebration. Hence they follow the prescriptions of the lawfully approved liturgical texts most faithfully.

There is also a praise-worthy custom existing in this tradition in the celebration of the *Qurbana*. The dictum is "One community, One Church, One altar and One celebration". Hence in ordinary circumstances, even when there are several priests, they prefer to have one celebration. During such celebrations, there is also a possibility that all the concelebrating priests remain in the *bema* together with the community through out the celebration, only the President, the Archdeacon and two Deacons entering the Sanctuary at the Great Entrance. When there is a bishop in the liturgical assembly, he has to preside over it and lead the liturgical celebration. But there is a marvellous custom in this particular tradition, that even when he presides over the assembly, he may ask another priest to lead the celebration in the Sanctuary, and may remain in his seat in the *bema*. In that case, the bishop receives communion first, and imparts the final blessing to the community, singing the *Huttama* prayer.

9. BAPTISTRY

The close relation between Baptism and the Eucharist, always upheld in Christian tradition, might have induced the Chaldeo-Indians to construct their Baptisteries (16) close to the Sanctuary. From excavations of ancient ruins and existing traditional constructions and also from liturgical books we understand the closeness of Baptistry to the Sanctuary. The centre of attraction in this part of the church is the baptismal font. Everything needed for the celebration of Baptism is arranged here. The walls of the Baptistry may be decorated with paintings or icons of our Lord's Baptism in Jordan, by water-symbols in the Bible or even by salvation history scenes. Usually there is a door between the Sanctuary and the Baptistry.

"The Holy Ecumenical Council confirms and approves the ancient discipline concerning the sacraments which exist in the Eastern Churches, and also the ritual observed in their celebration and administration, and wishes this to be restored where such a case arises" (Vat. II, O E. 12)

In the case of the Chaldeo-Indian Church, this article of the Council is yet to be put into practice. According to the desire of Vatican II, she has to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation, namely, the Sacraments of Baptism, of Perfection (*Confirmation* in Latin and *Chrismation* in Greek terminologies) and of the Eucharist, in one liturgical action. It is also good to restore the good practice of the ancient Thomas Christians, of baptizing in community during solemn celebrations such as the Easter Vigil, Denha, Pentecost, and so on.

It is also asked very often, why should there be a baptistry attached to a Seminary or Convent chapel? The baptistry attached to the Sanctuary is not intended for baptizing alone. It is a living symbol of our birth as Christians. Our Christian nourishment in the Holy Eucharist is always related to our birth as Christians, in Baptism. In the Ordination ceremony there is a special rite, where reverence is shown to the altar and the baptistry by the ordinandi kissing them. This shows the interrelation between the two Sacraments and also reminds the candidate of his principal ministry in priesthood.

10. SACRISTY

The Sacristy is a room (17) adjacent to the church, where priests and other ministers vest themselves and prepare for different celebrations. All necessary convenience for such preparation is provided in it. The necessary liturgical vestments, vessels and utensils for liturgical use are kept in it. There should also be a worthy place to keep the holy oils, if they are kept, the liturgical books, wine, bread, and so on.

In the early medieval Roman tradition, the sacristy is seen at the entrance of the church; then it was placed adjacent to the choir; and later, adjacent to the Sanctuary. In Chaldaic and therefore also in Chaldeo-Indian tradition, it was always adjacent to the Sanctuary. There was an access to the Sanctuary from the sacristy and also an access through the veranda to the chancel and the Nave. This is made clear in our present sketch.

As was the tradition in Gallican churches (6th cent.) and in all Eastern Rite churches, the Chaldeo-Indians used to place their offerings in the sacristy before the *Qurbana*. In ancient days, the

deacons used to select what was needed for the celebration from such offerings and used to bring them to the *bet-gazze* first, and from there to the altar. The offerings were restricted to what was necessary for the celebration, such as, bread, wine, incense, candles, oil, etc. Usually there was also a separate place or room where the people deposited their other offerings for the poor and the church.

11. BET-SAHDE

The Chaldeo-Indian tradition foresees a convenient place or room (18), adjacent to the sacristy, where the relics of the Saints are venerated. Traditionally, it appears to be the burial place of saintly bishops and priests. Their spiritual influence in the community was such that this place was later turned out to be a place of holy relics, and in relation to the holy martyrs of early centuries this place was called *Bet-sahde* in Syriac and *martyrium* in Latin. Gradually, the faithful began to deposit relics of martyrs and saints from other places or even from other Churches in the same place. Thus the veneration of martyrs and saints in Chaldaic tradition began to grow and flourish around this *bet-sahde*. It was also a custom for them to adorn this place with the icons of martyrs and saints. There is a touching ceremony during the episcopal ordination, that the candidate on his way to the Sanctuary to be ordained, enters into *bet-sahde* to pray and imbibe the courage and sanctity of the martyrs and thus to become a martyr for faith.

It is highly recommended that the parish cemetery is designed and constructed around this *bet-sahde*. If we succeed to move the statues of saints, erected today in the Sanctuaries and the Naves of many churches and chapels to the *bet-sahde*, when there is sufficient space, or honourably distributed and erected in the cemetery, that will be a bold step in restoring the authentic liturgical spirituality of the Chaldeo-Indian Church. Once it is done, the cemetery will naturally turn out to be a place of prayer. The community and authorities are to adopt all means to keep the cemetery neat and clean. Our forefathers are sleeping there, expecting the Lord's second coming. It is also good to set a St. Thomas Cross, the symbol of resurrection, at the head of each grave.

RAZA OR QURBANA

in the

Chaldeo-Indian Church

1. ENARXIS

- ç *Puḡdankon*, 'your commandment' and *Puḡdaneh da-Mesiha*, 'the commandment of Christ'
- Angels' Hymn, "Glory to God...."
- Lord's Prayer, "Our Father...."
- * *Slota*, 'Oration'
- * Psalmody, the group of psalms
- ç * *D-Qanke*, 'anthem of the rails'
- ç Incensing (sanctuary, nave and the community)
- Laku Mara*, the Resurrection Hymn

2. LITURGY OF THE WORD

- Trisagion*, the thrice holy hymn
- ç * *Qerjane*, readings from the O. T. (the Law and the Prophets)
- ç * *Surraja* the responsorial Psalm
- * *Slota*, the Oration before the Apostle
- ç * *Turgama*, the homiletic hymn before the Apostle
- * *Apostle*, the reading from the Epistles
- * *Zummara*, the *Halleluija* Hymn
- ç Blessing of the incense
- ç * *Turgama*, the homiletic Hymn before the Gospel
- * *Evangelion*, reading from the Gospels
- ç * *Turgama*, the homiletic hymn after the Gospel
- Karozuta*, and Preparation of the Gifts
- * Prayer of imposition of hands
- ç Dismissal of the Catechumens

3. TRANSFERENCE OF THE GIFTS AND GREAT ENTRANCE

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>A. Material Preparation
(Deacons lead)</p> | <p>B. Spiritual Preparation
(Celebrant leads)</p> |
|--|--|

Preparation of the Gifts
(during *Karozuta*)

ç Prostrations in the *Raza*
Washing the hands

- * *Onita d-Raze*, the anthem of the Mysteries
- Transfer of the Gifts
- Presentation of the Gifts
- Deposition of the Gifts
- Covering the Gifts with *Sosepa*, the veil

- (all these liturgical actions are done during the singing of the *Onita d-Raze* by the community)

- Approach to the Sanctuary door
- Symbol of Faith, the Nicean Creed
- Proclamation of the Deacon
- Approach to the Altar
- Prayer request of the Priest
- 1st *Gehanta* prayer
- Exchange of Peace
- * Diptychs
- Announcement of the Deacon
- Unveiling the Gifts
- ç Incensing the Gifts

4. ANAPHORA

- Sursum Corda* dialogue
- Kusapa*, 2nd *Gehanta*, *Sanctus*
- Kusapa*, Prayer request, 3rd *Gehanta* (a) Institution
- Narrative, 3rd *Gehanta* (b) *Qanona* of glorification
- Intercession
- Prayer request, 4th *Gehanta*, *anamnesis*, *Epiclesis*, Doxology.

5. RITE OF RECONCILIATION

- Prayer to Christ, Penitential Psalms
- ç Rite of incensing
- Elevation, Fraction and Consignation
- Kusapa*, with the sign of the Cross on the forehead
- Litanic* penitential prayer
- Prayer of absolution

6. RITE OF COMMUNION

- * Introductory prayer of "Our Father"
- "Our Father" and its *Embolism*
- Pax* and *Sancta Sanctis*
- * Prayers before Communion
- ç *Dhil-at*

Communion of the Celebrant and the ministers

- * *D-Bem*, and the invitation to Communion
- Communion of all others

7. RITE OF THANKSGIVING OR CONCLUSION

- * Thanksgiving by the community, ministers and Priests
- Lord's Prayer, the "Our Father...."

- * *Huttama*, the sealing prayer and final Blessing
- Farewell to the Altar.

PS ç Prayers and rites which may be left out in the *Simple Form* of celebration.

- * Variable parts of the *Qurbana*, which bring out the speciality of Sundays, Feast days and liturgical seasons.

1. The first *two* numbers in this structure together form the *Liturgy of the Catechumens* and the rest the *Liturgy of the Faithful*.
2. Most Solemn Form or *Raza* is celebrated on most solemn occasions, such as Easter, Denha, Christmas, Pentecost, Dukrana, Assumption of our Lady, etc.

The Solemn Form is celebrated on Sundays and Feast days. The Simple Form is celebrated on ordinary or week days.

The Mystery of Salvation in the Celebration

The Oriental Churches are fully aware and convinced of the core of their liturgical celebrations, namely, the Mystery of Salvation as accomplished in Jesus Christ and being appropriated by the faithful in the course of history. The Latin Church too has this awareness. Thus, in the Instruction, *Inaestimabile Donum*, on certain norms concerning worship of the Eucharistic Mystery, given by the Sacred Congregation for Sacraments and Divine Worship, one reads:

"Priests must acquire an ever deeper understanding of the authentic way of looking at the Church, of which the celebration of the liturgy and especially of the Mass is the living expression. With-

out an adequate biblical training, priests will not be able to present to the faithful the meaning of the liturgy as an enactment, in signs, of the history of salvation”.

But very often this essence of celebration is forgotten in western liturgical thinking and practice. Consequently, the liturgy has degenerated itself to a mere “business” of performing certain rites, or reciting certain prayers, or offering certain things and of presupposing to receive certain grace in return! Moreover, western christianity, caught in the grip of modernism, secularism and humanism, has sometimes tried to convert liturgical celebrations into mere social celebrations where the members share their own experience rather than the authentic apostolic Christ experience. Thus the great longing for votive Masses, motive Masses, group Masses, youth Masses, children’s Masses, thematic Masses, etc. Some of the Orientals seem to have subscribed wholeheartedly to all such aberrations in western liturgical thinking and practice without any discretion. In this context, the observation of the Holy See on the text of the Syro-Malabar *Qurbana* appears worth quoting:

“This contemporary western fad has no basis either in Indian culture or in a proper understanding of the liturgy in any tradition. All liturgy has but one theme, Jesus dead and risen for our salvation”.

Hence the excessive importance given to selected themes, their explanations, sharing of experiences, etc., in the Divine Liturgy, sprouts from an inadequate understanding of sacred liturgy in Catholic tradition.

The role of symbolism and the sense of Mystery are at the root of christian celebration. “To the Syrians, everything is mystery in the sphere of faith. They attach more importance to symbolism than the Latins. Every place, thing, person or ritual has symbolical significance attached to it. In many cases, the meaning assigned to places, things, persons or rituals may strike the less mystically minded people as somewhat strained and far-fetched. But it is very difficult to understand the Syro-Malankara Rite, if the West Syrian fondness for symbolism is not primarily and sympathetically taken for granted. The most important quality of the Syrian liturgy is its sense of awe and wonder before the divine mystery”, writes Rev. Fr. P. T. Givergis Paniker in a recent book, *The Eucharistic Liturgy in the Christian*

East, edited by Dr. Johannes Madey and published from Prakasam, Kottayam.

The faithful of the East Syriac or Chaldaic tradition also share the same liturgical mentality. In the vision of this particular ecclesial tradition, the whole Mystery of salvation is re-enacted in signs and symbols in every Eucharistic celebration.

The *Enarxis* begins with the "nativity" of our Lord, symbolically enacted in the angels' hymn, "Glory to God in the heights..." Meditating on the mystery of incarnation, the liturgical assembly looks back to its background in the Old Testament history and then passes over to Jesus' hidden life reaching its culmination in his epiphany in the Jordan, which is symbolized in the solemn unveiling of the sanctuary and the singing of the "resurrection hymn".

During the *Liturgy of the word*, the Church reflects on the public ministry of the Lord, who appears there as the leader, the guide, the teacher and the true master.

In the *Pre-anaphoral part*, when we perform the rites of transferring the Gifts to the altar and depositing them on it, and also that of the formal entrance of the celebrant to the altar, we are drawn into a proleptic experience of the Lord's passion, death and burial.

The *Anaphora* being the central part of the *Qurbana*, the worshipping community contemplates there the death and resurrection of the Lord which are the apex of the redemptive mystery. The resurrection of the Lord is also a symbol of the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit.

The rite of *Reconciliation* is, in fact, a public confession of the community's reconciliation with God and of all members among themselves. Reconciliation is the primary effect of salvific action.

In the rite of *Communion* one enters into a perfect union with God—a union with the risen body of Lord Jesus, which hastens the transfiguration of our human body. Its culmination comes only in our own death and resurrection.

The *Qurbana* in Chaldeo-Indian tradition is concluded with an elaborate thanksgiving rite, where the Lord is specially thanked for making the community worthy of celebrating this Mystery.

THE MIND OF THE HOLY SEE

The history of the Chaldeo-Indians shows that they were always filially attached to the Holy See, even in trying situations. Once they understood the mind of the Holy See, they were most willing to be faithful to that. Still there were also instances of false prophets, appearing and leading them astray. But they were always eager to return to the true fold.

Today, the Chaldeo-Indian Church appears to be in a crisis, especially in matters liturgical. Practically, there are two groups of people, opposed to each other, even in most essential issues. The common man is at a loss to select between the two.

Each of these two groups presents themselves as the promoters and spokesmen of the authentic teachings and direction of the Church. Hence the difficulty for ordinary faithful to distinguish between right and wrong. In fact there is among the people of God much scandal and bewilderment and even doctrinal uncertainty.

More dangerous is the case of a third group of people, who propose themselves as the intermediaries, and there are a number of them. In fact, they have no identity of personality. They try to play too much politics and diplomacy in between. I do not question their sincerity here; but if one is sincere and open, and approaches realities without prejudices and personal profit motives, he must embrace the truth whole-heartedly, once he encounters it. He will never try to bargain there. The tree is known from its fruits!

Hence what I intend is just to reproduce a few excerpts from relevant and recent documents of the Holy See, in order that the readers are helped to study by themselves the new situation and try to understand the mind of the Holy See.

Let us be bold enough to evaluate things as they are, to propose our own critical views, if there are, and at the same time to accommodate ourselves to the mind of the Holy See even when it appears to be opposed to our own views. The life of faith demands this sacrifice from us.

We are living in an era, when anybody can think and act in full freedom. The violations of rules and regulations, the disregard for law and authority, are often considered as marks of heroism. This is the case, to some extent, even in the Church and religious institutes! If anybody tries to point out those irregularities, usually he becomes an out-caste. Still, let us be bold enough to face the realities.

The documents given below are quoted exactly from the official publications of the Holy See. Clarifications, when needed are all given in brackets. I have given only the minimum necessary clarifications.

POPE PIUS XI

(The one who restored the hierarchy of the Chaldeo-Indian or Syro-Malabar Church on December 21, 1923) ... If some, led by their too great love for unity and concord, without sufficiently understanding the things of the Oriental and the genius thereof, have been bent on corrupting their sacred rites or on reducing the same to the rites of the Latin Church, the Roman Pontiffs, our Predecessors, with all force have stood against such attempts without sparing any effort, (This applies both to the Latins and the Orientals, especially to the Chaldeo-Indians themselves).

VATICAN II

The documents of Vatican II, especially the Decrees on *Ecumenism* and *Eastern Catholic Churches*, and also the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy are to be considered in this particular context. I do not try to enter into them at present.

POPE PAUL VI

Anyone who takes advantage of the reform to indulge in arbitrary experiments is wasting energy and offending the ecclesial sense (*L'Osservatore Romano*, August 23, 1973).

... (as) a cause of deep sorrow, there are those who, mistakenly believing that they are continuing along the lines of

the Council, have put themselves in a position of preconceived and sometimes irreducible criticism of the Church and her institutions.

Therefore, with...firmness we must say that we do not accept the attitude of:

— those who believe themselves authorized to create their own liturgy, sometimes limiting the sacrifice of the Mass or the Sacraments to the celebration of their own lives or of their own struggle, or even to the symbol of their own fraternity;

— those who minimize the doctrinal teaching in catechetics or distort it according to the preference of the interests, pressures or needs of people, following trends which profoundly obscure the Christian message, as we have pointed out in the Apostolic Exhortation *Quinque iam Anni*, of 8 Dec. 1970, five years after the close of the Council (AAS 63 (1971) 98);

— those who pretend to ignore the living Tradition of the Church, from the Fathers to the teachings of the Magisterium, and reinterpret the doctrine of the Church, and the Gospel itself, spiritual realities, the divinity of Christ, his Resurrection or the Eucharist, depriving these practically of their content and thus creating a new gnosis, and in a certain way introducing into the Church "free examination". This is all the more dangerous when it is done by those who have the very high and delicate mission of teaching Catholic theology;

— those who reduce the specific function of the priestly ministry;

— those who sadly transgress the laws of the Church, or the ethical exigencies demanded by them;

— those who interpret theological life as the organization of a society here below, reducing it indeed to a political action, and adopting for this purpose a spirit, methods, and practices contrary to the Gospel; and the point is reached of confusing the transcendent message of Christ, his announcement of the Kingdom of God, his law of love among people—founded on the

ineffable paternity of God—with ideologies which essentially negate this message and substitute for it an absolutely antithetical doctrinal position, propounding a hybrid linking of two irreconcilable words, as is recognized by the very theorists of the other side.

Such Christians are not very numerous, it is true, but they make much noise, believing too easily that they are in a position to interpret the needs of the entire Christian people or the irreversible direction of history.

They cannot by doing this appeal to the Second Vatican Council, because its correct interpretation and its application do not lead themselves to abuses of this sort. Nor can they appeal to the exigencies of the apostolate to bring closer those who are distant or who do not believe: the true apostle is sent by the Church to give witness to the doctrine and life of the Church herself. The leaven must be spread through the entire dough, but it must remain the leaven of the Gospel. Otherwise it too becomes corrupt together with the world (Address in the Consistory, *L'Osservatore Romano*, May 24/25 (1976) 1-2).

As for those who, in the name of a misunderstood creative freedom, have caused so much damage to the Church with their *improvisations, banalities and frivolities*, and even certain *deplorable profanations*, we strongly call upon them to keep to the established norm. If this norm is not respected, grave damage could be done to the very essence of dogma, not to speak of ecclesiastical discipline, according to the golden rule, "lex orandi lex credendi" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, June 30 (1977) 3).

POPE JOHN PAUL II

Fidelity too implies the observance of the liturgical norms laid down by the Ecclesiastical Authority, and therefore has nothing to do with the practice either of introducing innovation of one's own accord and without approval, or of obstinately refusing to carry out what has been lawfully laid down and introduced into the sacred rites (in the *Inaugural Address* of his Pontificate).

The *priest as minister*, as celebrant, as the one who presides over the Eucharistic assembly of the faithful, should have a special *sense of the common good of the Church*, which he represents through his ministry, but to which he must also be subordinate, according to a correct discipline of faith. He cannot consider himself a "proprietor" who can make free use of the liturgical text and of the sacred rite as if it were his own property, in such a way as to stamp it with his own arbitrary personal style. At times this latter might seem more effective, and it may better correspond to subjective piety; nevertheless, objectively it is always a betrayal of that union which should find its proper expression in the Sacrament of unity.

Every priest who offers the Holy Sacrifice should recall that during this Sacrifice it is not *only* he with his community that is praying but the whole Church, which is thus expressing in this Sacrament her spiritual unity, among other ways by the *use of the approved liturgical text* (After reading this document how can one still continue using unapproved liturgical texts and manipulate the already given liturgical texts and rites?). To call this position "mere insistence on uniformity" would only show ignorance of the objective requirements of authentic unity, and would be a symptom of harmful individualism.

This subordination of the minister, of the celebrant to the *Mysterium* which has been entrusted to him by the Church for the good of the whole People of God, should also find expression in the observance of the liturgical requirements concerning the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice. These refer for example to dress, and in particular to the vestments worn by the celebrant. Circumstances have of course existed and continue to exist in which the prescriptions do not oblige. We have been greatly moved when reading books written by priests who had been prisoners in extermination camps, with descriptions of Eucharistic celebrations without the above-mentioned rules, that is to say without an altar and without vestments. But although in those conditions this was a proof of heroism and deserved profound admiration, nevertheless in *normal conditions* to ignore the liturgical directives can be interpreted as a lack of respect towards

the Eucharist, dictated perhaps by individualism or by an absence of a critical sense concerning current opinions, or by a certain *lack of a spirit of faith*. (After going through these directions, how can there be still so much laxity in using the liturgical vestments and observing the different prescriptions of the liturgical texts?)

Upon all of us who, through the *grace* of God, are ministers of the Eucharist, there weighs a particular responsibility for the ideas and attitudes of our brothers and sisters who have been entrusted to our pastoral care. It is our vocation to nurture, above all by personal example, every healthy manifestation of worship towards Christ present and operative in the Sacrament of love. May God preserve us from acting otherwise and weakening the worship by "becoming unaccustomed" to various manifestations and forms of Eucharistic worship which express a perhaps "traditional" but healthy piety, and which express above all that "sense of faith" possessed by the whole People of God, as the Second Vatican Council recalled. (Apostolic Letter to all the Bishops of the Church on the Mystery and Worship of the Holy Eucharist, February 24, 1980, n. 12).

The liturgical renewal is hence the fundamental element for the ever fruitful life of your Church (the Syro or Chaldeo-Malabar Church): a renewal founded on fidelity to your own genuine ecclesial traditions and open to the needs of your people, to your culture and to possible changes owing to your own organic progress. You will be usefully guided by the fundamental principles which are set out in the letter *Dominicae Cenaе* (the Apostolic Letter of Feb. 24, 1980, which is just quoted), and which will assist you not to err in a matter that is so important and so delicate (Address to the Syro-Malabar and Malankara Bishops on August 29, 1980).

...difficulties will not be lacking in the field of returning to the genuine sources of one's own Rite. It is a question nevertheless, of difficulties which must be faced *viribus unitis* (by uniting the forces) and *Deo adjuvante* (and by God's help) (the same Address on August 29, 1980).

SACRED CONGREGATION FOR THE ORIENTAL CHURCHES

This Sacred Congregation acts for the person of the Holy Father and deliberates all matters pertaining to Oriental Churches. Naturally, this Sacred Congregation is the lawful authority to approve, when needed with the knowledge or even the approval of the Holy Father, all liturgical texts of the Syro-Malabar or Chaldeo-Indian Church.

The Holy See was always interested in helping this Church to understand her own genius and recognise her own identity. A short history of such attempts of the Holy See is given in the carefully prepared *Report on the State of Liturgical Reform in the Syro-Malabar Church given by the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches*, Rome, Aug. 12, 1980. It is given in full as *Appendix II* of my book, *Chaldeo-Indian Liturgy I—Introduction*, published from OIRSI, St. Thomas Ap. Seminary, Kottayam-686010, India. Hence I do not intend to give any details here.

In short, the Holy See itself took initiative to restore the Traditions and Liturgy of this Apostolic Church. This initiative bore fruit on July 3, 1962. Afterwards begins a period of authorized and unauthorized experimentation in this Church. The Text of the *Qurbana* approved by His Holiness Pope Pius XII on June 26, 1957 was set aside in August 1968. From August 15, 1968 this Church lives on an experimentally approved, highly latinized text of the *Qurbana*. The repeated requests of the Holy See to draft a definitive text of the *Qurbana* and send it for approval, were somehow consciously delayed. Such attitude of the authorities in this individual Church compelled the Sacred Congregation to write to the President of the Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference on May 22, 1979 as follows: "The mind of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches on this particular point is known. The experimental phase, at one time granted and later prorogated, must be brought to an end. Any further prorogation "ad experimentum" will certainly be detrimental". Still, the authorities in Chaldeo-Indian Church were slow to act.

The Prefect of the Sacred Congregation wrote again on May 3, 1980 to the President of the Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference as follows: "In fact, this Sacred Congregation would like to avail itself of the presence in the Roman Curia next June (the meeting was held in August instead of June) of Your Eminence and their Excellencies the other Syro-Malabar Hierarchs on their "ad limina" visit, to hold a special Meeting of the Hierarchy, under the presidency of this Sacred Congregation, in order to treat exhaustively of the problem of the reform of the liturgy, and to adopt, as is keenly desired, at the end of this long period of experimentation, a definitive solution. This Sacred Congregation will take pains to notify the individual Hierarchs, to enable them to prepare for this Meeting and to offer, each one, their valuable contribution towards a solution of so important a question".

The Meeting was held in Rome on the 26th and 30th of August 1980. At its conclusion, His Eminence, Wladyslaw Cardinal Rubin, the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches, delivered the following address:

Your Eminence, Your Grace, Your Lordships,

I would like, first of all, to give thanks to God for this Encounter, for this close contact with the Bishops who have been placed by the Holy Spirit to govern and to guide the Syro-Malabar Church.

And I am grateful to the Lord and to the Holy Father for the possibility offered me of returning your Visit and of sharing in your Christmas joys and in the Jubilee celebrations of the Syro-Malankara Church, which together with you represents the Catholic Church of Eastern Rite in India.

I offer my special thanks to those Hierarchs who have submitted, or who will later submit, their observations in writing.

If in discussing the *manner* of effecting the "revision, renewal, adaptation" of the Liturgy, there emerged a diversity of opinions, the basic impression that has been made upon me is that "quo ad substantiam" the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy intends to maintain its identity as an Eastern-Rite Church in conformity with the Conciliar

Decree on the Eastern Churches, with its own and distinctive Eastern liturgy which goes up to Apostolic times, without hybridisms derived from other liturgies and without syncretisms from other religions. Besides, no one has ever contested the fact that the Church of the Thomas Christians—though, like all other Churches, a “pilgrim” community, not having here “its abiding City”—is anything but an Indian Church in every respect.

I desire to recall the principle of “appropriate and organic development”, clearly affirmed by the Conciliar Decree on the Eastern Churches as well as by the Constitution “Sacrosanctum Concilium”. In every living organism there must coexist a power of assimilating new elements and a power of conservation, that is, of remaining oneself, of maintaining the identity. This fidelity must be presupposed; otherwise, one simply undergoes, and there is dilution and not vital assimilation. The “appropriate and organic development”, therefore, implies the avoidance of *immobilism*, on the one hand, but also of *instability*, on the other. This has been expressed in the third part of our Report which has been discussed; and which, I am pleased to note, has met with general appreciation.

I believe that in reconciling these two exigencies lies the key to the solution of the problem of revision renewal and adaptation of the Liturgy.

Fidelity to the tradition implies the renunciation to every purely individual initiative and, it goes without saying, the refusal of every liturgical text that has not been approved or authenticated, in either experimental or definitive fashion, by the Episcopal Conference and the Holy See.

The dynamic character of the reform, must be regulated according to principles enunciated in the Papal Documents and especially the “*Evangelii nuntiandi*” (n. 63), the “*Catechesi tradendae*”, the “*Dominicae Cena*” and the “*Inaestimabile Donum*”. The basic principles of such documents, as it has many times been said, apply “*ratione rei*” also to the Oriental Liturgies.

Now in the intention of determining the concrete ways and the technical times of application, for the purpose of obtaining the

finalization and the promulgation of the new text already in preparation, I would propose:

1. The Commission at present working at the project is to terminate the elaboration of the text within the next Christmas (1980),—this, as far as the Eucharistic Liturgy is concerned.

The Commission is to conduct its proceedings, bearing in mind the texts of 1962 and 1968 and the general principles indicated by this Sacred Congregation.

2. This text is, on completion, to be presented to the examination of the Syro-Malabar Episcopal Conference, which will make the observations it considers necessary. It is suggested that in the event of divergency of opinion, a report of majority and report of minority should be made.

The text elaborated by the Commission *and* the observations of the Episcopal Conference are to be sent to Rome; and I suggest that Easter Sunday be taken as a time-limit for this, so that the Sacred Congregation can examine the entire material before the Summer.

3. In the meantime, in order not to repeat the error of 1962, it will be necessary to prepare the clergy and the laity by means of an appropriate catechesis, to enable them to receive the revised text with favour, with intelligence and with real profit and so eliminate without difficulty the use of the not approved text.

I renew the expression of my gratitude to His Eminence Joseph Cardinal Parecattil, to His Grace the Archbishop of Changanacherry with their respective Suffragan Bishops, as well as Their Lordships the Bishops of the missionary Eparchies.

I have heard, together with my collaborators, and followed, with much interest and attention the discussion which you have conducted with all frankness and seriousness and vivacity, in a brotherly atmosphere emerged from our meeting is in consonance with the directives the Holy Father has graciously imparted in his remarkable Allocution of yesterday, so full of esteem and affection.

I am certain that you, Most Reverend Heirarchs of the Oriental

Catholic Church in India, will take to heart the Sovereign guiding lines of His Holiness. Yesterday's Allocution remains a basic Document for me too, a sure guide; indeed, a precious 'vademezum' in the carrying out of my mission, only just inaugurated, as Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

As I have already said at the beginning, my forthcoming Visit will provide me with the favourable occasion to come to know more closely your Holy Syro-Malabar Church, whose mystery is revealed so strikingly by its missionary drive and by its numerous projects and achievements in the spiritual, educational and social field.

Let me say with the Holy Father: may the Most Holy Virgin and Mother of God protect your Church. May Christ the Lord bless and prosper you in all your undertakings.

Once again: my thanks to you all and my most cordial good wishes for your persons and for your Eparchies.

In all truth I can say "Nemaste": not "Goodbye" but an "Au revoir"! (Rome, August 30, 1980).

The Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference could not, due to several reasons, submit the text of the *Qurbana* for final approbation by Easter 1981, as was demanded by the Sacred Congregation. They did it only on October 3, 1981.

As it is said in the Letter of the Sacred Congregation on March 1, 1983 to the President of the Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference, "the Sacred Congregation set up a special Commission, composed of highly qualified experts, and charged it with the task of examining the text in question, which had been submitted for approval by the Holy See, in accordance with the established norms".

"This Special Commission held its first meeting in December and continued its work without slackening up to May 1982, when it presented the results of its study to the Sacred Congregation which took careful note of the observations of the experts and subsequently proceeded to a fresh examination".

The letter continues: "It was precisely out of respect for the rich liturgical patrimony, the ancient tradition and individuality

of the Syro-Malabar Church, fully inserted and spontaneously growing since apostolic times on Indian soil, out of respect also for the historical experiences of your forefathers and for the special role and apostolic responsibilities incumbent upon your Church today (cf. Decree on the Eastern Churches, nn. 3 and 24), that this Sacred Congregation has been anxious that the Special Commission carry out its work with the requisite scientific rigour and with care for contemporary pastoral exigencies, so that thereby it may be in a position to express, with all the authority that belongs to it, its evaluation of the draft text submitted".

According to the words of Cardinal W. Rubin, the Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches, the Observations on the draft text of the Holy *Qurbana*, from which I give pertinent excerpts here below, are "the fruit of accurate and detailed study, completed at the beginning of" 1983, and they "represent the mind and considered judgement of the Sacred Congregation".

Towards the end of this particular letter the Sacred Congregation expresses its earnest desire in the following words: "In this way, also, the Central Liturgical Committee can at once take cognizance of the dossier and promptly proceed, in its turn, to the integration, with all the precision and completeness, of our observations into a definitive text, of which it is desired that a copy in Malayalam be sent, together with its English version, to this Sacred Congregation by September 15, 1983. It is necessary to impose this time-limit in order to bring to an end a period of uncertainty and arbitrary experimentation that has had deleterious effects on Church life and catechesis".

The Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference could not comply with this request of the Holy See too. They haven't succeeded even to the present day (i.e., upto September 1984) in drafting and sending the definitive text of the *Qurbana* for which clear and detailed directives have been given by the Holy See. For the information of the readers and to help them to think for themselves, I quote here below the relevant passages from those detailed *Observations* of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches, on the text of the Holy *Qurbana*, submitted for approval, to the Holy See by the Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference,

and "sent to each of the Most Reverend Member of the Episcopal Conference" on March 1, 1983.

This particular document "represents the mind and considered judgement of the Sacred Congregation in regard to the ORDER OF THE HOLY QURBANA", and not mere observations of a few experts, as many among the Chaldeo-Indians themselves tried to picture it:

REMARKS ON THE "GENERAL DIRECTIONS"

The "General Directions" (i.e., the Directions given at the beginning of the text of the *Qurbana*) are not acceptable in their present form. They are based on insufficient principles.... They are insufficient for several reasons....

They are too vague and broad to provide an adequate methodology for a matter so serious as liturgical change.

...the door was left open to substantial changes in the basic structure of the rites, and to innovations that are in no way "indianizations" but rather "latinizations", including superficial modern westernizations based on some of the worst aspects of current Western liturgical practice.

The results of the voting in the commission (namely, the voting on the text of the *Qurbana* in the Syro-Malabar or Chaldeo-Indian Bishops' Conference) shows a rigid pattern of two opposed blocks, at least on most essential issues. Hence, the text represents not a consensus, but the victory of one party. This can hardly be a firm basis for changing age-old traditions that are the heritage of all. Furthermore it is clear that the minority in the commission consisted of those desirous of preserving the integrity of the Eastern tradition, which is in accord with the constantly repeated instructions of the Holy See.

Numerous essential issues are left vague or not mentioned at all: liturgical art, the liturgical disposition of the church building, liturgical chant, clear and precise rubrics for the concrete deroulement of the rite, vestments. All liturgical change is a total process, not just a question of *texts*.

In general, there is a "reductionist" tendency to limit and reduce and Westernize as much as possible, with little awareness of the nature of ritual activity as understood from the view-point of cultural anthropology—that is, one sees hardly any awareness of what an extremely delicate thing it is to touch in any way the established ritual patterns of a tradition.

In this reductionism one can perceive a certain hostility to elements which are at the basis of the spirit of this rite—as if the Semitic, Chaldean elements in use in India for so many centuries were "foreign"—although, ironically, the same hesitation is not observed when it comes to introducing novelties invented in the West less than 20 years ago!

Hence, these directions are judged to show little truly critical, scientific, theological and pastoral sense of the tradition as should have resulted from an acquaintance with modern liturgical, biblical, pastoral, and anthropological studies.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE TEXT OF THE QURBANA

The text is based on a "law mass" celebrated by one priest, whereas the universal, age-old Eastern practice has always been that the approved official text of the liturgy be the solemn form. Other liturgies are lesser services based on the solemn form; the solemn form is not a sung version of the law mass. A liturgy celebrated by one priest with server, with no provision made for the service of the deacon, for the chants, etc, provides no adequate basis for planning or for evaluating the reform of an Eastern eucharistic service.

Characteristic elements of the Syro-Malabar tradition are systematically suppressed.

Numerous latinizations are introduced, inspite of the constant efforts of the Holy See to restore this rite, and its constant explicit forbidding of latinization. For example: mass versus populum (i.e., celebration of the *Qurbana*, the celebrant facing the community throughout), silent pauses, improvised prayers, "themes" (namely, explaining certain themes at the beginning of the celebration), the restructuring of the preanaphora rites according to Latin models.

PARTICULAR OBSERVATIONS ON ENARXIS

The priest stands "in medio sanctuarii" facing East, *not* towards the congregation (in Chaldeo-Indian or Syro-Malabar tradition, the celebrant stands either in the middle of the Sanctuary or in the *bema*, facing east or the altar). He does not stand at the altar nor at a table in front of it....

The "intention" or "theme" is not announced at the beginning.... This contemporary Western fad has no basis either in Indian culture or in a proper understanding of the liturgy in any tradition. *All* liturgy has but one theme, Jesus Christ dead and risen for our salvation; and the intentions of every Eucharist, including the particular intentions of the local community, are expressed in the liturgical texts themselves at the proper time. The proper time is not the beginning of the service, when our thoughts should first turn to the glorification of God (hence the opening "Glory to God in the heights") and not to our own needs. Indeed, this proposal is an example of the inadequate liturgical understanding manifested by the proposed text: It proposes to *suppress* the diptychs, one of the most *ancient and traditional Eastern expressions of such intentions*, and to *add a recent Western innovation* at a place in the liturgy where it certainly does not belong.

Spontaneous prayers are not to be admitted. This Western experiment has opened the door to mediocrity and banality. Very few people have the talent for spontaneous public prayer, and one person's "spontaneous" prayers always sound the same. Furthermore, in public, ritual worship (as distinct from private prayer) there is little room for spontaneity of composition and form. Indeed, such "spontaneity" is actually not that of the people of God, but of individual celebrants, who often impose their particular ideas and piety on a captive audience. Spontaneity in liturgy is found in the movements of hearts as they respond to grace, not in the liberty of individual priests to impose their personal piety on the common prayers of all.

It is sometimes said that all liturgical prayers should be said aloud so that everyone can hear them. This is a false principle both historically and liturgically. Some prayers are specifically designed to be said during singing or processions or

other activities of the people, or are apologies *pro clero* (prayers to form the personal attitude of the priests)... Indeed, to recite all prayers aloud interrupts the proper flow of the liturgical structure.

Restore *Oremus. Pax nobiscum* (Let us pray, Peace be with us). The *oremus* (let us pray) that precedes prayers, in some form or other, in all rites, is a basic element of the liturgical unit.

Under no circumstances whatever may other prayers be substituted here (namely, spontaneous prayers instead of the *Lakhumara* prayer). The Lakhumara Prayer (when understood and translated correctly) is one of the most famous, ancient, and beautiful liturgical prayers in the whole of Christendom, renowned among liturgical scholars for its pure, disinterested doxological spirit, asking only to be able to glorify God, without any petition for our needs.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Readings are read by *readers*; there is no order of "acolyte" in the Malabar tradition, and it has been suppressed even in the Latin rite.

The principles of the reform state that "alternate prayers can be introduced". What, then, could be the reason for suppressing those that already exist?

The halleluia, traditional before the Gospel in the whole of Christendom, may under no circumstances be replaced by a "hymn".

In universal Christian tradition it is the Gospel Lectionary, not the "Bible", which is read and to which reverence is given at this point as THE image of Christ among us in the Liturgy of the Word. Let the proper terminology be used here as elsewhere.

The place of honour for this book is the *altar*, and nowhere else, in the Christian East. Let this be specified in the rubrics.

Silent periods of reflection cannot be allowed to interrupt the liturgy: they have no place in Eastern usage.

The karozutha may not be replaced by other formulae. But other petitions for special occasions, formulated in the karozutha style, may be added following the initial fixed petitions, which express the permanent, general intentions of the whole Church and are set and irreplaceable.

Karozutha II (which is completely omitted in the liturgical text) may not be omitted. It is the "Angel of peace" litany, of great antiquity, common to most Eastern traditions, and an essential part of the structure of the Syro-Malabar *preces* (prayers) after readings.

If other, particular intentions are added to suit special necessities, these are to be submitted to the priest before the liturgy and are to be formulated in conformity with the pattern of the karozutha petitions. Spontaneous petitions from the congregation are to be avoided. (Privately composed litanies, generally unsatisfactory in both theology and expression, are one of the least successful aspects of the Western reform. There is no need to imitate the failures of others).

The dismissal of the catechumens, because of its theological signification, ought to be retained, with a rubric specifying its use if there are catechumens present at the Liturgy. The catechumenate is being restored in many places. When there are no catechumens present, or if it is not advisable to use a formula of dismissal, an alternative formula, in positive key, could be used to mark the liturgical moment.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE PREANAPHORAL RITES

The title OFFERTORY SERVICE is incorrect and must be suppressed. Such a view of the preanaphora is usually based on unfortunate aspects of pre-Vatican II liturgical thinking, that saw a double offering in the Eucharist. The term is no longer used even in the Roman books, which now speak of the preparation of the Gifts and altar. Furthermore, in the Eastern traditions it is the *accessus ad altare* (i.e., approach to the altar) or spiritual preparation for the

anaphora, comprising the *lavabo* (washing of the hands) approach to the altar, prayers for worthiness to offer, *Orate fratres* dialogue (namely, the request for prayer by the celebrant to the community and its response), Creed, Kiss of peace, etc., that characterizes the Eastern preanaphoral rites and has the predominant role, *not* the preparation, transfer and deposition of the gifts.

The omission of rubrics conceals the real intention of the proposed reform. Explicit, unambiguous rubrics are to be restored and submitted for approval; rubrics that state exactly who does what, when, and how, as in the approved Latin *Ordo Celebrationis* (i.e., the Order of Celebration in the Syro-Malabar Church).

Deacon's parts are to be assigned to the deacons, not to an "acolyte"—an order that never existed in the East, and no longer exists even in the West.

Bread and wine are prepared on the Bet-gazza, never, under any circumstances, on the altar. Where there are no Bet-gazzas *let them be provided without further delay*. Experts consulted are surprised to learn that today, over 25 years after the publication of the rubrics and instructions concerning the liturgical disposition of the church in the reformed *Liturgia Syro-Malabaresi* (namely, the liturgical texts approved by the Holy Father himself), there can still be found Malabar-Rite churches without Bet-gazzas! At liturgies celebrated in churches of other rites, the gifts may be prepared on credences suitably located, but never on the altar itself. To do so is to destroy the traditional rite of the transfer and deposition of the gifts, and its accompanying symbolism, that dates from the time of the earliest Syrian Fathers.

A'propos of "General instructions" n.15 ("It is good if the bread and wine are brought to the altar in procession":) no Eastern tradition has ever known an "offertory procession" of the faithful. If that is what is meant here, this is a latinization as well as an anachronism. (Even Western liturgists have come to see that the excessive solemnization of the preparation and transfer of gifts was based, in part, on a pseudo-theology according to which the "offertory" is the laity's liturgy, and the "eucharistic offering" is the priest's. As anyone knows today, the whole Church offers the total service, each according to his or her place and order).

In the whole history of the entire Christian East, the gifts have always been transferred to the altar by the deacons and, in some areas, with the help of the presbyters, but *never* by the laity. This tradition is to be maintained without change. It is permitted to solemnize the transfer of gifts, accompanying it with candles, incense, etc. But it should be remembered that the *accessus ad altare* (the approach to the altar), not the rites surrounding the gifts, are the fundamental part of the Eastern preanaphoral rites.

Both orders (there were two different orderings of the preanaphoral rites in the text of the *Qurbana*, sent for approbation of the Holy See) are blatant latinizations: For instance: in both orders, the preparation of the gifts is delayed until just before the *Orate fratres* dialogue as in the Roman Mass.

Order A moves the Creed to where it is found in the Roman Mass, but *in no Eastern tradition*.

Both orders place the *accessus ad altare* (approach to the altar) rites *before* the chant (*Onitha d-raze*, "Anthem of the Mysteries") that in all Eastern traditions introduces the whole preanaphora.

Both orders destroy the basic structure of the preanaphoral rites traditional in most of the Christian East. For instance:

In Eastern usage the preanaphora has two parts, *in the following order*: (1) The *material* preparation, comprising the preparation (sometimes done before the liturgy), transfer, deposition, covering...of the gifts. This was done by the deacons and concelebrating presbyters, without the intervention of the main celebrant. (2) The *spiritual* preparation, especially of the ministers, by means of the *lavabo* (washing of hands). *Accessus ad altare* procession and prayers for worthiness to stand before the altar and offer, the *Orate fratres* dialogue etc.

These Eastern preanaphoral rites always open with the Antiphon and conclude with the Kiss of peace. Other elements such as the *lavabo*, diptychs, etc., are more mobile, but the general norm is universally valid: the *accessus* rites *follow* the preparation of the gifts, and come just before the anaphora, for which they are the immediate preparation. To shift them up to before the preparation

of the gifts destroys the whole order and movement of the Eastern preanaphora, and cannot be tolerated.

....the proposed text destroys the integrity of both the *accessus* and preparation of gifts, intermingling them and shifting them in a way that has no basis in the tradition of any existing rite.

However, it is recognized that the rites in their traditional order do present a problem when the liturgy is celebrated by one priest without the aid of deacons or concelebrating priests. The traditional rite presupposed that the preparation, transfer, and deposition of gifts be done by deacons and concelebrants, while the principal celebrant remained on the bema, entering the sanctuary only after the deposition of the gifts—i.e., at the moment of the actual rite of entrance into the sanctuary. But when the liturgy is celebrated by one priest alone, he must:

- enter the sanctuary at Karozuta II to prepare the gifts;
- return for the prayers that conclude the intercession;
- enter again for the transfer of gifts;
- return to the sanctuary entrance to perform the rite of entrance into the sanctuary, which he has already entered twice.

In liturgies with concelebrating deacons and presbyters this problem does not exist and the traditional rite, as in the Latin text (also in the Syriac text), may be maintained, with the preparation and transfer of gifts performed without the intervention of the main celebrant, who will enter the sanctuary only at the *Ingressus in sanctuarium* (namely, the solemn entry into the sanctuary after the Creed).

However, in celebrations by one priest only, the preparation of gifts can be done before the liturgy begins, as was traditional in East Syrian usage; or it can be delayed and placed just before the transfer and deposition of gifts. Thus, after the *lavabo* (washing of hands), the celebrant will enter the sanctuary, perform the preparation, transfer and deposition of the gifts *quietly* during the chant of the Onitha (i.e., the anthem of the Mysteries). Then he will return to the sanctuary entrance for the *accessus* (approach) rites.....

They (namely, the translation of prayers recited during the preparation of the gifts) not only depart from the original text, but manifest a total incomprehension of the nature of Christian liturgical language, which is symbolic and often proleptic, and not ontological, pedantic literalism. Liturgical texts that use "Body and Blood" to refer to the gifts before the consecration, are not thereby advancing a theological thesis. This sort of language is common in the preanaphora and throughout the Christian East. The preservation of such expressions in the reformed rite approved by the Holy See in 1955 (the text was printed in 1955; the papal approbation was on June 26, 1957) should have been sufficient proof of their suitability!

...the Onitha d-raze (the anthem of the Mysteries) is never omitted or substituted by "hymns". There is already a large anthology of texts available.... Further texts, all in proper and traditional antiphonal form, may be prepared and submitted to the Holy See for approval.

The traditional text and location of the Creed are obligatory at all liturgies. The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed is a fixed element before the Anaphora in all Eastern traditions except the Ethiopian. Parallels with Roman usage, based on a totally different history, have no relevance here (the Roman usage mentioned here is that of the Apostles' Creed, which is not to be used in Eastern Liturgies).

"Canon" is a Latin term *in no way* equivalent to what is meant by the *Eastern* term "Anaphora", which includes not only the eucharistic prayer (or anaphora as the word is used in contemporary liturgical scholarship), but also includes several formulae that precede it. So the word "Canon" is misused here (namely, in the text of Syro-Malabar *Qurbana*) from both an Eastern and a Western point of view.

The traditional posture facing East is not to be abandoned for another Westernization, the *versus populum* (the celebrant looking to the people always!) position.

The translation "peace be with you also" is another occidental banality hardly suitable in the spiritual culture of the East ("with you and with your spirit" is the correct and highly theological form).

The diptychs... are to be restored in their integrity and chanted at least on Sundays and feast days, and in all solemn liturgies. They

are one of the most hallowed liturgical signs of ecclesio-liturgical communion throughout the Christian East since the 4th century.

The diaconal admonition "Recte state" (Let us all beg and beseech the Lord in purity and compunction. The tremendous Mysteries are being hallowed. Stand with due reverence and attend to what is being done....) in some form or other prefaces the anaphora dialogue in every Eastern tradition except the ancient Alexandrine. It is to be preserved in its integrity, without change.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE ANAPHORA

Rather than comment on each point of the proposed anaphora, which omits too much, it was thought better to propose a structure and a text.

The following model is proposed for its *structure*. No attempt has been made to provide a literary English style suitable for public use.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE RITE OF COMMUNION

Clear rubrics, based on the *Ordo celebrationis* of 1955 (the text published from Rome in 1959), must be inserted. The concrete déroulement of the rite is not at all clear in the present text.

"And also with you" here (as elsewhere) is not considered a preferable substitute for "And with your spirit".

The translation "Holy bread" is to be rejected. It is not one species, but the holy Qurbana or holy mystery that is being offered to the faithful.

Let the chant of the Canona verses be restored here in proper antiphonal form. Variant chant texts, all in proper form, may be proposed for approval in order to expand the anthology of chants, if this is desired.

The text should not read "lifegiving grace" but "grace of the giver of life". It is Christ, not the grace, that gives life. Here again, the emphasis has been shifted from God to His created gifts.

The remission of sins, an essential fruit of communion, should not be suppressed from the text. Let it read "for the remission of sins and life everlasting" (The formula while distributing communion in the proposed text was something like this: "the body and blood of Christ for life everlasting").

Suppress the "thanksgiving in silence". (Let the community sing in joy the hymns of thanksgiving in the text of the *Qurbana*, after the communion of all; it is always recommended to keep silence during the communion).

At the end restore the Our Father, traditional at the beginning and end of Malabar services for centuries.

Restore the proper title, 'Huttama' (*Huttama* means 'sealing'; hence in this context of the liturgy, it is the sealing of the covenant between God and the people of God).

CONCLUSION

One may wonder, how can there be so many Chaldeo-Indians, especially among the priests, religious and even the Prelates, who very easily neglect such clear directives from the Holy See! It is very difficult to find out a solution to this problem. One of the reasons may be the thorough latinization and Westernization even in thinking of these evolved classes in the Church, and their underestimation of Oriental genius. Nowhere else one may come across such an individual Church, where even the bishops, who are supposed to be the guardians of the particular ecclesial heritage, themselves are not sure of their identity and original sources!

As it is clearly stated in the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, the Apostolic See is the supreme and ultimate authority on all liturgical matters. Still all are fully free to propose their own views to it. But no one, whoever he be, is authorized to act contrary to its clear directives.

Some may be induced to think that the Holy See is acting in the case of the Chaldeo-Indian Liturgy, without any regard for the majority opinion of the bishops and the people. One can easily trace out the fallacy behind such argumentations and provocations, if he

were to face them with maturity and self-reflection. The bishops themselves know perfectly well that everything in their own eparchies cannot be decided always according to the majority opinions of the priests or the laity.

If Pope Paul VI had accepted the majority opinion of even the experts, the Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* would not have seen light. Similarly, the Popes would have had to sanction and bless the demands for divorce and abortion, and even the abolition of priestly celibacy, if majority opinions were always to be accepted.

In certain cases, it is not the majority opinion that counts, but the basic principles of faith and morals. Since Liturgy is the expression of faith—the epiphany of faith—the Holy See is the supreme authority to decide on such matters. All others are to respect such decisions, once they are pronounced. Moreover, everybody, especially those in authority, must be wise enough to foresee that, if he were to hesitate in obeying his higher authorities, the Holy See in this case, he can never command obedience of his own subjects.

Let us have the courage to study, and the magnanimity not to pass to realization until the problems have been thoroughly studied and the lawful ecclesiastical authority has shown the green light.

A RETREAT PLAN

Just as several activities of piety, retreats and recollections also have become a mere routine in one's religious life. Generally, they are considered to be occasions of spiritual renewal. But spiritual renewal must always be *ecclesial*, since Christian spirituality is fundamentally *ecclesial* and *sacramental*. There is no universal spirituality in the Church. Each of the individual Churches has her own spirituality, centred on her particular liturgical traditions. Hence the Fathers in Vatican II have repeatedly proclaimed and confirmed "Spirituality" as one of the *distinguishing* elements of an individual Church (LG 23; OE 3; UR 14). Thus retreats and recollections must be occasions for a renewal of *Christian spirituality*, which is a deepening of one's own God-experience in Jesus Christ through his or her own particular *ecclesial* and *sacramental* traditions.

The Chaldeo-Indian Church is really enthusiastic in conducting retreats and recollections at different levels, but unfortunately, because of several reasons, she appears to be the least concerned in conducting them in the proper *ecclesial* and *liturgical* traditions. This is an attitude exactly the same as shown by this Church in the case of clerical, religious and catechetical formation. Strange enough to see that it is during retreats and recollections, the greatest violence is being done to the proper *ecclesial* and *liturgical* traditions.

Several of the present retreat preachers, especially the misguided among the charismatics, do not deem it necessary to respect the proper liturgical structure or texts, place of celebration, rituals, vestments etc. When retreat preachers are invited from other liturgical traditions, and very often it is so, the proper liturgical celebration itself fails. Disregarding the proper liturgical celebration, what kind of spiritual renewal shall it be?

This strange situation must be a challenge to all the Chaldeo-Indians! They are to try their best to draw up plans for retreats and recollections, strictly on the basis of their *ecclesial* and *liturgical* traditions. They have to put a full stop to the custom of inviting strangers to the Chaldeo-Indian ecclesial and traditions for preaching retreats. Here below is given an outline for a retreat, based on this particular liturgical tradition. The outline may be expanded or

summarized according to the circumstances and the duration of the retreat.

1. **Introduction:** the divine call to salvation—the necessity of our reconciliation with God—the positive human response to the divine call, the liturgical worship.

2. **The Eucharistic Sacrifice:** the re-enactment in signs, of the Mystery of Christ—a summary of the history of salvation—the incarnation, private and public life, passion, death, burial, Resurrection, Ascension, Coming of the Holy Spirit, our reconciliation with God, union with and transformation into the Divine, *theosis*—all these happen in our *Qurbana*.

3. **The Liturgical Year:** the Mystery of Christ and the history of salvation celebrated in the cycle of an year—the system of *nine* liturgical seasons with *seven* weeks each, the first and last being exceptions. The idea of infinite striving for a perfect identification with the Mystery of Christ. An overall vision of the magnificent plan of salvation.

4. **The Period of Annunciation:** *The Mystery of Incarnation and Nativity:* the sin of Adam and its consequences—the misery of fallen man—the promise of the Messiah—God's saving interventions in the Old Testament the Messianic prophecies—He came to his own, but they received him not—an introduction to the mystery of Christ and the salvation, evoking acts of faith, of praise and of thanksgiving—the role of B. V. Mary in human salvation—Mary is the mother of Christ and also our mother—her virginity a model for every Christian. (All problems regarding sex, marital life birth control, vow of chastity, etc. can be discussed according to the context).

5. **The Period of Denha:** *The Mystery of Divine Manifestation:* Baptism as the proclamation of our faith—Jesus' baptism, his private and public life—the personality of Jesus in its human and divine aspects—the revelation of the Trinity through the humanity of Jesus Christ—the Trinitarian economy of Christian life—the self-emptying love of God—St. John the Baptist, the Apostles, the Evangelists, the Martyrs, the Doctors of the Church, the Saints, and the Departed Ones, as constant inspiration to the renewal of our Christian life—the necessity of such a renewal.

6. The Period of Great Fast: *The Mysteries of Passion and Death*: the sin of man and everything with regard to the modern understanding of sin—Fasting, Prayer and Almsgiving as cardinal traits of repentance—the Sacrament of Reconciliation—not a Sacrament of judgement but one of forgiveness—the Passion and death of our Lord as acts of expiation to the sin of mankind—the crucifix as the symbol of Passion and Death of Christ—Post-patristic emphasis on the crucifix in the West.

7. The Period of Resurrection: *The Mystery of Resurrection*: Christ's Resurrection as the victory over sin and death—Christ as the glorious King and the Leader—the glorious Cross or the flowery Cross as the symbol of Resurrection—the St. Thomas Cross—the theology of St. Paul on Resurrection—the work of the Holy Spirit in Resurrection—our continuous transformation into a resurrected life—Christ's Resurrection—Ascension and Mary's resurrection—assumption, a pledge of our resurrection—assumption—Resurrection the foundation of our Christian faith—the real Christian Joy.

8. The Period of Pentecost: *The Mystery of the Holy Spirit*: Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Christ—the universal teacher—the soul of the Church and her foundation—the infant Church and her hardships—the practice of Christian virtues—esp. that of Christian fraternity which gives us a sense of belongingness to the Church.

9. The Period of Summer: *The Mystery of the Church*: the development and flourishing of the Church—the theology of the origin of Individual Churches as the Churches of God in Christ—specific traits of our Church—essentially missionary character of each Church—our missions—the unity and universality of the Church.

10. The Periods of Eliah, Cross and Moses: *The Mystery of Parousia*: A foretaste of the heavenly bliss here on earth itself—the uncertainty of the Second Coming—the end of the world and the last judgement—hence the need of repentance and renovation of life—human suffering and its Christian meaning—Eucharistic Liturgy as an anticipation of the eternal heavenly Liturgy—the theology of Christian hope.

11. The Period of the Dedication of the Church:

The Mystery of Eschatological Fulfilment: the actual life in heaven—the dedication of the whole Church to the Father after the last judgement—real joy of heaven—the espousal and nuptial banquet—the glories and beauty of the Church—the Church as an image of heavenly peace on earth—the need of complete transformation for this heavenly life.

12. Conclusion:

the Mystery of Christ and the history of salvation—the divine intervention to save us men—the objective transformation through the Mystery of Christ—the subjective transformation through our liturgical celebrations—the relation between liturgical prayer and other personal prayers—liturgical spirituality and authentic Christian life.



APPENDIX I

COVERING LETTER

[We give here the covering letter to the *Final Judgement* (cfr. Appendix II) of the S. Congregation for the Oriental Churches, addressed to His Grace Mar Antony Padiyara, Metropolitan Archbishop of Ernakulam, President, Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference, on July 24, 1985. Although addressed to His Grace, it was sent to all the Syro-Malabar Bishops; and here is the full text.]

Your Grace,

Since the already remote, though ever significant, date of December 1, 1934, when Pope Pius XI, of venerable memory, enjoined and inaugurated the reform of the liturgy of the Church of the Syro-Malabar Rite, the Holy See has not ceased to entertain the keenest interest in the implementation of this vitally important project.

For this purpose, besides giving continual encouragement in this sense, the Holy See has itself taken a number of initiatives directed at satisfying the exigencies of renewal and of recovery of ecclesial heritage, felt by the whole body of the Hierarchy and faithful of the Syro-Malabar Church.

Thus, on January 20, 1962, the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches issued the Instruction "*De ritu Sacrificii Eucharistici instaurati*", by which was introduced the use of the new Syro-Malabar Missal in Syriac, text printed at Alwaye, on the basis of the Latin text comprising the *Ordo Communis* and the three Anaphoras, previously approved by Pope Pius XII on June 26, 1957.

This text, containing the three Anaphoras, was not integrally translated into Malayalam: only the first Anaphora, namely, that of SS. Addai and Mari, was translated and published in a bilingual edition of the new Missal, printed at Alwaye and bearing the *Imprimatur* of 7 Bishops. (This is usually known as the 1962 text of the *Qurbana*).

It was on August 15, 1968, that was authorized the use, *ad experimentum* and *ad tempus* (i.e., for experimentation and only for a time), of a new Missal, differing notably from the earlier one of 1962 which, as above stated, had received Papal approval (1957) and had been promulgated and introduced into regular use.

This is not the place nor the moment to retrace the history—difficult and tormented—of the too long period that then followed: unfortunately, in default of adequate liturgical catechesis and doctrinal instruction and under the cover of a reasonable trial period, a situation developed which led to hesitations and doubts and opened the door to certain experiments not all conducive to the improvement of the quality of the liturgy nor, in consequence, to the spiritual good of the Syro-Malabar community as a whole.

Thus it was, to put it briefly, that the S. Congregation found itself obliged, on August 12, 1980, to send to the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy a *REPORT ON THE STATE OF LITURGICAL REFORM IN THE SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH*, which finally prompted the Bishops to submit to the same S. Congregation, on October 3, 1981, the draft-text of *THE ORDER OF THE HOLY MASS OF THE SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH—1981* for approval by the Holy See.

Concerned as much for the successful outcome of the initial project as for the satisfaction of the reasonable aspirations of members of the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy, the S. Congregation proceeded to the detailed examination of the text submitted by the Bishops, and on March 1, 1983, communicated its *OBSERVATIONS* (rfr. our documentation), consisting of Remarks on the "General Directions", *General Observations and Particular Observations*.

By way of response to this comprehensive evaluation of the draft-text submitted, the Syro-Malabar Bishops presented to the S. Congregation two parallel documents which, incidently, reflected conspicuously the divergency of opinion which existed within the Bishops' Conference upon a matter at once so delicate and so vital as the liturgical life of the Church.

The first of these documents, dated August 16, 1983, was entitled: *OBSERVATIONS ON THE DIRECTIVES FROM THE HOLY SEE ON THE QURBANA TEXT*; the second (undated) was entitled

A RESPONSE TO THE OBSERVATIONS OF THE SACRED CONGREGATION FOR THE ORIENTAL CHURCHES and reached this Office on January 2, 1984.

After taking cognizance of both these documents, as well as of other communications received on the same subject, the S. Congregation proceeded to a re-examination of the entire question, naturally taking into due account the various views expressed by the Bishops. A first result of this activity was the report drawn up by the specially appointed Liturgical Commission and presented by this in June 1984. Then, in order to ensure the utmost objectivity and desiring to contribute to a healthy understanding and consensus, the S. Congregation did not hesitate to subject the report of the 'ad hoc' Commission to thorough and detailed and patient revision, on operation that was brought to happy conclusion in Spring 1985.

It is evident that the S. Congregation, in fulfilling its delicate task, and acting within the limits of its official competency, in no way intended, or intends to depart from the well-established principles that have constantly guided the Holy See in the all-important matter of liturgical reform and renewal. It has always been the Church's ideal that the different Rites be preserved in their authenticity and integrity and that they be cherished, observed and honoured with the greatest fidelity. Nor has the Holy See seen fit to accord authorization to reforms of lawful liturgical rites, whether by undue reduction or amplification or by misplaced imitation of other traditions, that are not consonant with the nature and spirit of the Rite concerned and not compatible with its appropriate and organic development. The relevant texts of the Second Ecumenical Vatican Council are a confirmation and a particularly authoritative declaration of the long-standing position of the Holy See. It should be remembered in this connection that the Conciliar Constitution on the Sacred liturgy is only in its most general principles applicable to all liturgical traditions, not in its detailed prescriptions which hold good for the Roman tradition. Appeals made to Vatican II to justify certain changes in Oriental texts and usages are in not a few cases simply renewed attempts at latinization.

The present conclusions of the S. Congregation which are herewith appended (rfr. Appendix II), aim at their most essential level, at establishing the suitability or not, the legitimacy or not,

of certain adaptations, proposed by the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy or arbitrarily, indeed abusively, introduced into the 1962 text. At the same time, the S. Congregation avails itself of the occasion to remind the Syro-Malabar Bishops that the permissions and dispensations formerly granted "in via sperimentale" (for experimentation) have been withdrawn and are considered as being henceforth *null and void*.

The Holy See intends to do more than simply ensure the reform of the liturgy in the strictly technical sense. In keeping with the Conciliar directives, it desires also to foster and promote the restoration and the revival of the full, spiritual and ecclesial heritage of the ancient and glorious Indian Church of the Syro-Malabar Rite, a Community distinguished by the intensity of its religious commitment, its exquisite fidelity to Catholic Unity and to the grace of its Apostolic derivation, rich in youthful energies, exemplary and enviable in its dedication to service of the Gospel.

It is, therefore, devoutly to be hoped that the Church of St. Thomas Christians may once again find its roots, at once evangelical and truly original, Oriental and Indian, as pleaded by a spiritual Master recently deceased. Such a "return to the sources", in liturgy first of all, cannot but contribute to the development, the full flourishing and the enhancement of a Church so fully Catholic, though still seeking to express adequately its ecclesial individuality and character. And how should not one desire that the wonderful Apostolic and missionary dynamism of this Church be matched by a renewal in depth, a spiritual enrichment based on a liturgical life renewed because re-discovered in its plenitude? Unfortunately, the so-called liturgical reformations envisaged "in loco" (locally) do not seem to have been prepared by such a "return to the sources" nor by a liturgical movement worthy of the name. This "return to the sources" is definitely not a "going-back", as some could think who consider "Oriental things are backward" and who have been trained in an anti-Oriental bias, who ignore the value of their ancestral Rite and Ecclesial Tradition and who fear it might be irrelevant to contemporary man of whatever milieu or an obstacle to modern progress.

In communicating the enclosed document to the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy, the S. Congregation insists on the fact that there is a crying need of a reliable, acceptable and definitive text of the *Qurbana*. After these protracted and many-faceted consultations, the preparation and publication of such a text cannot brook any delay: it must be seen to as soon as possible, care being taken to produce a Malayalam version—or any other language version—of good literary quality.

The availability of a text of the *Qurbana* will provide also a solid basis for further reforms, which are badly needed and are overdue. The final aim is to offer the People of God, clergy and faithful, of the Syro-Malabar Rite a liturgy, substantial in content, truly representative of the ecclesial tradition, and complete in all its parts; indeed, with a spirituality drawing its inspiration from the Bible and the Liturgy. Without such a spirituality, founded on a life filled with the Eucharist and other Sacraments, there cannot be renewal in depth.

The Syro-Malabar Church owes it to the rest of the Church, and also to all Christians in this age of ecumenism, to keep its heritage and to be able to experience and display it in a living manner. One of the main obstacles to its "acceptance" by other Churches in India and abroad has been, precisely, the fact that till recently its liturgical identity was so much reduced and obfuscated. In this perspective, it is high time that this Apostolic Church again became aware of its rich liturgical tradition. Only if the authentic character of its liturgy is fully restored, will it be able to show itself under its true colours.

Your Grace will find, herewith attached, the text of the *FINAL JUDGEMENT OF THE S. CONGREGATION FOR THE ORIENTAL CHURCHES CONCERNING THE ORDER OF THE SYRO-MALABAR QURBANA*. It is a text that complements and clarifies the *OBSERVATIONS*, already communicated to the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy on March 1, 1983. Your Grace is kindly requested to have care that the suggestions and the rectifications proposed by the S. Congregation both in the *OBSERVATIONS* sent earlier and in the present document (*FINAL JUDGEMENT...*) are duly inserted into the text of the *Order of the Holy Qurbana* and that an amended redaction of this is submitted to this

Office with the least possible delay. This S. Congregation would be grateful, if Your Grace would use your good offices to elicit on the part of the Most Reverend Members of the Hierarchy faithful adherence to the directives of the Holy See.

Thanking Your Grace for your precious collaboration, and with the sentiments of deepest esteem and cordial good wishes, ...

APPENDIX II

FINAL JUDGEMENT

[These are extracts from the *Final Judgement of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches concerning the Order of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana*, sent from Rome to all Syro-Malabar Bishops on July 24, 1985. Since this document was badly interpreted by several people to suit their own thinking, these extracts will help readers to reach the truth.]

The Sacred Congregation, having completed its examination of the document entitled, *The Order of the Holy Mass of the Syro-Malabar Church - 1981*, communicated its observations to the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy on March 3, 1983. (Cfr. the preceding pages of this book)

The same S. Congregation subsequently engaged in a completely new study of the whole question, on the basis of:

- a) a renewed study of all the previous documentation and literature on the topic;
- b) a careful assessment of the two replies received from the Syro-Malabar Bishops, a majority report entitled, *A Response to the Observations of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches* (hereafter, *A Response*), and a minority report by six bishops entitled, *Observations on the Directives from the Holy See on the Qurbana Text*, dated August 16, 1983 (hereafter, *Observations*).

Account was also taken of various unsolicited documents sent to the S. Congregation or to individuals, such as that by

several members of the staff of the Dharmaram Pontifical Institute dated November 24, 1983, as well as of various articles published on the topic by experts and non-experts.

Finally, the S. Congregation officially requested certain reliable experts in India to send their observations on the question, especially on the proposed Order of the Holy Mass (1981), the reply of the Congregation and the two responses from the hierarchy

In its new study of this material, the intention of the S. Congregation was to seek a solution that would be acceptable to all parties, by acceding as far as possible to legitimate requests of the hierarchy.

The S. Congregation bore in mind the supreme importance,

- a) of maintaining the integrity of the Syro-Malabar Rite, since this in itself, also forms part of the treasury of the Church's tradition; and
- b) of making allowance for slight adjustments, such as those already possible in actual, *hic et nunc* celebration, as indeed provided for by many rubrics while remaining conscious at all times of its serious obligation in conscience to fulfil the explicit and constantly reiterated will of the Holy See concerning the preservation and fostering of the Church's Eastern heritage. As Pope John XXIII said to Maronite Bishop Msgr. Francis Hayek, "what you have does not pertain to you alone, but to the treasure of the Catholic Church"

The S. Congregation intended to keep the door open for reasoned and serene proposals, and to do its best to meet requests that were well-founded and that bore upon particular points and not upon the substance of the Rite

As is very well specified below, the principle holds, and is to be firmly inculcated, that the ideal form of celebration—and hence, the starting point for any further special consideration—is the solemn form, namely, the *Raza* which the bishop celebrates on Sundays, Feast-days and important occasions in his cathedral

church with his priests, deacons and all other members of the people of God. The so-called "Low Mass" is only a lawful reduction of this; never the other way round: in other words, it can never be the starting point. As such, "Low Mass" (the Simple form of celebration) is a typical example of "adaptation"....

Concerning the issue of Vatican II's call for both restoration and updating (SC 4), the S. Congregation makes the following observations. It is in no way opposed to seeing the Malabar liturgy evolve in accord with the norms of Vatican II (SC 4, OE 6). But all liturgical development operates not in a vacuum, but within concrete historical circumstances, and the historical circumstances of the past development of the Syro-Malabar liturgy are known to all. Hence, Vatican II also calls for restoration of the authentic tradition where it has been lost (OE 6. 12). Furthermore, SC 23 orders that there be no liturgical innovations, "unless the good of the Church genuinely and certainly requires them, and care must be taken that any new form adopted should in some way grow organically from forms already existing"....

This is what the Holy See ardently desired when the restoration of the Malabar eucharistic liturgy was undertaken 30 years ago, was approved by Pope Pius XII on June 26, 1957, and published in Rome in Latin in 1959 *Ordo celebrationis*... to which was added in 1960 the *Supplementum*...—and in Syriac in Always on May 12, 1960. The reform came into force on July 3, 1962, and in the following year the S. Oriental Congregation in its *Decretum* of December 3, 1963, provided for some slight amendments and abbreviations while firmly rejecting other proposed modifications. This Decree retains its force....

It is no secret that this restored liturgy met with opposition from some of the clergy and hierarchy, and never really was given a fair chance. For a new liturgical reform to take hold a considerable period of time is needed. But within five years of the reform's promulgation, the Sacred Congregation was induced in 1968, during the vacation period of that year when experts were not available, to give hasty approval to a *fait accompli*. This approval, however, was given only *ad experimentum*, to a missal that had already been printed with no previous "dialogue", to say nothing of any prior approval. Request for approval was

made on August 6, 1968, and granted the following day—obviously without any adequate study of the matter....

So the Congregation continually if reluctantly granted the requested extensions while trying to bring the experiment under suitable control. At the same time unapproved, aberrant liturgical texts proliferated, often of extraordinary mediocrity and with little basis in tradition. Indeed, some of them were the result of shocking irresponsibility on the part of persons with high pastoral office and responsibility in the Church....

Furthermore, again in the light of these facts.... "one can hardly describe what was needed as a concern to finalize a process of study, revision and adaptation". Rather it is a question of putting an end to anarchy. This too the Congregation desires precisely for pastoral reasons. Abundant experience, in Kerala as elsewhere, has clearly taught that liturgical confusion and constant change and disruption is pastorally disastrous....

To orient, precisely, future dialogue on this matter, the Sacred Oriental Congregation set out norms that should govern liturgical reform, and once again the hierarchy was urged to submit a text that would put an end to anarchy by returning to a saner tradition based on the 1962 approved text....

Such a text was ultimately submitted to the Congregation (The Order of the Holy Mass....) and the Congregation's comments were sent, in turn to the hierarchy for their reactions....

One must carefully distinguish substantive ritual reform, which remains the prerogative of the Holy See as indicated in the conciliar and post-conciliar documents cited above; and the inevitable and legitimate adaptations that take place in a particular celebration, depending on the arrangement of the church building, the size of the Congregation, the solemnity of the celebration, local customs, the rhythm and style of the well-trained and practised celebrant, etc.

In the following remarks it is indicated where a certain liberty for such legitimate variety and celebrative adaptation is permissible.

The clear irreducible distinction between the "Rite" and the "celebration" is to be maintained and rightly understood.

By "Rite" is meant that "form of celebration" which is drawn up by the Church as such and which is to be found solely in the official liturgical books ("editiones Typicae", "libri typici"). This cannot be altered, not even by the bishops themselves, still less by priests or lay-people. This being so, the celebration cannot, and is never to be "thematized". It is always, and by its very nature, Paschal. Hence, what is to be developed are the Biblical themes.... By "celebration" is meant that "form of celebration" which is carried out by the concrete assembly (always "hierarchical", by definition). It is upon this alone that can be operated slight "adjustments" (again, we repeat, to be distinguished from the "adaptation" of the Rite)....

Where the commission feels obliged to remain firm on certain points, it does so to protect the integrity of the traditions in matters that affect the substance of the rite, or because no adequate motivation—liturgical, theological or pastoral—was demonstrated to justify the proposed change in accord with the explicit norms of SC 23 cited above....

Although such a rubric cannot be incorporated into the text of the *Qurbana* itself, the General Instructions in the introduction may permit the intention of the liturgy to be announced at the beginning. The western "fad" criticised presently by all knowledgeable liturgists is the custom of turning this brief announcement into a monologue, a sort of "mini-homily" or worse, into an informal "chat", at a moment when the people of God should be focusing their attention on Him, not on the celebrant or other minister. The place where the paschal mystery is applied to concrete life is in the homily. Furthermore, what was already said in the Congregation's *Observations*... concerning the thematisation of the liturgy retains its full validity: the theme of all liturgy remains the fact that Jesus Christ died and rose for our salvation. That is always the core of our celebration, and any "theme" that narrows that focus or detracts from the wholeness and centrality of that all-encompassing mystery of Jesus' earthly economy is liturgically unsuitable. As other feasts apart from Sunday and the Easter cycle developed, the Fathers of the Church still did not lose sight of the fact that individual mysteries of Jesus' saving life are but a part of that central paschal mystery.

Note: The intentions are, *per se*, (really), to be announced by the deacon; they are announced by the priest only in the absence of a deacon. (Obviously, there is no justification or reason here for the much-abused, and always superfluous, "mini-homily").

The "intentions" must never "finalize" a particular celebration, for this is, and must remain, only the celebration of Christ the Lord in His Word, in order to worship and adore the Holy, One and Consubstantial Trinity. If reasons there be to allude to real problems that concern the community, the proper place and time to do this is, and can only be, in the homily.

This being so, the celebration cannot, and is never to be "thematized". It is always, and by its very nature, Paschal

The sign of the cross, preferably made from right to left, or from left to right where this is long-standing custom, may be tolerated *ad libitum* (according to each one's desire) at the beginning of the liturgy where it is already in general use. But it is not to be included in the approved text of the *Qurbana*, and in areas where it is not in general use, it is not to be introduced. (Anybody of ordinary intelligence can understand here the desire of the Holy See with regard to the mode of making sign of the cross on oneself. The authentic and early custom is to move the hand from right shoulder to the left, and not from left to right, as many Syro-Malabarians are used to do. Once the truth is revealed what difficulty there is to follow that? Why again cling on fanatically to the aberrated custom?)

It must be noted again: the Christian "sign of the Cross" was for over a millenium made in the same way in all the Churches of the East and of the West: *from right to left*. In 1962 there was simply a timely return to the *normal* usage of the non-Latinized East: the measure is in full conformity with the cogent, general directives in OE 2.6 and 12. For this reason, the relevant rubric of 1962 is to be upheld

Mandatum vestrum—mandatum Christi (*Puqdarkon—Puqdaneh da-Msiha*), is by all means to be kept for *Raza*. It can be adapted in translation to suit it to the genius of the local language. For example the celebrant would say something like:

Priest: "At your bidding let us begin our Service".

People: "We do so following the command of Christ"...

There is at present in the Malayalam liturgy, particularly when sung, an unwarranted insistence on the initial Our Father, without speaking of the singing of other hymns at the beginning of the Liturgy. Actually, the real, introductory hymn of the East-Syrian Eucharist is that of the Risen Christ: "*Laku Mara...*" In the Malayalam usage of today, this hymn is simply recited by the celebrant/concelebrants. (This passage was seen misinterpreted by some, saying that the *Qurbana* can be begun at the Resurrection-hymn; but the emphasis here is on the fact that the Resurrection-hymn ought to be sung at all public celebrations)....

Improvised prayers are not to be permitted....

The psalms of the *marmita* must be taken in full. The traditional form with *Qanona*, and the conclusion with *Glory be*... is obligatory....

Silent pauses, especially after the *Oremus* (Let us pray. Peace be with us) before prayers, may be left to the discretion of the celebrant according to the principles enunciated above. But the prescribed silent prayers *pro clero* (for the priest) are to be said according to their approved text, unless otherwise indicated. (This was also seen misinterpreted by interested parties to suit their own conjectures on silent prayers during liturgical celebrations. The following paragraph reveals the mind of the Holy See on this.)

Due measure must be observed here, as elsewhere: the liturgy is already prayer—one does not stop the liturgy in order to pray. All prayer, including liturgical prayer is personal; but the liturgy is not a framework for our private prayers; it is the common prayer of the Church. Furthermore, for Hindus and Muslims as in the Patristic and Monastic tradition of Christian prayer, there is no opposition whatever between recital and contemplation. Indeed the Latin word *meditare* in Latin monastic writings meant precisely the slow and reflective ruminating on a text of Scripture that was recited. The good celebrant will know how to pace his liturgical words and actions and prayers so that it is a prayerful, meditative, unhurried experience of true prayer for the devout participants....

The petitions of the *Karozuta* may be multiplied or abbreviated, but always in the proper traditional form. However, "Salva nos..." and the following "Angel of peace" petitions (*Karozuta II*) must be retained....

The suppression of the dismissal of the catechumens was already allowed in the initial reply to the bishops....

But even with the omission of a dismissal, if catechumens are present at the liturgy, or if there are catechumens in the local Church—and one would expect no less in a Church that prides itself on being "missionary"—then they should be prayed for at the liturgy in *Karozuta* petitions composed for this purpose.

If on account of the rite of the "dismissal of the catechumens", problems were to arise for the catechumens (discrimination, civil and religious persecution, etc.), it may be left to the discretion of the celebrant to omit it. However, it is to be retained in the rubrics; and suitable instruction on its meaning is to be imparted to the faithful and the catechumens themselves....

The preanaphoral rites following the *karozuta* are simply to be left as in the 1962 text.

The question of the preanaphoral rites is intimately bound up with the use or not of the *bema*. It is suggested that:

- 1) where the Eucharist is still celebrated without *bema*, the order of 1962 be kept; and
- 2) where Eucharist is celebrated with *bema*, the rites be indicated accordingly....

Not only does the New Testament and earliest historical literature on the topic witness to early Christian prayer and hymns addressed to Christ... The Christological texts of the tradition are, therefore, to be kept as such. In other words, even where the liturgical prayer is addressed to the Lord Jesus Christ, since it stems from venerable tradition (3rd century and later, and not only in the Eastern Christian, and Eastern Syrian tradition...), it is absolutely not to be changed. The accusations of "heresy" and similar allegations are simply the fruit of insufficient information.

It might also be added that such prayers appear to have made their appearance under the influence of passages of the Epistle to the Hebrews

The *onita* (anthem of the Mysteries) text is to be left as in the approved text of 1962

The so-called Nicene Creed is to be left in the liturgy, at its traditional place as indicated in the Congregation's *Observations*, p. 15, and it is to be recited daily at every eucharistic liturgy

Regarding the blessing of the mysteries (*A Response* II. 17), those familiar with the tradition affirm that there are two forms of greeting to be distinguished in this liturgy: the simple greeting "Peace be with you" as before the pax or Gospel, and "The grace . . . be with us" at the beginning of the anaphora and before communion. In these latter two instances, the blessing that accompanies the formulae is said to express that in the first instance the mysteries, source that brings this grace and peace to us in the liturgy of the Eucharist, are about to be sanctified; in the second instance, before communion, the blessing is a sign that this grace is about to be received by us through communion

A better and smoother connection between the *gehanta* preceding the text with the words of institution and the latter be made

A very serious problem is presented by the re-arrangement of the text of the Holy Anaphora, operated by the 1962 text. Here the so-called "Formula of Eucharistic Institution" is followed by a section of the last *gehanta*, before the Epiclesis.

It is altogether suitable and desirable to adopt here, for greater clarity, for celebrative harmony, as well as for a more authentic theology, the apt solution of the *Missale Chaldaicum* which has the following arrangement:

—Beginning of the third *gehanta*;

First part of the Anaphora of Mar Nestorios (the III Anaphora of the Chaldean Rite) that concludes with *Phil* 2, 6-11;

Continue with the "institution narrative";

Then follows naturally the rest of the third *gehanta*, .. then the fourth *gehanta*, and then, at its proper place, the Epiclesis

It is evident that "all" and "many", biblically speaking, in both the Old and the New Testaments, simply denote the same reality, as can be inferred from *Rom 5*. Besides, account must be taken of the fact that in India the Oriental Churches even those not of the Chaldean tradition, all without difficulty use the more authentic "for many". This expression is, therefore, to be retained in the Syro-Malabar Church, also for ecumenical reasons....

The initial and final repetition of prayers may be omitted, as was approved in the December 3, 1963 *Decretum*....

In the anaphora the *kusape* may be omitted as in the bishops' proposed *The Order*... no. 60, except for the intercessions no. 65; but they should be printed in smaller type. This will facilitate the recitation of the restored text aloud, which would be desirable....

The ritual gestures and bodily postures of the celebrant are to be executed always in accordance with the relevant rubrics of the 1962 text. Such matters are not to be left to the whim of individual celebrants....

The use of the Latin vestments is absolutely forbidden. *Note*: the shawl worn by some over *Kottina* or *alb* is not really a religious garb; it is indeed used by some priests in India without any reflection on the meaning of such a shawl....

On the difficult question of celebrating the entire Eucharist *versus populum* (celebrant turning towards the people), rather than preserving the traditional distinction between the position of the priest during the Liturgy of the Word and during the Anaphora, when he stood at the head of the people, facing in the same direction as the congregation he was leading in prayer, the S. Congregation has the following to say:

- a) The introduction of the *mass versus populum* (turned to the people) was done without any approval from the Holy See. The tradition in this matter remains the ideal and clearly represents the will of the Holy See in this matter.
- b) The Eucharist celebrated *versus populum* certainly runs counter to the basic approach to worship in any Eastern tradition worth the name.
- c) The celebration, therefore, is not to be *versus populum*, but in conformity with the normal way of standing at the altar in the Oriental tradition.

Care must be taken :

—to celebrate the Liturgy of the Word among the people, as was done in the more ancient tradition ;

—to see to it that every cathedral and parish church is eventually provided with the *bema*, constructed in the middle of the central nave and regularly put to use.

- d) The *versus populum* position may be tolerated, in parishes where it has already been introduced, provisionally and for as brief a time as is reasonably possible, while keeping the fact in mind that all permissions and dispensations of whatever kind given during the experimental period are revoked. (*N.B.*

These directions of the Holy See with regard to the question of the celebrant facing the people always during the Eucharistic celebration, were seen very dishonestly interpreted by some. Anyone who can read English, can also understand the implications without much difficulty. I am at a loss to understand why people are so adamant and try to defend themselves even through insincere methods. The document clearly declares that "all permissions and dispensations of whatever kind given during the experimental period", namely, upto December 19, 1985, "are revoked".)

In order to provide greater variety in the Eucharist, the other two traditional anaphoras are to be translated into Malayalam according to the redaction approved by Pope Pius XII on June 26, 1957 and enter into regular usage, as the Holy See intended (*Ordo Communis—Taksa d-Quddase*).

The fundamental text of the liturgy to be approved by Rome is to be the complete liturgy in its full form. In addition, it should be indicated how the liturgy is to be celebrated in its simpler form....

Rome in no way opposes recommendations for legitimate Indianization on which the whole hierarchy can reach agreement. Such recommendations should be carefully prepared and submitted with sufficient explanation....

On all other points not mentioned in this document, the Congregation's *Observations* remain unchanged. As was stated there and elsewhere, texts of refrains and chants more suitable to Indian culture can be proposed. But Rome's desire to preserve the scriptural framework of such refrains is because these scriptural elements are basic to all Christian worship in every tradition....

It must be bluntly admitted that much of the so-called experimentation was done by priests who had neither the formation nor the outlook to make a positive contribution to liturgical development. *Nemo dat quod non habet* (No one can give that which he hasn't). This has been the case, for instance, with some of the music and songs introduced into liturgical services. A development in this direction would not be objectionable, since the Indian musical tradition, particularly in South India, is both very ancient and of the highest quality. But cheap cinema tunes will not do, with texts inspired by mere sentimentality and individualism that run counter the least liturgical sense.

...the Sacred Congregation has also its responsibilities to the particular mission assigned to it. This demands the preservation of the basic structure and meaning of the eucharistic actions, chants, rites, formulae, and of the essence of the Malabar liturgical tradition as seen in such treasures as the *Laku Mara* Hymn, the traditional anaphora, etc. But in preserving this heritage one must allow for legitimate evolution, in accordance with the principles set out above.

But that is not the end of our common task. There are many outstanding items on the Malabar hierarchy's liturgical agenda: the translation and introduction of the propers for the Eucharist, for which the initial preparatory work was done in the *Supplementum*... restoration of the Lectionary cycle to its integrity, restoration of the Liturgy of the Hours as parish daily prayer, and of course, in all

religious houses too where the daily office should be celebrated by rule, and also in seminaries; restoration of the Liturgical Year; renewal of the liturgical disposition of the church building, etc.

It is the opinion of the S. Congregation that the time has come to turn the page and move on to these other questions in the ongoing liturgical renewal of the Malabar Church.

APPENDIX III

DECREE OF APPROBATION

[Here follows the Decree of the Holy See giving final approbation to the Eucharistic text of the Syro-Malabar Church, after a long period of dialogue and experimentation, namely, from 1934 to 1985].

The Apostolic See which has been solicitous about bringing back to the genuine and early form, of the Syro-Malabar Liturgy, by order of the Supreme Pontiff, Pius XI of venerable memory, earnestly undertook from the year 1934 to bring this into execution. After long and very diligent work the new Syro-Malabar missal prepared in Syriac was published on the 20th of January 1962, with the approbation of the Supreme Pontiff Pius XII of immortal memory. (This sentence summarizes paragraphs 1-4 of *Appendix I* and 10 of *Appendix II*). Finally on the 15th of August 1968, at the request of all the bishops, the Congregation permitted the text of the Syro-Malabar Missal translated into Malayalam and partly renewed to be used in an experimental way and for a time. (for details cfr. Appendices I and II).

From protracted experiments that were done not a few difficulties and suspicions came to light. Wherefore the matter was subjected completely to a new study. In 1980 when the Syro-Malabar Hierarchs had assembled in Rome for their '*Ad Limina*' visit, the Sacred Congregation made use of that opportunity to give directive norms to prepare the definitive text. Afterwards, the bishops returned home and jointly collaborated in liturgical matters. The intereparchial Commission and the Commission of Bishops transmitted the fruit of

their works to the Apostolic See in the year 1981. Having studied diligently and at length the text presented by the bishops, the Oriental Congregation in the year 1983 notified the bishops certain remarks to obtain an amended text. The bishops, according to their interest, proposed anew certain things to the Congregation to be considered again. The Congregation studied the text and proposed the definite text. The whole Episcopal Conference collegially accepted it, except for a few things, and again returned it to the Congregation at the end of the year 1985 for definitive approbation.

The same Congregation, having considered everything, by the power given to it by the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II, rightly approved the meticulously amended text through the present Decree and ordered it to be published as is given in the attached copy. This text will begin to be in force on the very day when the same Supreme Pontiff, amidst the joy and exultation of all, will use it while he will make the pastoral journey in the Region of Kerala and will solemnly inscribe in the catalogue of the heavenly blessed the Lily and the Rose blossomed from that blessed land.

Nothing against this will have any value.

Given at Rome from the Office of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches on 19th December of the year of the Lord 1985.

(sd.)

D. Simon Card. Lourdasamy
Prefect

(sd.)

Archb. Miroslaus S. Marusyn
Secretary

REFLECTIONS

Going through these documents, i.e., Appendices I-III, I am astonished at the so many destructive criticisms against the liturgical restoration and renewal of the Syro-Malabar Church, even in periodicals edited by her own institutions. It must be either due to their ignorance about these documents or due to their lack of understanding of them. The attitude formed by centuries of latinization, the lack of loyalty to the Holy See, etc., can also be other reasons.

Liturgical renewal and growth in any Catholic tradition must include a study in depth of its sources, purification of the proper heritage from undesired, forceful and unauthentic accretions, and integration to the new life-situations. Integration to the circumstances is a felt need of today. But, in order to integrate, one must first reach the authentic heritage; and hence the need of deep study of the sources. It remains a must to the Syro-Malabar Church, since she was cut out of her authentic heritage for about four centuries.

The Examiner Article

Unless one is sure of his faith and ecclesial heritage, and thus of his own ecclesial identity, how can he bear witness to it and integrate it to the situations? In this context, may I just mention an article, *The Malabar Liturgy—Its Origin and Reform*, appeared in *The Examiner* of August 2, 1986, written by Msgr. Clemens Thottungal, bishop of Sagar Diocese. *Was it not a "painful surprise to the Malabarian soul?"*, to quote Cardinal G. Beltrami, who wrote this sentence referring to the so-called synod of Diamper. Shall we expect such superficialities and conjectures from our bishops?

In order to correct himself, he may better go through some serious books on those topics. For discussions on the origin and development of liturgies and liturgical families, he may better consult *The Early Liturgy* of J. A. Jungmann, as a preliminary reading. His conjecture about the first liturgies (that they were all in the mother-tongue), is to be radically corrected. Aramaic (present Syriac) and Greek were the only liturgical languages in Christendom at the beginning. Even in Rome, they began to use Latin only after

250 A. D. They appear to have had preferred Greek, the cultural language of the time to Latin, which was their mother-tongue, at least upto 250.

In this connection, let us also think about Kerala in the first century. What was then the mother-tongue there? Nobody is sure about that. Anyhow, Malayalam developed only by the 12th and the 13th centuries. Sanskrit, the Aryan language, began to exert its influence in Kerala only from the 5th century. But Aramaic (Syriac) appears to have been a familiar language in India (also in Kerala) even before the time of Lord Jesus. The fact that Asoka promulgated his edicts also in Aramaic, shows that there were many people in India at that time, who could read only Aramaic (Syriac). Aramaic was the *lingua franca*, the commercial language, in the East from before the time of Jesus upto the Arabic Period. Besides all these reasons, if the first Thomas Christians had given an extra importance to this Aramaic (Syriac) language, which was the language of their Revelation, of their Lord Jesus and of their Apostle St. Thomas, can any sincere man find fault with them? Those who are sincerely making researches in this line, can never assert that Chaldaic (namely, Aramaic or Syriac) came to India only through Thomas of Cana in the fourth century. If Persian language could become the court language of India and could continue upto the British period, why not Aramaic (Syriac), the cultural and commercial language of that time could be accepted as the hieratic language of the Thomas Christians?

In order to learn more about the cultural relations between India and Persia, the *Discovery of India* by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru may be suggested. At least he, the architect of modern India, could not have thought of betraying our "Indianness"! In fact, he discovers the basic contributions of the Persian or Semitic culture to the formation of the so-called "Indian culture".

The Apostolic link among the Churches in India, Persia (present Iran), Mesopotamia (present Iraq) and Edessa (somewhere in the middle of Turkey) through their *Father in Faith*, the Apostle St. Thomas, is now established by several scholars. And in fact, all these Churches had never known a different liturgy, other than their own East Syriac Liturgy, through which they had always expressed their Apostolic faith.

If St. Thomas came to India from Persia in the first century, when these countries were in commercial relation, what happened to the following two centuries? Can anyone abruptly say that such relation between them was completely broken during the 2nd and 3rd centuries? No man of common sense can draw such conclusions unless there are clear evidences. As far as I know, there are no such evidences.

Actually, I did not want to enter into such details of the *Examiner* article. But it saddened me to note that there are also bishops in the Syro-Malabar Church who are neither conscious nor convinced of their own ecclesial identity. Let us pray the Lord that he may give to this Apostolic Church bishops who love and live her authentic ecclesial heritage.

The New Leader Article

May I add here a reply, (which I have already given to the Editor of *The New Leader*, and was published on Sept. 21, 1986), to the article *Can Orientals have Altar Facing People?* by Fr. Paul Puthanangady sdb, appeared in *The New Leader* of August 31, 1986.

I am not at all surprised in seeing such writings by people like Fr. Puthanangady. In fact, some of the Orientals in India, who had to change their ecclesial identity for the Latin Church (and Fr. Puthanangady is one among them), seem to be out-heroding the Latins in their opposition to the Oriental traditions of the St. Thomas Christians in India. But I am astonished to see that these superficial and misleading assertions come from the director of the National, Biblical, Catechetical and Liturgical Centre (NBCLC), the most important Centre of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India. It is to be specially mentioned here, that most of the activities of this Centre are directly or indirectly aimed at undermining the Apostolic Oriental heritage in India. I wonder how they (the Director and the Staff of NBCLC), even in spite of repeated emphasis by the present Holy Father himself about preserving intact and developing organically the patrimony of Oriental Churches, ecclesial norms which have been so well articulated in the Vatican II documents, continue to misuse the confidence placed in them by the bishops of all the three individual Churches in India.

Appeal to Vatican II

The author's appeal to Vatican II is unfortunately one-sided. I doubt whether he has come across passages from the Vatican II documents, such as, "Among these principles and norms there are some which can and should be applied both to the Roman Rite and also to all other Rites. The practical norms which follow, however, should be taken as applying to only the Roman Rite, except for those which, in the very nature of things, affect other Rites as well" (SC 3), "... the sacred Council declares that Holy Mother Church holds all lawfully recognised Rites to be of equal right and dignity; that she wishes to preserve them in the future and to foster them in every way" (SC 4), and so on.

I am not entering here into the details of many other passages, especially, of the Decree on the Catholic Eastern Churches and on Ecumenism. I just quote a passage from the letter of the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches, sent on July 24, 1985, to His Grace, Mar Antony Padiyara, the President of the Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference, together with the *Final Judgement* of the Holy See on the Syro-Malabar liturgy issue. "It should be remembered in this connection that the Conciliar Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy is only in its most general principles applicable to all liturgical traditions, not in its detailed prescriptions, which hold good for the Roman tradition. Appeals made to Vatican II to justify certain changes in Oriental texts and usages are in not a few cases simply renewed attempts at latinization". I fear Fr. Puthanangady is not aware of these documents and the attitude of the supreme authority in the Church in this matter.

Theological, Liturgical, Historical ?!

The theological, liturgical and historical exposition in his article does not appear to be of a scholar who has made deep researches into the theological, liturgical and historical aspects of Christian liturgy in any ecclesial tradition. He appears to depend only on hearsay and not on authentic sources. His underestimation of "return to the sources" of Vatican II and of Patristic tradition, and over-enthusiasm for making relevant to the time and place, betray his tendencies to modernism, humanism, historicism, secularization and false

nationalism. In his historical exposition, he has conveniently set aside even the available objective data in the Roman tradition. His assumption on the origin and development of different Rites appear to be anti-Vatican II and hence not acceptable to any Oriental tradition.

Celebration Facing to the East

The early Church both in the East and the West was fully aware and deeply conscious of the importance of the East. The eschatological note of the early Church was highly remarkable, and the Church at all ages has to rely on it, to lead an authentic Christian life. The fact that the Nativity of Jesus, the first appearance of God in the world, was announced by a star in the East (*Mt 2, 2*) might have induced the first Christians to think of a sign in the East, announcing also his second coming, namely, the eschatological fulfilment of Christian existence. *Mt 24, 27, Lk 1, 78*, etc., are sure proofs to substantiate this orientation in worship of the early Christian Community.

The authentic Christian existence, whose fundamental dimension is the "already and not-yet", demands that all the faithful fix their eyes always on the "not-yet" when they are in the "already". Hence, it is only natural to a Christian, whether he is in the East or in the West, that he celebrates his Christian existence, i.e., the Divine Liturgy, fixing his eyes on eschatological fulfilment, namely, on the second coming of the Lord. Turning to the East during liturgical celebrations is only a proclamation of one's faith in all the above said salvific realities.

In the course of time, as at least a few western scholars themselves have remarked, western Christianity began to be tempted and distracted by this world, its desires and attractions. Consequently they turned their attention away from the "not-yet" and fixed it on the "already". Modernism, humanism and secularism, have contributed their own share in this change of attitude in the West. (But let us not forget the fact that celebration facing the people started in the West in conjunction with the construction of the Major Basilicas in Rome and precisely for turning to the East during liturgical celebrations.)

Pilgrim Nature

Another theological basis for celebration facing to the East (to the Sanctuary or to the Altar) is the pilgrim nature of the Church, so clearly explained in the *Lumen Gentium*, the Constitution on the Church, of Vatican II. The Sanctuary in Eastern liturgical structures is not merely a platform and the Altar a dining table ; but, in fact, the heaven on earth and the Throne of His Majesty respectively (the Altar is also the representation of the sepulchre of the Lord). Hence, the liturgical assembly under the leadership of the celebrant turned to the East or to the Sanctuary or to the Altar in any Eastern tradition is, in fact, a proclamation of the real nature of the Church marching towards her pilgrim goal, the heavenly Jerusalem, under the leadership of her Lord, Jesus Christ.

Biblical as well as Patristic sources make it clear that the liturgical celebration facing the people is a blatant denial of the eschatological and pilgrim nature of the Church in the "already and not-yet". The same is to be said about the so-called "Indian posture" (sitting in *padmasana* on the ground) for liturgical celebration, highly encouraged by NBCLC and other such institutes in India. Hence, it is an attitude to be corrected also in the Latin tradition. Articles such as *Towards God or to the World* (appeared in a German Periodical) show that sensible Western scholars have already begun to rethink about the present situation of celebration in the Latin Church.

Liturgy is a dialogue between God and the people of God ; and not one between the celebrant and the people about God, as many like the author of this article, are inclined to think. In this supreme dialogue, the celebrant has to stand with the people and lead them. Only when he has something to be communicated or to impart blessing to the people in the name of the Lord, that he turns to them.

Communion-Emphasis

Turning to the people during celebration is not the only way (or rather the proper way), as Fr. Puthanangady thinks, of expressing the "Lord's supper" or the "meal" aspect of the Eucharistic celebration. If he had know the significance of the "communion-emphasis" in Oriental traditions, he would not have dared to write so. The

same is to be said about his concept of "animator" or "president". Only an unbiased study of the 'Liturgy of the Word' in any Oriental tradition can illumine his mind and bring him to the reality.

Liturgy is also catechetical. That does not mean that the celebrant has to teach the community all through the celebration. Such mentality is the residue of medieval "clericalism" and due to the impact of all the above said "isms" in the Western Church. For an Oriental, the very posture in liturgy itself is the proclamation of his faith. The celebrant standing amidst the people proclaims that he too is one among them. When he ascends to the altar from amidst them, the community remains convinced that one of them, whom they have selected and sent, is at the altar perfecting the Mysteries for them. At the same time, they do not forget about the ministerial power of the celebrant. But in the Latin tradition and among the latinized Syro-Malabarians of today all these salvific realities have to be explained; and explanations without action do not produce any effect.

Hence, celebration facing to the East among the Orientals is not because of "an anti-Roman reaction" as the author conjectures; but because it is the right and proper orientation in worship in any ecclesial tradition.

Fr. Puthanangady is also known to be a professed protagonist of the so-called "Indianization". Why does he change his colour as he comes to this question of "turning to the East for prayer", which is, in fact, a remarkable gesture of worship in the Indian context? It is true, inconsistency and contradictions are galore among the so-called "Indianizers". Let the Chaldeo-Indians (Syro-Malabarians) or any other Christian be not misled by such provocative and misinformed writings!

Editorials and Articles

The same is to be said about the *editorials* and *articles* which have appeared and are appearing in several periodicals. They are all examples of betraying the proper ecclesial heritage. Let us pray the Lord to forgive them, since they do not know what they are doing. If they are sincere at heart, these Magesterial documents will help them to understand themselves.

In fact, all those writings were and are provocative. In the pretext of fighting against a few, they are actually attacking the Holy See. What a paradoxical situation, when we compare it to that of our forefathers! They were famous for their fidelity to the Holy See. All those who have come in contact with them in the course of history, have acclaimed it. But what about the present generation? Most of them have turned against it! They scorn, ridicule and laugh at those who are obedient to the Holy See; nay, they even persecute them. *Is it a crime to be loyal to the Supreme authority in the Church?*

Aggressive Attitude

The present aggressive attitude of many to the finally approved *Qurbana* text can only help to divide and weaken the Syro-Malabar Church and retard her progress. The Holy See itself has pointed out this fact on several occasions. After receiving directly all these positive directives from the Holy See, why some of the Syro-Malabar bishops are not co-operating with it, is another amazing fact. When these documents become known to the public, I fear it will be a great scandal. It appears that the attitude of some Syro-Malabar bishops has already caused doubts in the Holy See. That may be the reason why the letter of July 24, 1985 (Appendix I) requests Mar Antony Padiyara, the President of the Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference, "to elicit on the part of the Most Reverend Members of the Hierarchy faithful adherence to the directives of the Holy See".

What or who has brought the Syro-Malabar Church to this deplorable condition? The *Decree* of final approbation (Appendix III) attributes it to "the protracted experiments", perhaps a conscious protraction of the use of experimental texts for liturgy. Now also, even after all these directives from the Magisterium, the same attitude persists. Otherwise, why hesitation to use the text of the *Qurbana*, approved, after all necessary procedures, on December 19, 1985 and inaugurated by the Holy Father himself at Kottayam on February 8, 1986.

The letter from the S. Congregation on July 24, 1985 (Appendix I) hasn't got a different opinion about this attitude in the Syro-Malabar Church. It says: "unfortunately, in default of adequate liturgical catechesis and doctrinal instruction and under the cover of rea-

sonable trial period, a situation developed which led to hesitations and doubts and opened the door to certain experiments not all conducive to the improvement of the quality of the liturgy nor, in consequence, to the spiritual good of the Syro-Malabar community as a whole".

Conclusion

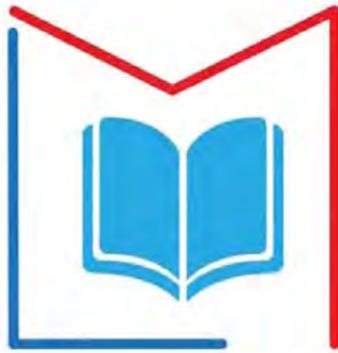
Is it not time to get out of this voracious ambush and help our Church to grow in its own way? When there are two opposed views on a matter, the normal and prudent step is to accept an arbitration. In the case of liturgy and other ecclesial matters, the Holy See is not only the Supreme Arbitrator but also the Supreme Authority. Why then some of the so-called spokesmen of the Church continue to question the authoritative directives of the Holy See, is beyond ordinary man's understanding. If they are to continue their fight against the Holy See, the future of the Church is definitely gloomy. On the other hand, if, by being faithful to the directives of the Holy See, all collaborate with one another, the Syro-Malabar Church can surely look forward with confidence to a bright future, reminiscent of her ancient glory, and thus become decisive in the destiny of the Churches in India. Hence, let us pray for such unity and harmony within the Syro-Malabar or Chaldeo-Indian Church.



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- 1 Dr. Quriaqos Elijah Vadaketh, cmi., വ്യക്തിസാഹചര്യം (A study in Oriental Spirituality), 1984.
- 2 Dr. Varghese Pathikulangara, cmi., *Church and Celebration*, "The Interior of a Church or Chapel in the Chaldeo-Indian Tradition", 1984., Second Printing, 1986.
- 3 Dr. Varghese Pathikulangara, cmi., (comp. & ed.), വിശുദ്ധ കർമ്മങ്ങളുടെ ആരാധന, ആശീർവാദം (Benediction and Adoration) 1984.
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