

# THE LIVING COMMUNITY



9



**THE SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC CATECHISM**

**THE LIVING  
COMMUNITY**

**STANDARD - IX**

**The Synodal Commission for Faith Formation**  
Catholicate Centre, Pattom, Trivandrum-695 004

- Title : English  
**The Syro-Malankara Catholic Catechism - 9  
The Living Community**
- Imprimatur : **His Beatitude  
Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis  
Major Archbishop-Catholicos  
of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church**
- Published by : **The Synodal Commission for Faith Formation  
Syro- Malankara Catholic Church  
Catholicate Centre  
Pattom, Trivandrum,-695 004, Kerala, India.**
- First Published : May 1<sup>st</sup> 2007
- Copy right : **The Synodal Commission for Faith Formation  
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- Design & Layout : **Greeshma Designs  
Kottayam  
Ph: 9447304348**
- Printing : **St. Mary's Press,  
Pattom, Trivandrum-4**
- Distribution : **Catholicate Centre  
Pattom,  
Trivandrum,-695 004, Kerala, India  
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23 March 2020

## BENEDICTORY MESSAGE

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

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

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

God bless you all!

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# INTRODUCTION

The Command of Jesus Christ, “Go into all the world and proclaim the Good News to the whole creation” (Mark 16:15) is the foundation for Catechesis or faith formation. This faith formation has been continuing in the Church from the days of the early Church in different ways. Catechesis is based on the theological positions of each epoch. A serious awareness on the liturgical, spiritual, theological and disciplinary patrimony of the Malankara Catholic Church led to the promulgation of a unique catechism for the Malankara Catholic Church. The entire Church rejoices at the fulfilment of this desire.

Catechism should never become an intellectual pursuit. True Catechesis should lead the pupil to a life of worship and witness. Catechesis should attempt to lead, nurture and confirm the pupil in the life of faith of the Church to which he or she belongs. Thus the catechumen will be able to know and experience Christ in and through the Church and participate in the mystery of salvation and be in communion with the Holy Trinity. Jesus Christ continues his Salvific Mission in and through the Church. Therefore we have concentrated on an ecclesial centred catechesis. This catechesis is founded on the spiritual heritage of the Malankara Catholic Church.

In classes one to seven, we studied the mysteries of God’s revelation. The theme in classes eight to ten is man’s response to revelation. The basic attitude of man is adoration of God, who is creator, protector and redeemer. In classes eight, nine and ten, we learn progressively about the worshipping, living (witnessing) and proclaiming community.

The main topic of this book is Christian morality. We recognise here man’s response to divine revelation. In the first part, on the Bible there is a general description of Holy Scripture. The importance of the Word of God in Christian life is also dealt with. The second part concerns the liturgy. It introduces the various liturgies (rites) in Kerala. The third part is on Church history. The lessons from six to ten explain monastic and religious community life in the Church. They also refer to the first seven Ecumenical Councils and to Church history from the middle ages to the modern period. The fourth part’s topics are God’s commandments in general, each commandment

separately and Christian conscience. Thus on the basis of instruction, worship and witnessing, this text book series is divided into four parts.

Based on the principle that “the rule of prayer is the rule of faith”, this textbook will help our children to understand better the prayers and songs that we recite in our services and thus allow them to experience truly our Liturgy. The prayers, hymns and practical suggestions given at the end of each lesson give more meaning and spiritual nourishment to the child.

We are profoundly grateful to His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, Catholicos, Major Archbishop of Trivandrum and the other bishops of the Malankara Catholic Church for their constant prayers, support and suggestions. My special thanks are due to our beloved Aboon Jacob Mar Barnabas, the Apostolic Visitor in ETR, India and Aboon Joseph Mar Thomas, the Apostolic Visitor to America and Europe for their continued support and guidance.

To the many priests, religious and lay faithful who have sincerely collaborated in this endeavour we offer our gratitude. I would like to thank Rev. Fr. Samuel Thykoottathil for his effort to translate the Malayalam Text into English. I acknowledge Rev. Fr. Abraham Kalakkudi for his valuable remarks and correction. We would like to thank the Professors of St. Mary’s Malankara Major Seminary, Trivandrum, and especially Rev. Dr. Philip Chempakasserry, Rev. Dr. Kurian Valuparampil, Rev. Dr. Chacko Aerath O.I.C., Rev. Dr. Stephan Thottathil, Rev. Dr. Kuriakose Thadathil and Rev. Dr. Geevarghese Chediath. I would like to extend our sincere thanks to the diocesan directors of catechism Rev. Fr. Joseph Poovathumtharayil, Rev. Dr. Antony Chethipuzha, Rev. Fr. Robinson Kunnackad, Rev. Fr. Alexander Valiyaveettil, Rev. Fr. Varghese Valikodath and Rev. Fr. Jose Venmalottu. Our thanks are also due to the Text book committee – Prof. Mary Mathew, Shri. N.G. Philip and Shri. M.V. Thomas. So also to Mr. Mathews Orathel for designing the text book and pictures. I would like to extend our sincere thanks to Rev. Fr. Joseph Kalariparampil for his assistance. Our indebtedness to Rev. Dr. Antony Kakkanatt who is the master brain behind this work is also sincerely acknowledged.

I pray that through this catechism text each child may be brought to and nourished in and confirmed in the faith of the Malankara Catholic Church and thus be able to know and experience Christ’s love more profoundly.

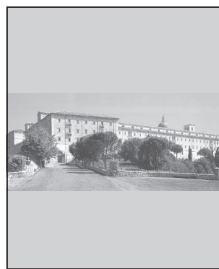
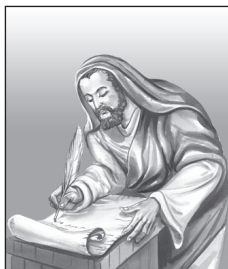
**+ Thomas Mar Koorilos**  
Former Chairman, The Synodal Commission for Faith Formation



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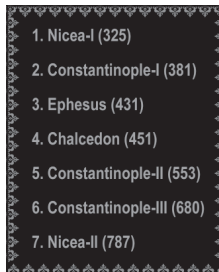
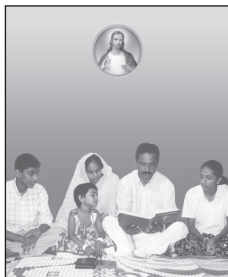
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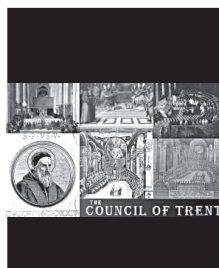
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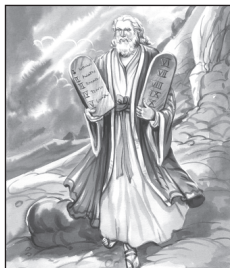
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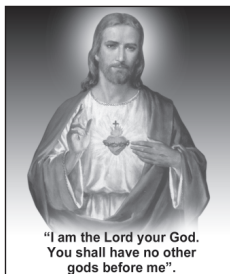
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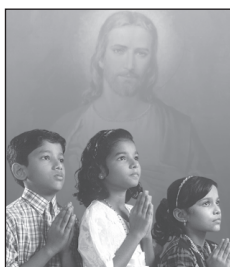
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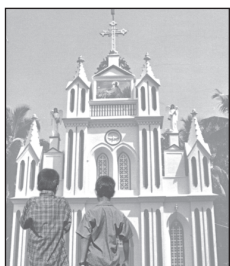
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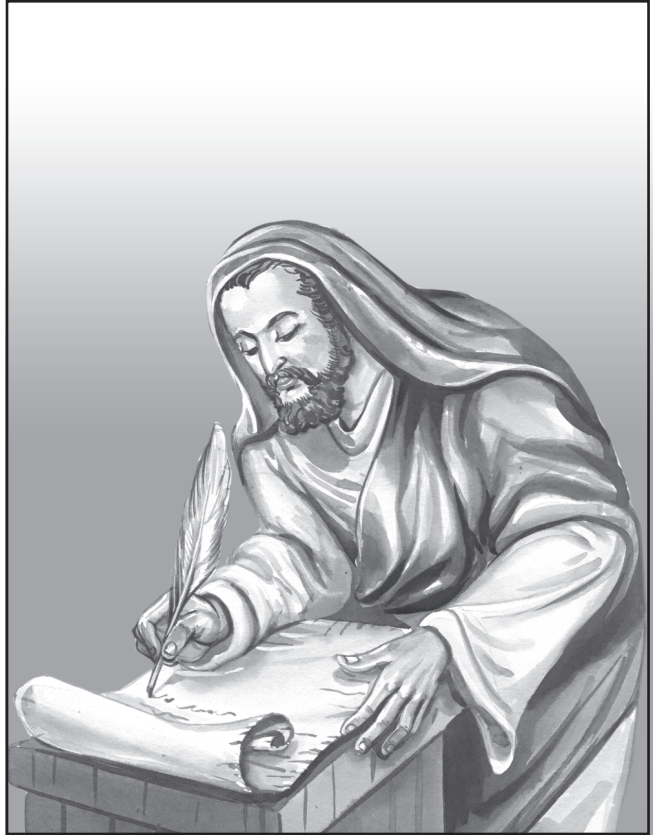
## **PART - I**



## **HOLY BIBLE**

# THE BIBLE, THE WORD OF GOD

All religions have their own religious books. The Bible or Scripture is the religious book that contains the core of Christian religion. The Bible has the largest circulation and it is the book that has been translated into the greatest number of languages. No other book that has influenced human beings and the history of mankind as the Bible. This lesson discusses the general topics, such as: the content of the Bible, its formation, canonicity, divine inspiration and structure.



## The Content of the Bible

The human search for God is as ancient as human history. We see in the various religious books the story of human beings' search for God. But in the Bible, which is the Judeo-Christian religious book, we see the picture of God going in search of human being. Thus we meet with God, who reveals himself to human beings in the Christian religion. The revelation of God begins with the creation of the universe. God continued his revelation through creating human being in his own image and likeness. God intervening in the history of humankind and revealing himself to Abraham, formed the people



of Israel through him and leading them gave hope and meaning to their life. The revelation of God continued through the prophets, priests and kings.

Above all, in the fulfilment of time, God sent his only Son to the world and revealed himself. God completed his revelation through the person, Jesus Christ and through his life. God continues his revelation through the Holy Spirit, whom Jesus Christ sent and through the Church. The content of the Bible includes the history of the revelation of God and human beings' response to it.

In the document about the revelation of God, the Second Vatican Council says: 'Bible is the collection of the self-revelation of God. The Bible describes how God revealed himself through words and deeds. It is through the Bible that we know God perfectly. Hence the Holy Bible is the first means of the revelation of God to us'.

### **Bible, the Literal Meaning**

In almost all modern languages, the word, Bible, is in use. Its literal meaning is 'book'. It originates from the Greek word '*Biblia*', which means 'books'. By the year 400 A.D., the word '*biblia*' began to mean the holy book of the Christians alone. Bible is also known as 'the Holy Scripture', 'the Holy Book' or 'the Holy Writing'.

### **The Formation of the Bible**

The Bible is the collection of 73 books. Although the books are different, they are at the same time related to each other. Human beings, who have received inspiration from the Holy Spirit, wrote all the 73 books of the Bible. God had formed Israel and had led them many centuries before the 46 books of the Old Testament were written. God did not reveal himself through any written book but through the life of a chosen people. Later on, human beings wrote the experience of this community under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This is the Old Testament of the Bible.

Similarly, the New Testament was written several years after the resurrection of Jesus. It is the Church, led by the Holy Spirit that first came into being. The New Testament books are the Christ-experience of the Church, given the shape of books by those who had the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The word of God existed as spoken word through speech and hymns before they were written. They got definite form when they were written. The original books were formed in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek languages. The Bible was first written on papyrus, leather and metal plates. Then they were preserved as scrolls. Later on their copies came into existence. It was the Bible, which was first printed when printing was discovered in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

## **The Period of the Composition of Bible**

The period during which the Old Testament was composed, is considered to be between 1300 to 50 B.C. Similarly, the New Testament is composed between 50 and 100 A.D., that is, a duration of 1400 years is considered to be the composition period of the Bible.

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, these five books together are called the Pentateuch. Certain parts of the Pentateuch were written first. But it got fully written by the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. only. In the New Testament, the books that first were written are the Letters of St. Paul. Among them the first one is the First Letter to the Thessalonians. The books that were written last are the ones after the name of St. John (Gospel, Epistles and Revelation).

## **Original Works and Versions**

The majority of the Old Testament books were written in Hebrew. The rest were written in Aramaic and Greek. Later on the whole Old Testament was translated into different languages: Aramaic (Syriac), Greek and Latin. The First Greek Version of the Bible made around 275 B.C. by 70 learned men together, is called the Septuagint (the Seventy). Septuagint was the first Old Testament, accepted by the early Christians.

The Version made in Syriac during the period of the early Church is called the *P'Seetha*'. This means "simple language". The Latin Version, which St. Jerome prepared between 382 and 405, is called Vulgate, which also means "simple language". All the translations of the Bible, that we have today, are based on the original Hebrew or Greek or on the *P'Seetha* and Vulgate versions.

## **Divine Inspiration**

We have found that the Bible is the collection of 73 books composed by several persons under different circumstances between 1300 B.C. and 100 A.D., a duration of 1400 years. Each author wrote by the power of the Holy Spirit only what God intended and desired. Thus, individuals chosen by God, under the urge of the Holy Spirit, wrote the Bible according to God's desire. 'Divine inspiration' is the word used to signify the encouragement and urge of God for composing the Holy Book.

Since human beings wrote the Holy Book, there may be human limitations and mistakes in it. These mistakes do not affect the divine inspiration or the authenticity of the Holy Bible.

## **The Canonicity of the Bible**

During the periods of the Old and New Testaments, there were several other books circulated as word of God besides the 46 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament. But none of them was considered by the Church as divinely inspired. The Church has separated books that are divinely inspired and those that are not divinely inspired. Only those books, which have the Church's official recognition as divinely inspired are included in the Bible.

The community of the faithful had considered certain books from early times as inspired. In the course of time such books were declared as the Holy Bible. Later on the Church gave them official recognition. Such books, approved by the Church, are called the Canonical books or the Authoritative books. The literal meaning of 'Canon' is 'scale' or 'criterion'. This word is also understood to mean 'catalogue' or 'list'. The authentic list of the books of the Scripture is known as Canon. But the books, which have the nature of the Holy Scripture, having no approval of the Church, are known as non-canonical books. There are many non-canonical books after the names of renowned individuals and the apostles.

The Bible Canon approved by the early Church as well as St. Jerome and St. Augustine was not questioned till the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Protestants changed the Bible Canon in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Hence in 1546, the Council of

Trent definitively proclaimed the Canon of the Bible. The Council declared anathema (condemnation) against those who did not accept in its entirety, the list of all the books contained in the Vulgate of St. Jerome. This declaration stands as the final word of the Catholic Church regarding the Canon of the Bible.

## **The Catholic and the Protestant Bible**

The Greek version, Septuagint, which 70 learned Jews made in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, is known as the Alexandrian Canon. The early Church, St. Jerome and the Council of Trent approved the Canon of this Septuagint. But later on in the Palestinian canon, which the Jews approved, 7 books of the Alexandrian canon were not included. These books were: 1 & 2 Maccabees, Tobit, Judith, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Wisdom and Baruch. Only after the early Christians approved them in the Alexandrian Canon did the Jews also include them in the Palestinian canon.

Until the 16<sup>th</sup> century nobody in the Church questioned the Alexandrian canon, which has 46 books for the Old Testament. After the Protestant reformation, Martin Luther questioned the canon of the Catholic Church and accepted the Palestinian canon of the Jews, having 39 books for the Old Testament. Hence, in the Old Testament of the Protestant Bible there are 7 books less. The 27 books of the New Testament, are the same in the Catholic and Protestant Bibles. Thus, there are 73 books in the Catholic Bible and 66 books in the Protestant Bible.

## **Division of the Book**

The Jews had divided the Old Testament into three groups: (i) Thora (Laws), (ii) Nabiim (Prophets) and (iii) Kethubim (Letters). But from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Catholic Church has divided Bible into three groups based on the contents of the book, namely, (i) Historical, (ii) Didactical and (iii) Prophetical.



## **Old Testament Books (46)**

### 1. Historical (21 Books)

They are: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemia, Tobit, Judith, Esther and 1 & 2 Maccabees.

### 2. Didactical (7 Books)

They are: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs (Solomon), The Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach (Ecclesiasticus).

### 3. Prophetical (18 Books)

They are: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Baruch, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

## **The New Testament Books (27)**

### 1. Historical (5 Books)

They are: Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), Acts of the Apostles.

### 2. Didactical (21 Books)

They are: The 14 Epistles of St. Paul - Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon and Hebrew.

Catholic Epistles - 7: James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3, John and Jude.

### 3. Prophetical (1 Book)

Revelation.

## **Worship**

In the prayer that is recited after the reading of the Gospel in the Holy Qurbono, the people of God praise the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit for the words of life:

“Our Lord Jesus Christ, we praise you for the words of life you have given us, the Father, who has sent you for our salvation and your Holy Spirit, who vivifies us” (Order of the Holy Qurbono).

## **Life Witness**

The Holy Bible is the word of God written in human language through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Let us try to have respect and favour towards the Holy Scripture in our daily life and to arrange our life in accordance with the word of God.

## **Memorise**

“Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life”  
(John 6: 68).

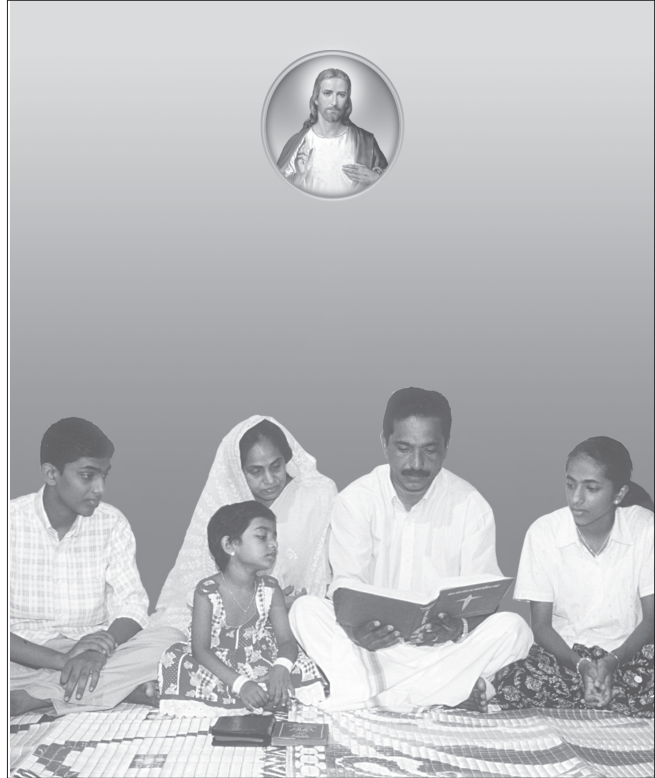
## **Questions**

1. The Bible is the collection of the self-revelation of God. Describe.
2. God inspires the Bible. Why?
3. What is the difference between canonical and non-canonical books?
4. Prepare a short note on the formation of the Bible.
5. How does the Catholic Church divide the Bible? Describe.
6. What is the difference between the Protestant and Catholic Bibles?

# THE BIBLE IN CHRISTIAN LIFE

Bible is the religious book of the Christians. The Bible is known under different names: the Holy Book, the Holy Writing and the Holy Scripture. The theme of the Bible is the words and deeds of the self-revealing God and the response of humankind to it. The Bible is the fundamental means to understand God and to go deep into the mysteries of God. We can know and experience God through the reading and learning of the Bible. The Second Vatican Council says in the decree

on the Divine Revelation that ignorance about the Bible is ignorance about Christ. We introduce in this lesson the importance of the Holy Book in Christian life.



## **The Bible and the Order of the Liturgy**

Christian life is intrinsically related to the order of the liturgy of the Church. The faithful live spiritually through the order of the liturgy of the Church. The official prayers of the Church, sacraments, sacramentals, the feasts of the Lord, and prayer of the hours; all these belong to the order of the liturgy. All the prayers of the order of the liturgy of the Church are either the explanation of the Biblical events or the description of Biblical passages or the direct introduction of the word of the Bible. What mainly takes place

in the liturgy is the commemoration of salvation history. Hence the relation between the order of the liturgy and the Bible is inseparable.

In almost the entire order of the liturgy of the Church, there is a part called the service of the Word. Here, direct reading from the Bible takes place. The readings from the Old and New Testaments are included in the Service of the Word, based on the background of the worship. The faithful listen to the word of God through the order of the liturgy and make it part of the prayer. Thus, the Bible is intrinsically related to the Order of the Liturgy and Christian life.

## **The Presence of Jesus in the Bible**

Individuals, who have received the special urge of God, wrote the Bible. Hence the Church understands and honours the Bible as the Holy Writing, which includes the presence of God.

The early Christians experienced the sacramental presence of Jesus in the Holy Qurbano. Similarly, they recognized the presence of Jesus in the words of the Holy Book. The first part of the Holy Qurbano is the service of the word of God and the second part, the anaphora or the institution of the sacrament. The early Christians experienced the salutary presence of Jesus in both these parts. That is, the early Christians recognized the presence of Jesus in the forms of word and bread.

God reveals himself to mankind through different ways. Among these ways the sacraments and the Holy Scripture are important. Sacraments are the loving touches of God. But the Holy Bible is the word of divine love. We experience God through the sacraments, we hear God through the holy word. The Second Vatican Council stresses the relationship between Holy Scripture and Holy Qurbano. Both these realities are intrinsically related with Jesus. Both give spiritual nourishment to the people of God. Just as the Church honours the sacred body of our Lord, she honours the Holy Bible also. The Second Vatican Council says in the decree on Divine Revelation that the faithful get the living word from the table of the Word and the bread of life from the table of Life in the Holy Qurbano.



History bears witness that the Church specially honoured the presence of Jesus in the Holy Scripture. In the Council of Ephesus in 431, the Holy Scripture was solemnly brought and installed. Jesus Christ, present through his word, acted and guided the deliberations of the Council. Just as the Church worships the Holy Eucharist, she honours the Holy Scripture. It is said in the law about the Holy Qurbono that the word that is preached should be worshipped on the *thronos*. The Church honours the presence of Jesus in the Holy Scripture like the sacramental presence of Jesus on the *thronos*, by incensing it. The priest and the server bow before the Holy Scripture and kiss the same during the celebration of the Holy Qurbono and honour the presence of Jesus. Just as there is the presence of Jesus whenever we read the Holy Bible during the time of worship, we specially experience the presence of Jesus at any time we read and meditate the Holy Bible.

### **The Renewing Word of God**

Just as the sacraments make us experience renewal, when we devoutly read the Holy Scripture, God speaks to us and nourishes us with his presence and renews our life. Hence we should read the Holy Scripture with an open mind.

St. Paul speaks about the strength of the word of God thus: “Indeed the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart” (Hebrew 4: 12). Thus when we receive the word of God heartily, we will be renewed and will have the experience of salvation.

### **The Word of God of Consolation, Joy and Challenge**

At times, the word of God gives us consolation and joy. But at times it will become a challenge to our life. We will experience the word of God sometimes soft and at other times hard. As much as we desire to change, so much the word of God stirs us and will impart the divine life to us. There are some who read the Holy Scripture without any personal interest. But that reading is useless. When we read the Holy Scripture, God is personally speaking to us. The Holy Scripture invites us to relate ourselves with God and with others. We cannot evade this invitation without giving a reply.

Certain parts of the Bible may be more appealing to us emotionally and certain other parts less so. But God can make use of any part of it to converse with us. Hence when we read the Holy Scripture, we should wait for the intervention of God with an open mind. We need not despair thinking that we do not understand certain parts of the Bible or that a part does not suit with our circumstances. We should approach the word of God with humility. We should understand that our intellect and strength are limited. The word of God acts in a humble heart.

### **The Reading of the Scripture in our Daily Life**

The best way to establish deep relationship with God is the daily reading of the Holy Scripture. We should read the Holy Scripture not only when we confront any problem or difficulty. God desires from us not only the relationship, which lasts for a short while. God stabilizes love for us by conversing with us in the joys and sorrows of our life. We have in a day 1440 minutes to live. If we are able to spend at least ten minutes to relate ourselves with God through reading the word of God, there will be joy in us; there will be internal change. Through this, we will associate with the word of God. The word of God is a part of our life.

It is possible for us to read the Holy Scripture individually or collectively. It is the custom in our homes to read Holy Scripture in common, at evening prayer. That is an act, which we perform as part of our family worship. It is most blessed to read the Holy Scripture daily, individually. Through this, God will speak to us each day and we can enter into association with God.

### **The Reading of the Holy Scripture and the Work of the Holy Spirit**

When we read the Bible, it becomes active in us through the work of the Holy Spirit. When we read the Holy Scripture as the word of God, the Holy Spirit works in us. We ought to pray to the Holy Spirit in order to have real association with God and to hold conversation with him.

The Holy Spirit works in different ways when we read the Holy Scripture. Firstly, the Holy Spirit strengthens us to read the Holy Scripture as the word

of God. Thus, through reading and understanding the word of God personally, we experience that our life has meaning. Secondly, the Holy Spirit helps us to understand the divine meaning in the Holy Scripture. The Holy Spirit strengthens our effort to understand the Holy Scripture. The Holy Spirit, having opened our mind, makes clear to us what the Holy Scripture intends to talk to us personally. Thirdly, the Holy Spirit will influence our response to the word of God. The Holy Spirit will help us to determine how to react to the part of the Holy Scripture we read, how to respond and what change we have to make in our life.

When we read the Holy Scripture together with the Holy Spirit, we wouldn't be able to remain inactive. We ought to respond to the Holy Spirit in some way. Sometimes, this response will be through entering into a deep relationship with God. At other times, it will be through acts related with people. Still, at other times, it may be a challenge to the Christian spiritual life, which we have underestimated. Reading the Bible with the urge of the Spirit will be useful to strengthen the experience of following Jesus in day-to-day life. Thus, the word of God will become a living reality and enlighten our minds and thoughts and enflame our hearts. Let us pray for God's gift of the Spirit. When we read the Word of God and live accordingly, the life of God will be manifested through us.

## **Worship**

The Church prays in order that the word of God may shed light in front of my legs, in the daily life, like a lamp:

(Nadha ninnude ardrathayerum...)

“Enlighten Lord, your word as lamp, before my legs,

So that I may walk along it like the light of the sun” (S’himo, Monday, Evening).

## **Life Witness**

Let us try to listen to God through the reading of the Holy Scripture and understanding God’s mind and respond to it in our daily life.

## **Memorise**

“Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart”  
(Hebrews 4: 12).

## **Questions**

1. What is the relationship between the Bible and the Order of the Liturgy?
2. Describe the conviction of the Church about the presence of Jesus in the Bible.
3. What is the need of reading the Holy Scripture in daily life?
4. How does the Holy Spirit work in the reading of the Holy Scripture?



**PART - II**



**LITURGY**

# THE ORDER OF THE SYRO MALANKARA LITURGY

There are 22 Individual Churches in the Catholic Church. Each Individual Church has its own order of liturgy. All the orders of liturgy, we see today are developed from the tradition of three ancient orders of liturgy.

The Latin tradition of Liturgy developed centring on Rome, the Greek, on Constantinople and the Syrian tradition of liturgy centring on Seleucia-Ctesiphon (Mesopotamia), Persia and Antioch. The Latin and Greek traditions developed in the

Roman Empire and the Syrian tradition in the Persian Empire. In course of time six families of the order of liturgy developed. The Roman Empire was divided into two parts: Eastern and Western. Latin Liturgy developed in the Western Roman Empire and Antiochean, Alexandrian, Armenian and Byzantine liturgies in the Eastern Roman Empire. Besides, the Chaldean Liturgy also developed in the Persian Empire. In short, all the orders of liturgy prevalent today in the Church, are related to these six traditions of liturgy. In the Indian Catholic Church, there are three orders of liturgy. The Latin Catholics use the Latin order of liturgy, the Syro Malabar Catholics use the Chaldean and the Malankara Catholics, the Antiochean Syrian order of liturgy. In this lesson we describe the specialties of the Antiochean order of liturgy.



## **Antiochean Order of Liturgy**

The Malankara Catholics of India use the Antiochean order of liturgy. The origin of this order of liturgy is in Jerusalem. But when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 A.D., Antioch developed as the centre of the Church. The order of liturgy that developed in that Church, later on got the name of the place, Antioch. Various Churches use this order of liturgy at present. The following Churches use this order of liturgy: the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch, Syrian Catholic Church, Malankara Jacobite Church, Malankara Orthodox Church, Independent Syrian Church of Thozhiyoor, Malankara Mar Thoma Church and Malankara Catholic Church.

The Indian Church was divided into two, following the oath of the Koonan Cross. The sect known as 'Puthenkoottukar' entered into relationship with the Jacobite Church of Antioch and through their bishops, the Antiochean order of liturgy developed here.

## **The Specialities of the Antiochean Order of Liturgy**

The Antiochean order of liturgy has also the name, the West Syrian Order of Liturgy. This order of liturgy is formed centred on Antioch, the capital of ancient Syria. The Antiochean theological college and the learned theological Fathers formed the Antiochean order of liturgy and the Christian community over there. The Antiochean Christian community received the distinguished order of the Holy Qurbano of Jerusalem, which is known as the Anaphora of St. James. The independent mode of Greek liturgy was formed by the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. Then, this order of liturgy flourished in the Syrian language. The 'Puthenkoottukar' of India began to use this order of liturgy after 1653.

## **Emphasis of the Holy Scripture**

The Jewish Christians were the background of this order of liturgy. Hence the Jewish customs and signs are included in this order of liturgy. The fulfilment of the Old Testament sacrifices and offerings took place in the New Testament through Jesus Christ. Against this background, prayers and hymns connecting the Old Testament events with the New Testament are specialities of this order of liturgy. The signs, symbols, events and styles

are all based on the Holy Scripture. Prayers and hymns are arranged intrinsically related to the Holy Scripture. It is because of the Jewish Christian background that this order of liturgy is replete with the Old Testament events and signs.

## **Mysteriousness**

Holy Qurbono is said to be ‘Holy Mystery’ in the Antiochean order. That is, the substance and the meaning of the Holy Qurbono is beyond the understanding of human intellect. It is clear in the prayers that even the fiery angels tremble before the powerful presence of God and that the angels stand before the presence of God covering their face with their wings. Here, the presence of God is always introduced mysteriously since the human eyes and intellect have no strength to see and understand the powerful presence of God. This mysteriousness is introduced in several ways. For example, the secret prayers of the liturgy, the covering of the sanctuary with the veil, the services held behind the veil, the sacred body and blood being always kept covered, away from the view of the faithful; all these signify the mysteriousness.

## **Signs**

The signs are the means used to make human beings understand the divine things, which ordinarily cannot be fully described through words. The Antiochean order of liturgy has more interest than others to introduce the divine mysteries through signs, symbols and rites. For example, the cross on Golgotha is covered with a red veil for 40 days after the feast of the resurrection, which signifies the presence of the risen Lord. There was the special presence of the risen Jesus on earth for 40 days after his resurrection. Similarly, ‘the service of the procession around fire’ of Christmas and ‘the service of the burial of the cross’ on Good Friday are signs signifying the salvation events.

## **Exhortation in the Liturgy**

It is one of the specialties of this order of liturgy to teach the faithful the truths of faith through prayers and hymns. Especially the prayers of the



Proemion and Sedro of the liturgy teach in detail the theology of the particular sacraments and feasts. It is the characteristic feature of the Jewish prayers to glorify God recalling to mind with gratitude the intervention of God in the life of the ancient Fathers of Israel. It is the speciality of the Christian liturgy to remember often the salutary events, which Jesus Christ fulfilled for the salvation of humankind and to praise and worship God for that sake. These kinds of prayers will help us to remind constantly the truths taught in catechism, thereby to remain firmly in relationship with God.

### **Liturgical Hymns and Music**

The order of the Antiochean liturgy is musical. Liturgical music has special importance. There are special hymns for all sacraments, feasts and prayers of the hours. Almost all the prayers of the order of liturgy have literary beauty and their reciting is in a musical tone. There is no prayer in this order of liturgy without melody except the homily. In short, the hymns and melody of the prayers lead the faithful to spiritual enjoyment. There is no service without hymns in this order of liturgy. The singing of the hymns and their listening alike, render spiritual enjoyment. The thought that 'he who sings prays twice', reveals the importance of the music of the order of liturgy.

The chief among the Fathers who have composed the Antiochean liturgical hymns are Mar Ephrem, Mar Jacob of Serugh and Mar Balai. The Syrian liturgical music has the quality to impart spiritual enjoyment. The Syrian hymns are regularized to sing in eight tunes. These eight tunes are useful in order to express the particular state or attitude of the occasion of each service. It is the speciality of this order to recite in different tunes and tones almost all the prayers of the order of this liturgy.

### **Incensing**

There is incensing in all the services of the Antiochean liturgy, which has, to a great extent, the influence of the Jewish culture and the Old Testament background. There is incensing throughout the celebration of the Holy Qurbano. There is no service in the order of the Antiochean liturgy without incensing. Incensing is common even in the prayers of the hours.

Incensing signifies three things. It signifies the sanctification of the entire worshipping community. Secondly, it signifies the prayer that rises towards the presence of God from the hearts of the faithful like smoke. Thirdly, incensing is understood as the indication of honouring and respecting a person or a thing.

## **The Commemoration of the Salutory Events**

This liturgy emphasizes the salvation history of God. The whole celebration of the Holy Qurbano is the commemoration of the salvation mysteries or the salutory events. The salutory events from the creation of the universe up to the second coming of Jesus are commemorated in the Holy Qurbano. We remember in the Holy Qurbano the Old Testament events, the birth of the Saviour, his baptism, public life, passion, death on the cross, burial, resurrection, ascension, reign at the right hand side of the Father and second coming. Similarly, the Church commemorates in a year all Christ-events through the order of the liturgical year.

## **Trinitarian Praise**

All prayers begin with praising the three persons of the holy Trinity. The Trinitarian praise is inserted in all the hymns. All prayers end with offering praise and glory to the three persons of the Holy Trinity. The work of the three persons of the Holy Trinity in the act of creation and salvation is remembered through the order of liturgy. In short, Trinitarian praise is a characteristic feature of this order of liturgy.

## **Holy Mother of God**

Throughout the order of this liturgy there are hymns and prayers praising the holy Mother of God. The basic prayer, '*Kauma* prayer' ends with the prayer: 'Hail Mary, full of grace'. At the end of every service, there is the *Kukkilion* (Prayer with incense) in honour of the Mother of God. The thanksgiving hymn of the Mother of God ("My soul magnifies the Lord", Luke 1: 46-56) is recited in every important feast and in the prayer of the hours. The public service of the Holy Qurbano begins with the commemoration of the Virgin Mary ("Mary, who gave birth to you").

The Mother of God is given a special position in this liturgy as the Mother of the Saviour.

## **Respect and Reverential Fear**

The liturgy is full of wonder, fear and respect on the basis of the vision, which the prophet Isaiah had (Isaiah 6: 1-13). As the glory and strength of God are introduced, it also introduces the sinfulness and limitation of the human being. Basing on the vision of Isaiah, the sanctuary is considered as heaven and the altar as the throne (*thronos*) on which God sits. The servers in the sanctuary are considered as angels. The seraphic disks, with the picture of the angels, signify the hymn of the angels. In short, the liturgy signifies the presence of God in the sanctuary and that even the angels stand before the glory of the omnipotent God with fear and trembling. Thus, this order of liturgy prepares the faithful to stand before God with reverential fear and respect.

We, the Malankara Catholics, are using the Antiochean order of liturgy having these special qualities. Let us try to make the divine worship more lively, studying and understanding this order of the liturgy. Thus let us try to grow in God-experience and to meet the living God through liturgy.

## **Worship**

The Church entreats in the intercessory prayers during the Holy Qurbano in order that God may mercifully receive the prayers and sacrifice, which the people of God offer:

“Lord, listen to the petition of your worshippers with interest and mercifully accept the same. For, you are one who receives sacrifices. We will offer praise and thanksgiving to you and to your only Son and to your Holy Spirit now and at all times and forever” (Order of the Holy Qurbano).

## **Life Witness**

Let us try to make the worship of God most lively and perfect, having understood the special qualities of the Malankara order of liturgy and through that to offer glory to God, continuously.

## **Memorise**

“For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere”  
(Psalms 84: 10).

## **Questions**

1. Write a note on the different orders of liturgy that developed in the early Church.
2. How was the beginning and growth of the Antiochean order of liturgy?
3. Describe the mysteriousness of the Malankara order of liturgy.
4. The Antiochean order of liturgy is musical. Describe.
5. What does the saying that the Holy Qurbano is the commemoration of the salvation mysteries mean?

# THE ORDER OF THE SYRO MALABAR LITURGY



The apostle Thomas, the disciple of Christ reached Kerala in 52 A.D. and preached the Gospel of Christ here. The Christians, who received faith from St. Thomas the apostle held relationship with the Persian Church or Chaldean Church. Thus, the Christians over here used the East Syrian Order of Liturgy of the Persian Church or Chaldean liturgy from the beginning. The Syro Malabar Church, from the arrival of Thomas the apostle, preserved communion with the Catholic Church and uses the East Syrian liturgy, which it was using from the beginning.

The Syro Malabar Church has the ancient Syrian order of liturgy, which was developed centring on Edessa, the centre of the early Judeo-Christians. The main anaphora of the Syro Malabar Qurbono is known after the names of Addai, who was the disciple of Thomas the apostle and the apostle of Edessa and Mar Marri, his disciple. We are introducing the construction of the Syro Malabar Qurbono in this lesson.

## **Syro Malabar Qurbono**

Each Holy Qurbono is offered in response to the instruction of our Lord: 'Do this in remembrance of me when you gather together'. Holy Qurbono



could be offered solemnly or otherwise in accordance with the importance of the day.

The formation, development and explanation of the Holy Qurbono in the East Syrian Church are based on the teaching of St. Paul (1 Corinthians 11: 23-26). The Holy Qurbono is the divine action, in which the whole Church gathered together in unity, observing the remembrance of the Lord, bless the bread and break it and bless the cup and partake of it. Observance of the remembrance of the Lord means all the mysteries of his salvific event are remembered, from his incarnation up to his second coming. Each constituent element of the Holy Qurbono is a sharing in his salvific mysteries observing the remembrance of the Lord. Accordingly, we can understand the following parts as important divisions of the Syro Malabar Qurbono.

## **1. Introductory Service**

The introductory service extends from the beginning of the Holy Qurbono up to the prayer “Lord of all things”.

The Holy Qurbono begins either with the invitation “Let us begin the Holy Qurbono according to the command we have received” or its version in poetry:

‘On that Sacred Feast of Pasch  
As per command of the Lord’.

In this part, there are the services of the anamnesis (commemoration of the command of the Lord), the Lord’s Prayer, the hymn of the angels: ‘Holy, Holy, Holy’, the Psalms and the incensing.

In this part is commemorated: the Incarnation of the Lord, his birth, and the dreams of the ancient Fathers, who waited for the Lord.

## **2. The Service of the Word**

The service of the word begins with the announcement, “Let us raise our voice and exalt the Lord”. In this part there are the following services: the ‘thrice holy’ hymn; the first reading from the ‘Books of the Law’ of the Old Testament, the second reading from the ‘Prophetical Books’ of the Old Testament, the readings from Epistle, Gospel, Karosusa (proclamations) and prayer of the imposition of hands.

The public life of the Lord and his witness through words and deeds are specially remembered here.

### **3. The Service of Preparation**

What is known as preparatory service, are the actions and prayers between the service of the word and the part of the sacrament (anaphora). The arrangement of the holy things and the spiritual preparation of the celebrant and the faithful are held in this part. At this time, the bread and wine are arranged and carried to the altar. Then the celebrant washes his fingers. The holy things are installed on the altar and covered with the *sosappa* (veil). Then the commemorative prayers, the creed and the entrance to the altar, are conducted.

In this part, the passion of the Lord, his death and burial are specially remembered. Besides, the Holy Virgin Mary, St. Thomas the apostle and all the departed ones are remembered here.

### **4. The Sacramental Part, the Anaphora**

The important part of the Holy Qurbano is the anaphora or the sacramental part. The anaphora has also the name, the thanksgiving prayer. The part, from the prayer, which begins with “Lord our God, we say thanks to you” including the prayer of invitation of the Holy Spirit, beginning with “Lord, let your Holy Spirit come”, is called the anaphora. In this part, there are: the exchange of peace, the four prayers of petition and thanksgiving with head bent, commemoration of the salvific mysteries, description of the last supper, intercessory prayers and invitation of the Holy Spirit.

The Church praises God through this prayer for the immense mercy, God has shown us through the works of creation, salvation and sanctification. The resurrection of the Lord is specially remembered in this part.

### **5. The Service of the Breaking**

The service of the breaking begins with the prayer, which the priest recites raising the sacred Host. The priest breaks the sacred Host into two pieces and mixes with the sacred blood. After that, he prepares for receiving the

Holy Communion. This signifies the fulfilment of the holy mysteries of the Lord. The congregation worships Christ who is present in the Holy Qurbano like the apostles, who worshipped the risen Messiah when he appeared to them after resurrection.



## **6. The Service of Reconciliation**

The celebrant prays for the reconciliation between God and humankind and human beings among themselves. In this part, there are: the prayers of the invitation for reconciliation, incensing and prayers for the absolution of sins. The faithful prepare themselves spiritually in order to receive the Lord.

## **7. The Service of the Communion**

In this service are included the Holy Communion and prayers connected with it. The Lord's Prayer, the proclamation: "The Holy Qurbano is for the holy people", the Holy Communion of the celebrant and the faithful. The faithful receive the risen Christ through the Holy Communion and become sharers in his life.

## **8. The Concluding Service**

The concluding service is the part, where the congregation, having received the sacred body and blood of the Messiah, partaken of his salutary acts and become united to him, says thanks to him. In this part, the celebrant prays thanking to the Triune God. Then the celebrant gives the concluding blessing to the congregation. The celebrant seals the congregation with the sign of the living cross. Here, the second coming of the Lord and eternal life are remembered. The celebrant ends the Holy Qurbano with kissing the altar, the sepulchre of the Lord.

By taking part in the Holy Qurbono, we commemorate the Paschal mysteries – from the incarnation until the second coming – and partake in them symbolically. Through this, we are made ready to be the apostles of the Lord by becoming sharers of these mysteries of salvation, which the Father has entrusted to his Son and perfected through the Spirit. Holy Qurbono is the golden opportunity, which God prepares for the members of the Church to participate in the salvific mysteries of the Messiah, whom God gave to humankind as gift of grace. The Syro Malabar Church has organized each service of the Holy Qurbono in a manner helpful to partake of these mysteries in an active way. This helps the faithful to experience the mysteries of the Messiah and be their apostles in the world through the prayers and services, which are replete with the vigour and style of the Holy Scripture.

### **Worship**

The Holy Qurbono begins in the Syro Malabar Church with the remembrance of the command of the Lord. The people of God remember this through the hymn given below:

“On that sacred feast of Pasch  
As per command of the Lord;  
Gather us in the holy name  
And offer this sacrifice.  
Come, let us be reconciled  
And we make a new altar;  
We offer with Master’s love  
This sacrifice before him”.

### **Life Witness**

Let us try to understand the variety in the divine worship, to praise God and to promote love and communion with the Church community by learning more about the order of the liturgy of the Syro-Malabar Church.

### **Memorise**

“How lovely is your dwelling  
place, O Lord of hosts!”  
(Psalms 84: 1).

### **Questions**

1. Prepare a note about the beginning and growth of the Syro Malabar order of liturgy.
2. Into how many parts are the Syro Malabar Qurbono divided? Which are they?

# THE ORDER OF THE LATIN LITURGY



The important orders of liturgy that were formed in the West were the Roman (Latin), Ambrosian, Gallican and Celtic. But out of these what exist today are the Roman and Ambrosian only. The Roman liturgy is observed all over the world. Ambrosian liturgy exists only in the Archdiocese of Milan.

## **Roman (Latin) Order of Liturgy**

Rome had great importance from the very beginning of the Church, since it is the See of Peter. Similarly, the liturgy that was formed centred on Rome, became very important in the Western World, especially in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.

What is meant by the Roman (Latin) liturgy is the liturgy that took origin and grew, based on the city of Rome under the patronage of the Roman Pope and by parish priests of the churches surrounding Rome.

From the 4<sup>th</sup> century, after Latin replaced Greek language in the Roman liturgy, the books of the Divine Office and the Sacraments began to be codified in a large scale.

Slowly this Latin liturgy began to spread outside Rome. Emperor Charlemagne accepted this liturgy in his Empire and the Roman liturgical books were spread there.



In course of time, this liturgy began to establish control over the other Western liturgies except the Ambrosian. Thus, during the reign of Pope Gregory VII (1073-1085), the liturgical unification was effected all over the Western World. Through the discovery of America in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (1492), this liturgy began to be used there also.

As a result of the missionary activities of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Roman liturgy spread in the Eastern World also (Philippines, India, Japan, China and African Continent).

The Council of Trent (1545-1563) in the 16<sup>th</sup> century encouraged the renewal of liturgy. Through the renewal of liturgy during the times of Popes Pius X, Pius XII and John XXIII, the Latin liturgy had attained more development. Its perfection could be seen in the Second Vatican Council and in the modifications that followed.

## **Order of the Divine Liturgy (in the Latin Rite)**

The divine sacrifice has 4 parts: 1) Preparatory Act, 2) Sacred-Word Act, 3) Act of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, 4) Concluding Act. These parts complement each other.

### **1. Preparatory Act**

These are the parts before the service of the word in the holy sacrifice. They are: entrance procession, entrance hymn, greetings, act of contrition, Lord have pity, Gloria and Prayer of the Congregation. These are included in order to mark the beginning, preparation and introduction of the Holy Sacrifice. The aim of this is to prepare the faithful as a community and to prepare them befittingly for the service of the word and for the service of the sacrifice.

### **2. Act of the Sacred Word**

The preaching of the word and its sharing has great importance in the order of liturgy. There is no order of liturgy without the service of the sacred word. Second Vatican Council says: "In order to avail from the table of the word nutritious food in large quantity, the deposits that are in the Holy Scripture are to be given to the faithful. For that, the chief portion of

the Holy Scripture is to be read to them within a stipulated time” (Order of Liturgy).

The reading from the Holy Scripture is formed basing on the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. For the Sunday reading, a three-year-cycle and for the reading of the ferial days a two-year-cycle are arranged. The homily, recitation of creed and prayer for the faithful follow the reading of the Gospel.

### **3. Act of the Eucharistic Sacrifice**

The third important division of the Holy Sacrifice is this part, which is the source and centre of the whole sacred function, especially the Eucharistic Prayer. All that Christ the Lord said and did are commemorated in this part. He took the bread and said: “Take and eat; this is my body”. He took the cup and said: “Take and drink; this is my blood”. Then, he gave them to his disciples. There are specially three things in this thanksgiving part of the sacrifice: Preparation of the offerings, Eucharistic prayer and Holy Communion.

#### **Preparation of the Offerings**

At the commencement of this act, the offerings, bread, wine and water are brought to the altar. These represent the faithful who take part in the holy service. By offering these things on the altar, they are offering themselves to God along with the sacrifice of Christ. Then the prayer over the gifts is recited, the chief content of that prayer is to dedicate the offerings to God, and to entreat so that they may be accepted.

#### **Eucharistic Prayer**

This is the central point of the holy sacrifice. This is the prayer, which the celebrant offers to God the Father through Jesus Christ with the introductory statements and their answers. This is the occasion to commemorate the salvation events of God with hearts full of gratitude and to offer the Eucharistic sacrifice. The constituent elements of all Eucharistic prayers are the following:

- 1 Preface (Introductory Prayer)
- 2 Sanctus (Hymn of the Angels)
- 3 Epiclesis (Invocation of the Holy Spirit)
- 4 Institution Narrative
- 5 Anamnesis (Command of Jesus to continue the Service)
- 6 Offering of Sacrifice
- 7 Intercessory Prayers
- 8 Doxology (Conclusion of Thanksgiving).

## **The Act of the Holy Communion**

When the doxology is finished, the Holy Service will come to an end with the reception of the sacred body and blood of the Lord. In this part, the following services are conducted: The Lord's Prayer, Service of peace, Service of the Fraction and Service of mixing the body and blood. The aim of this part is to prepare the faithful properly to receive the sacred body and blood of the Lord with due disposition and devotion.

After this, the celebrant holds the sacred Host above the chalice and raises so that the faithful may see them and invites the faithful to the banquet of the divine lamb saying: "Behold! The Lamb of God..." The celebrant and the faithful together respond: 'No one is worthy to receive the Lord' (Matthew 8: 8).

The service of the Holy Communion is held as the culmination of the Holy Sacrifice. Then the celebrant and the faithful receive the Holy Communion. After saying the prayer of the divine meal, the celebrant and the faithful give thanks to God.

## **4. The Concluding Service**

The important items of the concluding service are the greeting and the blessing of the celebrant. The celebrant bids goodbye to the faithful with the farewell word: "Go in the peace of Christ" and dismisses them with the advice to put into practice the divine mysteries, which were observed through

signs. Then the celebrant and the deacon bid goodbye to the altar kissing the same and they bow before the altar along with the other servers and conclude the closing service.

The faithful having been nourished with the Word, and Sacred Body and Blood of the Lord, become one with the Lord, leave the church in order to fulfil the duty, which the Lord has entrusted them to do. They become living witnesses to Christ in the world as the continuation of the Holy Qurbono. Hence, it is necessary to participate in the Holy Qurbono. Each individual has his own duty to perform in the Holy Sacrifice. If only one tries to fulfil one's duty, one would be able to make each offering of the Holy Qurbono an experience. Thus, let us pray continuously to the Lord of the Holy Eucharist to mould a Christian community based on the Holy Qurbono.

### **Worship**

At the very beginning of the Holy Qurbono according to the Latin Rite, the celebrant and the faithful confess their sins and recite the act of contrition as follows:

“I confess to Almighty God and to you my brothers, I have committed many sins through thought, word, deed and negligence; my fault, my fault, my great fault. Hence I request Holy Mary, ever Virgin, all the angels and saints and to you my brothers pray for me to our Lord God”.

### **Life Witness**

Let us try to understand more about the Latin Order of Liturgy in order to accept the universal nature of the Catholic Church and to strengthen the Catholic Communion through the order of liturgy.

### **Memorise**

“O Lord, I love the house in which you dwell, and the place where your glory abides” (Psalms 26: 8).

### **Questions**

1. Prepare a note about the beginning and development of the Order of the Latin liturgy.
2. Into how many parts are the Latin Qurbono divided? Which are they?

**PART - III**



**CHURCH HISTORY**

# THE CHURCH AND ASCETICISM



Monte Casino Ashram

From the beginning of the early Church there were dedicated individuals in the Church, who abandoned worldly life for the sake of Jesus and led a solitary life. When certain people chose solitary life, others chose community life. In course of time, the community life paved the path for religious communities and religious rules. These were engaged in prayer, fast, meditation, reading of the Scripture, taking care of the poor, study and writing, for the love of Jesus. We deal in this lesson about the origin and development of the religious life of the early Church.

## **Asceticism in the Holy Scripture**

We can see in the Holy Scripture certain examples about the religious life in the Old Testament itself. Most of the prophets left worldly affairs and lived solitary lives. The Holy Scripture testifies that Prophet Elijah, who led a solitary life, established a monastery on Mount Carmel (1 Kings 17: 3-4). Many ascetics lived in communities in the deserts and hills of Palestine before Christ.

St. John the Baptist, who came as the forerunner of Jesus was a model for asceticism. He led an ascetic life in the wilderness wearing hair shirt and



eating wild potatoes. The substance of asceticism could be seen in the life of Jesus. Many, in the early Church, were attracted to the life of asceticism having understood the fundamental realities: poverty, obedience and celibacy from the exhortation of Jesus.

## **The Early Church and Asceticism**

The early Christians expressed interest to live in accordance with the Gospel and to be identified with Jesus. Many Christians were urged to live, leaving aside worldly life entirely due to their expectation that the second coming of Jesus was very near. Many Christians lived in forests, deserts and in caves in order to save themselves from idolatry and persecution. These people were gradually led to the life of asceticism. The ascetics began to attend to prayer, fast, meditations, reading of Scripture, taking care of the poor, study and writing. Ascetics are those who have wholly dedicated their life to God. They dedicated themselves entirely to Christ without thinking of their home, possessions or dignity.

Ascetic life started in the early Church in the desert in Egypt. They were solitary ascetics. St. Anthony, St. Paccomios, St. Basil and St. Benedict were the Founder Fathers of ascetic life.

### **St. Anthony of Egypt (250-356 A.D.)**

St. Anthony is known as the founder and father of the solitary ascetic life. He was born from Christian parents at Keman in Egypt in 250 A.D. His parents passed away before he reached 18 years of age. A Gospel passage, he heard in the church one day, touched his life: “Jesus said to him, if you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me” (Matthew 19: 21). He understood this passage as addressed to him personally and gave away all his possessions to the poor. Then he went to the desert of Egypt for a solitary life.

He started the ascetic life in 271 A.D. at the age of 21. The austere asceticism of Anthony attracted many. Many followed him. Many went to visit him and to receive his advice. Having spent 40 years in the desert in solitary life he died at the age of 105. The disciples of St. Anthony lived solitarily and in

community from Licopolis of Egypt up to the regions of Alexandria. Anthony, who wished to follow the life of the early Christians laid the foundation to the religious life and attracted many people towards religious life.

### **St. Paccomios (290-346 A.D.)**

Paccomios was born at Esna in Egypt in 290 A.D. from pagan parents. He was a member of the Roman army and being attracted by the life style and nobility of character of the Christians, became a Christian. Later, he became interested in religious life and began to lead a solitary life under an ascetic called Palemon. But he liked more the community life of the ascetics. So he founded an ashram at Thabennis in Egypt. Gradually, the number of his followers increased. He was the superior of the community till his death. In order to facilitate community life he formed a set of rules. This code of law was the result of his prolonged thinking and prayer. Paccomios taught that in order to be a good ascetic obedience, love, poverty, celibacy and devotion are necessary elements. He gave importance to the learning of the Scripture and education of the ascetics. The rules to which he gave shape influenced the community life in later years.

### **St. Basil (330-379 A.D.)**

Basil was born in a Christian family in 330 A.D. He completed his higher studies in Athens and learnt about asceticism. St. Basil of Cappadocia was of the thought pattern of St. Paccomios. He encouraged ascetic life in Asia Minor and nearby regions. He considered that community religious life is better than solitary religious life. He asks: “Whose legs could a solitary religious wash?”

Hence his rules were such that gave importance to community life. Meals, work, prayer, etc were being carried out together in the ashram itself. They began to observe the three vows: celibacy, poverty and obedience. They also started charitable works by establishing hospitals, orphanages and schools. They introduced regular prayer for seven times a day. Basil established his ashram in 360 A.D. near Caesarea. St. Basil propagated religious life even after he became the bishop of Caesarea. He made a code of rules for asceticism. This is known as the code of rules of St. Basil.

## St. Benedict (480-547 A.D.)

Religious Movement was started in the Western Church too at this time. Asceticism developed there under Eusebius in 365, Athanasius in 373 and St. Ambrose of Milan in 374. The chief among the Founding Fathers of the Ascetic Movement of the West, was St. Benedict.



St. Benedict began solitary life in a cave. After that he founded twelve ashrams. He established a big ashram at Monte Casino in 524. This has become the Mother House of the Benedictine Religious Congregation. He

formed a new code of rules for the religious community. The Western World has given him the honorary title of the “Patriarch of the Western Ascetics”.

The renowned Pope Gregory (590-604) approved the Rule of Benedict. He made the following religious vows compulsory in the religious life, namely: poverty, celibacy, obedience, observance of rule, renewal of moral life and stability in ascetic life. The timetable of the religious life was: prayer, work and spiritual reading. Special importance was given to the order of liturgy in the rule of Benedict.

## The Religious Types of the Early Church

Three types of religious traditions came into force in the early Church. (1) Solitary Religious Life: The originator of this life style is St. Anthony. This is related to his vision and way of life. (2) Community Religious Life: This is the type of asceticism, which originated and developed in the desert of Egypt under the leadership of St. Paccomios. (3) The type of religious life that combined prayer and social service. St. Basil started this type of religious life in Asia Minor. All types of religious life that came into existence in the later age were different combinations of these three types.

## **The Substance of Asceticism**

Ascetics are those who are specially called in order to reach Christian perfection through perfectly loving God and brethren. An ascetic is obliged to observe the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience in order to serve God and humankind. This is a call for the life like that of Jesus by renouncing oneself to live for others. An ascetic dedicates his whole life for worship, meditation, labour, service and learning. He remembers the Church and the whole world through prayer. Many ascetics spend their time for the study of the Scripture and for writing books. Thus, many books written by ascetics are the great wealth of the Church. It is the ascetics, who wrote new copies of the Holy Scripture and translated it into various languages. Thus religious centres, in course of time, became great centres of learning. Ascetics have started many educational centres and opened the field of knowledge to all.

An ascetic is considered to be the symbol of the kingdom of God. An ascetic is called to live according to the values of the kingdom of God and to become a model for all. An ascetic is obliged to fight against evil and having understood the vanity of the world he has to be the symbol of genuine Christianity. Thus, asceticism which began in the early Church, continues to exist even today doing good to the Church and to the entire world.

## Worship

We read thus in the Sedro of the service of the profession of vows of women aspirants, who approach to dedicate themselves to the religious life that they may have the blessing and sanctity and may be absolved from all faults they have committed throughout their life:

“Lord, have mercy on these and bless and guard them, who have approached you with their heads bent and being obedient to you, in order to carry your joyful yoke, which is the religious life. Behold! They have approached you desiring asceticism, which is your house of perfect bliss. Hence Lord, we entreat you to be pleased with them having erased all their faults and transgressions in life till now. They have come near in order to be close to your sacred presence. Bless them so that they may have blameless dealings before you” (Profession of Vows of the Religious Women).

## Life Witness

The ascetics are those who are called to follow and imitate Jesus Christ perfectly. The life of the ascetics of the early Church was the means of ever imparting strength to the Church. Let us try to take in their examples of life.

### Memorise

“If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me”  
(Matthew 19: 21).

## Questions

1. How was the religious life in the early Church?
2. Prepare a note about the Religious Fathers of the early Church.
3. Describe the substance of asceticism.

# THE FIRST SEVEN ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

Councils have very important position in the life of the Church. It was the custom of the Church from its inception to hold Councils of the Fathers to propose solution for common problems whenever they occurred in the Church. We can see example for this in the very apostolic Church (Acts of the Apostles 15: 1-15). After the apostolic times, regional Councils were held to deal with regional problems. These kinds of common and regional conferences of

the Church were called Synods or Councils. The Bishops took part in these Synods. The seven most important Church Conferences held in the first centuries are known as Ecumenical Councils. They are known connected with the places where they were held. The following are the seven Ecumenical Councils: (1) Nicea-I (325), (2) Constantinople-I (381), (3) Ephesus (431), (4) Chalcedon (451), (5) Constantinople-II (553), (6) Constantinople-III (680), (7) Nicea-II (787).

All these 7 Councils were held in Asia Minor in the Eastern part of the Roman Empire. Asia Minor is the old name of modern Turkey. These Councils were held to discuss and solve the problems that cropped up in the Eastern Christian Churches of the Roman Empire. The Bishops, who participated in these Councils, were mostly Easterners. But among them





there were representatives from the Western Church also. Similarly, the representatives of the Pope of Rome also took part in the Ecumenical Councils. In these Councils, the Fathers of the Church formed canons for the order of Ecclesial punishments. Thus they made clear effective paths to safeguard the true faith and lead humankind through true worship. The Fathers encountered in the Councils the tempests that beat against the fundamental truths of faith. Since the idea that the truths of faith should not be diluted prevailed over them, they did not yield to any kind of compromise.

## **1. Council of Nicea-I (325 A.D)**

The modern name of Nicea of Bithinia is Isnic of Turkey. The Church Conference of Nicea is the first Ecumenical Council of the Church. It is generally accepted that 318 Bishops participated in it. This Synod was held to contradict the false teaching of Arius, an Alexandrian priest and to teach the true faith. The heresy of Arius was the denial of the divinity of the Lord Jesus. Arius taught the false doctrine about the Son of God that the Son is a creature, that he is in substance not equal to the Father and that there was a time when the Son did not exist. It is against this heresy that Emperor Constantine (+ 337) convened the Council at Nicea. The Synod declared the divinity of the Son of God by teaching that the substance of the Father and the Son is the same. They also published a Creed of the Synod including the afore-mentioned idea. Besides, they discussed the most important topics such as: the celibacy of priests and the Feast of the Resurrection. They codified twenty canons regarding these topics. The Synod was concluded after forming the sum total of the true faith and after expelling Arius from the Church.

## **2. Constantinople-I (381 A.D.)**

The Arian heresy did not cease with the Council of Nicea. It continued in different Churches of the Roman Empire in various forms and aspects. The lack of accuracy in the meaning of theological terms was the main reason for this. Those who are known as the Cappadocian Fathers: St. Basil (+ 379), St. Gregory Naziansen (+390) and St. Gregory Niza (+ 394); gave specific meaning to the theological terms. They were able to find a permanent

solution to the Arian problem with their theological contribution and their affectionate dealings. Arianism subsided with the Council of Constantinople. It was made clear that in one God, there is one substance and three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It was Emperor Theodosius I (379-395) who convened the Council of Constantinople in 381. In the light of the theological contribution of the Cappadocian Fathers, the 150 Bishops, who assembled there, codified and published a Creed. It is this Creed, which is known as the Nicene-Constantinople Creed that is commonly used by all Churches. Terms against denying the divinity of the Holy Spirit are added in this Creed.

### **3. Ephesus (431 A.D.)**

The third Council in the history of the Church is the Church Conference held at Ephesus in 431. The most important declaration of this Council was the oneness of the Person of Christ. Emperor Theodosius II convened this Synod. St. Cyril of Alexandria took leadership in this Council, controlled the discussion in the light of the theological analysis that originated in Alexandria and arrived at conclusions. The one drawback of this Synod is that it did not pay heed to the Antiochean theological thoughts. Hence this Council paved the path for a broad division in the Church. This was the cause for the formation of two groups in the Church: the Alexandrians and the Antiocheans. Both the groups stood for the true faith. But as they followed different thought patterns, they failed to understand each other. The division that persists even to this day has originated in the Council of Ephesus. But in the period in which we live, it is possible to see both the groups of Ephesus a little more objectively. The Alexandrians gave stress to the one Person of Christ, whereas the Antiocheans stressed his two natures. Both groups stood for the true faith. But they were not able to understand each other. Nestorius taught that Jesus has the divine and human personalities and that Virgin Mary is only the mother of Jesus, the man. Hence Mary should be called the mother of Jesus and not the mother of God. This is called the Nestorian heresy. The Council of Ephesus discarded this.

### **4. Chalcedon (451 A.D.)**

The attempt of uniting both the thought patterns of Alexandria and Antioch, namely, stressing the one personality and two natures of Christ the Lord,

took place in Chalcedon. But the Alexandrians contested that their thought pattern alone would be conducive to the exposition of the right faith. Thus, they taught that the two natures of Jesus merged into one, with the result that Christ has only one person and one nature. The Council of Chalcedon discarded the theory of Monophysiticism (one nature theory). This Council taught that there is in Jesus one person and two distinct natures. The Monophysites, who rejected Chalcedon, were later on known as Jacobites. Mar Gregorios, a bishop of the Jacobite group came to India in 17<sup>th</sup> century and organized the Puthenkoottukar, who stood separate at that time and established the Jacobite Church community here.

### **5. Constantinople-II (553 A.D.)**

This Synod too stressed the one person of Jesus like the Council of Ephesus. It was Emperor Justinian who convened this Synod and dominated its proceedings. This Synod too rejected the Antiochean thought pattern of theology and sponsored solely the Alexandrian theological pattern. Besides, this Synod took legal action against the supporters of Antiochean teaching, which caused a great cleavage in the Church. Except that the deceased prelates were condemned, Justinian could not make any gain. What took place in this Synod was a permanent verdict against the Antiochean Christology.

### **6. Constantinople-III (680 A.D.)**

Since Christ has both human and divine natures, this Synod made clear that Christ has a human will and a divine will. The Byzantine Emperors introduced the false teaching of Monothelitism (theory of one will) in order to unite the Jacobites with the Catholics. It is against this that the Synod made clear that in Christ, there are two wills and two modes of action. This Synod is the continuation of the Council of Chalcedon. It follows logically that if Christ has two natures, he has two wills and a different mode of action corresponding to each will.

### **7. Nicea-II (787 A.D.)**

This Synod was convened against the false doctrine of iconoclasm (destroying images). The Synod made it clear that the making of images and

their veneration belonged to the tradition of the Church. It is the human face of the Son of God that is reproduced in images. This Synod also taught that it would help us to reach God, who became man in order to save us.

### **Worship**

In the intercessory prayers of the Holy Qurbano, we commemorate the Councils, which stabilized the Church in true faith: “Lord, mercifully strengthen all of us on the rock of true faith, which was ascertained by the Holy Synods. We will offer praise and thanksgiving to you and to your Son and to the Holy Spirit now and at all times and forever”.

### **Life Witness**

The Ecumenical Councils could successfully encounter the heresies that cropped up in the early centuries. Let us try through prayers and necessary actions to be steadfast when crises against faith confront us in the age in which we live.

### **Memorise**

“Make me to know your ways,  
O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead  
me in your truth and teach me, for you  
are the God of my salvation; for you  
I wait all day long”  
(Psalms 25: 4-5).

### **Questions**

1. Which are the first seven Ecumenical Councils?
2. Write notes on:
  - a) Nicea-I
  - b) Constantinople-I
  - c) Ephesus
  - d) Chalcedon.

# THE CHURCH IN THE MIDDLE AGES

The history of the Church from 8<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries is described in the lesson under the title 'the Church of the middle ages'. The following topics are described in this lesson briefly: the Church and Nation, the Church and Feudalism, the Dark Ages and Renovation, Disciplinary Actions or Inquisition, the Holy Wars and the Popes in Avignon.

## **Church and Nation (Papal State)**

The Church got all favours during the reign of Emperor Constantine when the Church became independent through the edict of Milan in 313 A.D. The Church got the special right to hold, own and possess properties. Emperors and generous Lords donated many territories to the Church. Thus many places of Italy came under the dominion of the Pope. This marked the beginning of the Papal State.

The German natives, known as Lombards attacked Italy from its northern parts in 568 A.D. At that time, Italy was in the Byzantine Empire. The Emperor was not able to resist the attack of the Lombards. Hence the people of Italy approached the Pope. The Pope came forward to give leadership to Italy. Since the Pope resisted the attacks of the Lombards, the influence of the Pope increased in Italy.



*Charlemagne*

The Emperors of Constantinople were ruling Italy. Leo III, who was Emperor of Constantinople from 717–790 A.D. began to intrude into religious affairs. He destroyed the images of Christ and the Saints under the pretext of idolatry and prohibited venerating them. But the Pope did not approve of the decision of the Emperor. Council Nicea-II held in 787, taught that the veneration of the images of the Saints, is not wrong. This caused cleavage between Italy and Constantinople. Thus the ecclesiastical and national dominion of the Pope was established.

The threat of the Lombards was on the increase. The Pope sought the help of Peppin, the king of France. Popes Zachariah (741-752) and Stephen (752-757) both accepted Peppin. Thus the Pope cut away relationship with the Byzantine Emperor and Constantinople. Peppin defeated the Lombards and gave to the Pope domination over many cities and territories. Besides, he prepared a legal document granting the Pope full authority over these territories and promising every kind of help to the Pope in future. This is known as 'Peppin's donation'. Later on the Pope received authority over more places. Thus, an independent kingdom, called the Papal State came into existence in the name of the Pope. Thus, the Pope became the spiritual and national ruler at the same time.

## **The Church and Charlemagne**

The relationship between the Church and the king became strengthened during the reign of Charlemagne, the son of Peppin. The king took to himself the maintenance of the Church and nation. He did good things to make the rule of the Church easy. He prohibited the non-Christian traditions and codified laws in order to enhance uniformity for Christianity all over. Pope Leo III (795-816) fully accepted the dominion of Charlemagne. Pope Leo crowned Charlemagne as the Emperor of the Roman Empire. That was the reconstruction of the lost Roman Empire. Through this the spiritual authority of the Pope and the temporal authority of the Emperor were established all over Europe. During this period an understanding was formed that the Pope should accept the Roman Emperor and should crown the Roman Emperor and the Emperor in return should be the protector of the Church.



The Papal State took its origin with the good intention of protecting the Church community from enemies and avoiding Church's intervention in national affairs. The Papal State brought to the Pope temporal power. Since the Church enjoyed spiritual and temporal authorities, the attention of the Church rulers began to turn more towards temporal matters than to the spiritual affairs. People began to contest for the post of Papacy. By getting political authority, bishops and priests turned towards pompous life. They undertook royal positions and began to wear majestic dress.

## **The Church and Feudalism**

Emperor Charlemagne died in 814 A.D. The 200 years that followed are considered to be the dark age of the Church. During this period the Feudal system started. Roman Empire was divided into small states. The rule was transferred to the feudal landlords. Those who possessed their own land became independent rulers over their own land.

When feudal system flourished, it affected the Church too to a great extent. The Church and the properties of the Church came under the rule of the landlords. The Church and the institutions of the Church became means of wealth for the Lords. There was tug of war for the post of the Pope. Nine Popes were killed in assaults during the period between 867 and 1048. Thus, that was a period filled with anarchy. Kings and Lords wielded their influence in the election of Popes. The Church rulers were forced to work according to the pleasure of the Lords. The Lords and Kings appropriated the income of the Church. The spiritual nature of the Church was lost to a certain extent during this period. The Christian spirit was dimmed in this period. The life of the Church leaders was scandalous. All these show the human side of the Church. It is because the Church has a divine grace that she remains steady. The Church, which declined grew up again into hope and goodness.

## **The Renovation of the Church in the Middle Ages**

It was the religious institutions that came forward to arrest the decadence of the Church. A religious congregation started at Cloony in France in the year 910 A.D. was known as the Cloonian Movement. In course of time, the

Cloonian ashram became the centre of the Renovation Movement. The ascetics of Cloony cared very much to help the Church authorities. They showed great interest in establishing ashrams with very strict rules. They spent their life in prayer and meditation keeping away from other affairs. Their thoughts of renovation were an inspiration for other religious communities and Churches.

In continuation of the renovation of ashrams, efforts were carried out under the leadership of the Popes too. It was Pope Leo IX (1049-1054), who marked the beginning of this enterprise. After him, many Popes gave leadership to this. The following are those who dedicated themselves to set free the Church spiritually during this period: St. Francis of Assisi, St. Bernard, St. Clare and St. Dominic Goodman. The religious ashrams they started strengthened the Church very much.

### **Disciplinary Procedures or Inquisition**

Disciplinary measures were introduced in the Church, alias inquisition, for the renovation of the Church. Inquisition is the special disciplinary measure established in Rome by Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241) in order to forbid the false teachings within the Church, to find out activities against faith, to prohibit harmful activities against religion, to punish those who err and to forbid books against religious beliefs. The aim of this movement was good. Many good things resulted through this. But in course of time, this movement deteriorated. Many disciplinary measures, not conducive to the Christian spirit, were implemented through this. Many were denied natural justice. Many Christians were persecuted under its name. All these could be considered as the failures of the human side of the Church.

### **Holy Wars**

Islam religion, started in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, subdued many places through battle and harmed the Christian religion and culture very much. The countries of Egypt and Persia and the patriarchates of Antioch, Jerusalem and Alexandria were brought under the Muslim regime. This advance of Islam was a great threat to the Church. Almost all the holy places came under their rule. Under these circumstances, the Western Christians waged war against

the Muslims with the consent and blessings of the Popes in the 11<sup>th</sup> century in order to recapture the holy places and the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the Muslims and to protect Western Europe from the attack of the Muslims. These wars are called the holy wars. The soldiers of the holy wars were those who took oath to wage war. As a sign of this oath, they wore a mark on their shoulders with the sign of the cross imprinted on the dress. Hence, the wars they waged were called 'wars of the cross'.

Pope Urban II introduced the idea of the holy war at the Council of Clermon, held in the year 1095. Eight holy wars were waged during the period from 1095 - 1272. Almost all the Popes of the time rendered strong support to the holy wars.

### **The After Effects of the Holy Wars**

In general, the holy wars were a success. Besides recapturing the holy places, the Christians got the self confidence that they could protect their own territories. By the year 1241 the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem was almost re-established. The pilgrims could freely visit Jerusalem, Nazareth and Bethlehem by 1299. It was the holy wars that saved the Latin colonies of the Eastern territory from complete destruction. These wars paved the path for the increase of pilgrimages. They have also helped the growth of the religious life of Europe. The holy wars produced some temporal and cultural good fruits. These have also helped the Western Church to enter into relationship with the Eastern Churches and to strengthen trade relationship with the Eastern countries.

The holy wars also had their evil effects. They caused the shedding of innocent blood and many Christians were persecuted. The cleavage between the Latin and Greek Churches was widened through the attacks of the soldiers of the holy war in Constantinople. The holy wars started with the intention of rescuing the holy lands were at times made use of for selfish motives also. That affected the holy wars badly.

The fact that Christians came forward even at the cost of their own lives, in order to safeguard the Christian faith and to protect the holy places, was a sign of their deep love for the Church and of their courageous Christian witness.

In the background of Christian spirituality we cannot justify the holy wars. The Christian moral principle; that the end does not justify the means, has been violated. The means of weapon is not Christian. The very name 'war of cross' is contradictory. Cross, which is the sign of peace, has no relation with war. It may be the circumstance under which the Muslims would wipe away Christianity from the face of the earth that lead the Church towards the holy war; even then the Church was bound to follow the teachings of Christ.

### **Popes in Avignon**

The seat of the Pope, the successor of Peter was Rome, from the establishment of the Church. But from 1309-1376, the seat of the Pope was shifted to Avignon in France. During this period the influence of France was predominant in the Papal Curia. The chief reason of the Avignon Diaspora was the state of insecurity of Italy and Rome. The Gualf family, supporters of the Pope and the Giballanus family, opponents of the Pope turned Italy into an arena of battle. Under this circumstance the Popes used to change their residence seeking a place of refuge. But it was accidental that Avignon became the place of residence of the Popes.

Pope Clement V, elected in 1305 did not go to Rome due to ill-health. He resided in Avignon as the guest of the Dominican religious community. Pope John XXII, who succeeded him, was the Bishop of Avignon. On account of the wars that were waged in Italy and Rome during that period, the Pope could not go to Rome. In 1348, the then reigning Pope bought Avignon and built a palace there. Seven Popes resided in Avignon and led the Church during the period from 1309-1376. The Diaspora of Avignon came to an end when in 1377 Pope Gregory began to reside in Vatican.

We have seen in this lesson the chief events of the history of the Church in the Middle Ages. The strong rule based on Rome was established in the Catholic Church in 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. Strong code of canons was formed during this period. The Papal authority was stabilized through that. The activities of the Roman Curia were made efficient. Thus the Catholic Church changed into a stable organization during this time. Many ashrams

and educational institutions were established during this time. All these were some of the good things of the middle ages. But the spiritual decadence of the Church during this period paved the path for the Protestant reformation.

### **Worship**

In the Evening prayer of the Hudos Eetho Sunday, we pray that the Church may be preserved from heresies and schisms, which destroy the Church:

“O Merciful Lord, we entreat you to visit your catholic, apostolic and holy Church, which you have liberated from idolatry and the dangerous schisms and from all things that cause opposition and stumbling for your faithful. Grant her peace and tranquillity from fierce waves and harmful tempests. Guard her from the false teachings of the Gentiles”.

### **Life Witness**

The Church, during the Middle Ages passed through many crises. There were many persons, who strengthened the Church during this period. The soldiers of the holy wars served the Church giving up even their very lives. Let us also strengthen the Church when she passes through crises in this modern age through our sacrificing services.

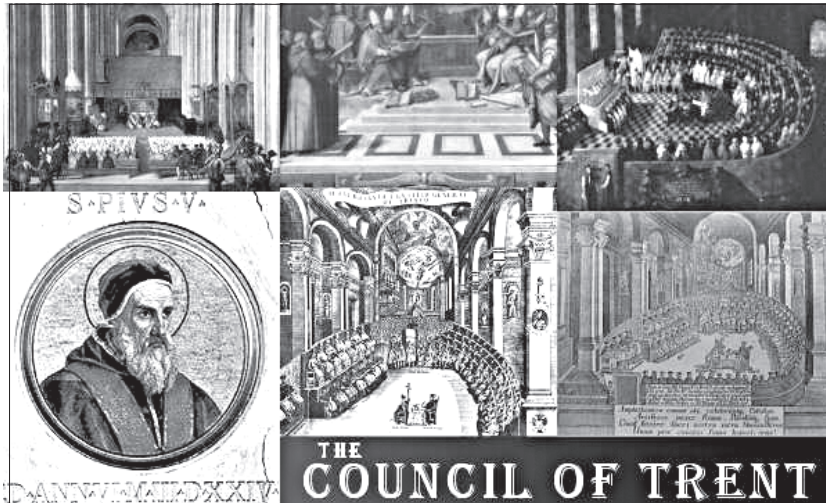
### **Memorise**

“Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God”  
(Ephesians 5: 1-2).

### **Questions**

1. How was the beginning of the Papal State?
2. What does the ‘Donation of Peppin’ mean?
3. How was the renovation of the Church in the middle ages?
4. What is Inquisition?
5. Describe the Holy Wars and their after effects.
6. Make clear what the Avignon Diaspora means.

# PROTESTANT REFORMATION AND THE COUNCIL OF TRENT



We saw the period of the Church from 8<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries in the previous lesson. This is generally known as the dark period of the Church. After the 14<sup>th</sup> century marked the beginning of renovation of Europe. The renovation could be considered as the rebirth of the Greco-Roman culture, art and literature. There was wonderful growth in the spheres of education, art, literature and science during the renovation period. Humanism, which extols human being and human intellect, imparted strength to the renovation.

There was not much progress in the spiritual realm. That lack of progress led to the Protestant reformation and consequent split in the Church later on. Under this circumstance, the Catholic Church through the Council of Trent carried out the activities of renovation. The theme of this lesson is the Protestant reformation, which took place during 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and the Council of Trent.

## The Background of the Protestant Revolution

The reasons for the Protestant reformation or renovation, alias Luthernism, are many. One of the important reasons is the spiritual decadence of the



Church in the middle ages. The lack of scholarship in theology of the Church, defects of the order of liturgy and the ignorance of the leaders of the Church were all reasons for this. Besides, the increasing regional conscience, the unbridled ardour of autocrats for authority and the intellectual progress enhanced during the period of renovation; all these gave impetus to the Lutheran renovation. Many had the audacity to oppose the Church, Sacraments and the authority due to the influence of philosophy. Since undue importance was given to customs, liturgy deteriorated into mere rituals and became lifeless. The interest to oppose the authority of the Pope and the Italian dominion was strengthened. The name Protestant came into existence with the revolt that took place at Spire in Germany in the year 1529.

### **Martin Luther (1483- 1546)**

Martin Luther was born at Thuringia, a village in Germany in 1483. He took his Master's degree in 1505, joined the Augustinian Congregation and was ordained priest in 1507. He took his doctorate in Theology and was appointed professor of the Holy Scripture in Wittenburg University in 1512. The five years that followed was the important period of the life of Luther. It was on this occasion that he gave shape to his own theology.

Luther, who had immense anxiety about his own salvation, experienced severe spiritual conflict. The thought about the judgment of God engendered fright in him. He, who thoroughly studied the Epistle to the Romans, arrived at this conclusion: God is not a cruel judge. The verse: "The one who is righteous will live by faith" (Romans 1: 17) gave him support. But the conclusions he derived from it were wrong. They are: the foundation of salvation is faith only, and Christ has already achieved salvation for us. Hence, man has only to believe and do nothing. Human beings cannot possibly achieve salvation through deeds. Hence one cannot merit salvation through good deeds and good life. So, he considered that the teaching of the Catholic Church was meaningless and that it was his duty to oppose it.

The foundation of salvation or justification is belief alone in God. Human activities cannot merit salvation. He denied the authority of the Pope in

order to justify this. The foundation of faith is only the Bible. Any human being may interpret it. There is no need of priests to intercede. There are only two sacraments: Baptism and Qurbano. Thus Luther reduced Christian religion to Bible only. Thus, Luther denied those things, which the Church had considered holy, namely, the Sacraments, especially Priesthood, Tradition and Divine Authority.

## **The Dispute of Indulgence**

Although the elements that prepared the background for the Lutheran renovation are many, the proximate reason for it was the dispute about Indulgence.

Even if a sinner gets absolution of his sins through the sacrament of reconciliation, he needs to do penance either in this world or after death in purgatory for the remission of the temporal punishment resulting from sin. When that person fulfils the penance which the Church imposes on him, with repentance and due preparation he receives remission from the temporal punishment. This remission, which God gives, is called indulgence. The Church has the authority to grant this indulgence. Through the works of penance a person receives absolution of sins. Similarly, when we do works of remittance for the souls in purgatory, they also get absolution from sins.

Popes Julius II, in 1510 and Leo X in 1513 declared that those who contributed towards the construction of the St. Peter's Basilica of Rome would receive indulgence. The religious members of the Dominican Congregation were entrusted with the task of preaching this in the dioceses of Germany. In order to attract the faithful towards indulgence; the monks presented the fruits and power of indulgence in an exaggerated manner. Luther, who listened to this preaching got wild and wrote a letter to Albert, the Archbishop of that place in 1517. He prepared a document with 96 resolutions questioning the indulgence, purgatory, penance and the supremacy of Pope. He affixed this document on the door of the Cathedral of Wittenburg on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1517. With this, Luther started his open fight.

## **Attempts for Reconciliation**

As the influence of Luther grew, the Church authorities were ready for conciliatory negotiations with Luther. Many were deputed to hold discussions

with Luther. At the end Pope Leo X sent a letter to Luther on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1520 demanding explanation for the 96 resolutions. But instead of giving any reply to the letter, he set fire to the letter along with a book of the code of canons in front of a large crowd. After this on January 3, 1521 Luther was excommunicated. With this Luther sharpened his accusations. The followers of Luther increased in number. The German lords undertook leadership of the new religion. The lords and kings used this occasion and siding with Luther questioned the authority of the Pope of Rome and rebelled against the dominion of Italy. Leaving the religious congregation in 1525, he got married and died on February 18, 1546. The lords and the kings exerted their influence upon those who were under them and led them to accept the ideas of Luther. The Protestants got full freedom in 1556. The obstinacy of Luther with the intention of renovating the Church and his pride led to the split of the Church and to the establishment of the Protestant or Lutheran Church.

The Protestant Renovation Movement, started in Germany began to spread also outside Germany. John Calvin in France and Swingly in Switzerland gave leadership to this.

### **The Split of the Church in England**

The split between the Churches of England and Rome was not an event that happened all on a sudden. The unbridled autocratic mentality of Henry VIII of England and his unsteady character affected the relationship with Rome. Henry VIII desired to marry Annebol while his lawful wife Catharine was alive. He approached the Church for the annulment of his marriage bond with Catherine. But the Church did not agree with the argument of Henry. The king being dissatisfied at this, married Annebol publicly. The Pope opposed this marriage and he excommunicated Henry VIII for marrying Annebol while his lawful wife was alive.

Being dissatisfied with the proceeding of Rome, he convened the Parliament on November 3, 1534 and got approved the rule of supreme power. Accordingly, it was proclaimed that the king of England would be the supreme authority of the Church of England. Thus, the king decided to

form an independent Church. Those who did not obey the rules of the king had to undergo cruel persecution. Bishop John Fisher and Thomas Moor, the chancellor of the king, were executed. Henry VIII died in 1547. Queen Mary, who came into power after him re-established faith. But Queen Elizabeth, who succeeded Mary, stopped relationship with Rome by getting the rule approved in the Parliament in 1559. During this period many Catholics were imprisoned or killed. She persecuted the Catholics, who intended to reinstate relation with Rome. Through her reign for 50 years, the Church of England (Anglican Church) got established. The Anglican Church, which, having accepted the thoughts of renovation of Germany and France and having formed a new creed and mode of rule centred on the Bishop, officially came into existence.

### **The Council of Trent (1545-1563)**

The efforts of some, in order to renovate the Church, led to the Protestant reformation and to the theology of that Church. The religious revolution, under the name of renovation, to which Martin Luther, Henry VIII and Calvin gave leadership called in question and denied the traditional faith of the Catholic Church and her authority. In the afore mentioned background, the Council of Trent marked the beginning of the renovation on the part of the Church.

Pope Clement VII decided to convene a Council in order to contradict the thoughts of renovation. But because of the war between France and Germany the Council did not take place. Paul III, (1534-1549), who became Pope afterwards, in view of the renovation, enlarged the college of Cardinals selecting Cardinals who were in the forefront with regard to holiness and knowledge. He decided to convene a Council at Trent in Italy in 1542 and on 13<sup>th</sup> December 1545 the Council was inaugurated. The Council was held in three phases due to the war and it got over on December 3, 1563.

### **The Success of the Council**

This Council included in its agenda for exhaustive discussion and study all matters regarding faith, which the Protestants had called in question and proclaimed the true faith of the Church. The following were the important

decisions of the Council: to publish a Catechism text including the official teachings of the Church (Trent Catechism), to begin Seminaries for the training of candidates for priesthood, to publish books for the Divine Office and Holy Qurbano, and to bring the Holy Scripture, the teachings of the Fathers of the Church and Moral Theology to detailed study and research. The Council reiterated and stressed celibacy of priests. The Popes, who succeeded, soon put into practice the decisions of the Council. The Gregorian University and many other Colleges were established for priestly study. Sacred Congregations were instituted in Rome for the rule of the Church. The number and qualities of the Cardinals were specified. It was this Council which finally fixed the canonical books of the Holy Scripture.

The success of the Council produced lasting results. The fundamental principles regarding faith and morals, to which the Protestant Revolution caused confusion, was remedied to a certain extent. The laity's position and responsibility in the Church was made clear. The Council strongly criticized the intervention of the kings in the affairs of the Church and took means against it. In course of time the decisions of the Council came into force.

## **Renovation and Religious Congregations**

Several Religious Congregations of the 16<sup>th</sup> century accepted new form and style and were prepared to confront with the challenges of the time. The share, the religious congregations had for the renovation of the Church, is unique. The religious congregations existing at that time, namely, the Franciscan, Carmelite, Benedictine and Cistercian worked for the renovation of the Church through their life of sacrifice.

The Society of Jesus is a religious congregation that was formed under the leadership of Ignatius Loyola after the Protestant revolution. The Society of Jesus had the lion's share in the renovation of the Church. They gave importance to education and missionary work. St. Francis de Sales (1567-1622) is one, who came forward to renovate the Church through preaching of the Gospel and through writing. St. Vincent de Paul established religious congregations for men and women to work among the poor and through that he imparted strength to many.

## **Missionary Activities of the 16<sup>th</sup> Century**

The journey of the Westerners in search of the new world in the 16<sup>th</sup> century paved the path for new missionary activities. Missionaries also went with the merchants and adventurers to the new lands. The Portuguese and Spaniards gave leadership to this. Through the works of the missionaries, Christianity spread in almost all Eastern Countries. Even though Thomas, the apostle preached Gospel in India in 52 A.D., Christian religion spread here through the missionary works of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

St. Francis Xavier preached the Christian religion in Japan as he did in India. There, the missionaries of the Society of Jesus gave leadership to the missionary activities. In the 7<sup>th</sup> century itself the missionaries from Persia began their work in China. Even though the Franciscan missionaries in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and the priests of the Society of Jesus in the 16<sup>th</sup> century too worked there, due to persecution, the Church did not grow in China. Through missionary endeavours, the Church grew in Thailand and Philippines in the 16<sup>th</sup> century itself.

In 1415 the Portuguese missionaries went to Africa with the Gospel message. Later on, the Franciscan community and the fathers of the Society of Jesus made missionary work there.

European Countries such as: Portugal, Spain and France had established colonies in the vast lands of America from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, the Gospel was preached in South as well as North America.

The Catholics who were exiled from Ireland to Australia in the 18<sup>th</sup> century were the early Christians there. Together with them, there were three priests also. As the result of their work Christian religion spread there. The Catholic faith reached Newzeland in 1828.

We have seen the history of the Church in 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was very painful that the Protestant renovators, without maintaining love and faith to the Church, led the Church to a split. But this circumstance could be considered as a God given occasion for the renovation of the Church. God was preparing the Church to progress through strength and enthusiasm. We see here the history of the Church that the Holy Spirit is guiding her



through adversities without being confused. Missionaries went to the four quarters of the world in the 16<sup>th</sup> century with the Gospel. They sacrificed even their life for that. The Gospel of Jesus spread in many places. We have the obligation to spread the Gospel to those places where the good news of Jesus has not yet reached. So also we have to understand that those who have accepted the Gospel of Jesus have the obligation to faithfully bear witness to the Gospel.

### **Worship**

In the sedra of the night prayer on *Qudos Eetho*, the Church prays for its protection from enemies, discords and heresies:

“Lord, regard in grace your Church that you redeemed with your precious blood. Protect it from the divisive schemes of its enemies, from disputes and quarrels. Confirm it in your counsels and the observance of your life giving commandments”.

### **Life Witness**

The crisis and split that occurred in the Church in the 16<sup>th</sup> century were the most painful events in the history of the Church. Let us try to work for the Church and to think along with the Church when crises and problems arise in the Church.

### **Memorise**

“Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace”  
(Ephesians 6: 14-15).

### **Questions**

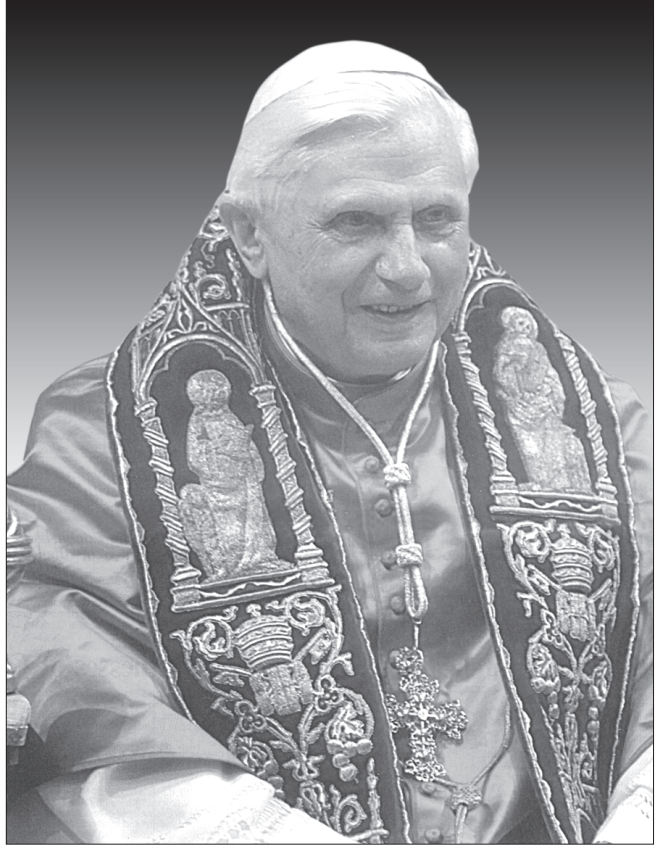
1. What is the background of the Protestant revolution?
2. What is indulgence?
3. Describe the Council of Trent and its results.
4. What is the share of the religious communities in the renovation of the Church?
5. Prepare a concise report about the missionary activities of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

# THE CHURCH IN THE MODERN AGE

There was a spiritual renovation in the Church after the Council of Trent. The Church survived the crises and went forward strengthening the missionary activities. But the new revolutionary theories and movements that grew up after the Council of Trent became a threat to the Church.

## New Threats

Some began to teach the false doctrine, Jansenism (1585-1638), i.e., only the elect would receive God's grace and that the authority of the Pope is subject to the Synod. Gallicanism (1638-



1715) contested that the nation has the full right over the Church. Then, the Natural Religion cropped up, which taught that reason alone being the foundation of knowledge, denied faith and revelation and hence it is enough that one should believe God only by reason. In the light of this idea Voltaire (1694-1778) and Russoeau (1712-1778) from France strongly criticized the teachings and the administrative system of the Catholic Church and published books against them. Thus, many books were written to engender contempt in the minds of the people towards the Nation and the Church. It is in this background that the modern history of the Church of the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries is introduced in this lesson.

## **The French Revolution**

France faced great financial crisis by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A good part of the national wealth belonged to the Church. The Church also shared in the national administration. During this period, neither the Nation nor the Church could solve the problems of the ordinary folk. The people were angry and revolted against this. The representatives of the general public boycotted the assembly convened by Louis XVI on May 5, 1789. Afterwards they gathered together and declared themselves as regional assembly of France.

The new Regional Assembly assumed the authority and in 1789 they stopped all privileges, which the Landlords and the Priests enjoyed. The new government severed the relationship between the Church and the state. The wealth of the Church was nationalized. Substitute Bishops and priests of the state were appointed. France cut away the relationship with the Pope. Lots of priests were killed and many were exiled. King Louis XVI was executed in 1793. The new government permitted to kill the priests wherever they were found. Instead of the Christian worship, revolutionary worship was introduced. It prohibited conducting religious rituals in churches. This dreadful rule continued until Napoleon undertook the reign of France in 1799. Through the treaty that Napoleon held with Pope Pius VII in 1801, the Catholic Church got freedom in France.

## **The Unification of Italy**

The great enthusiasm, which the French Revolution raised, spread into the other countries too in course of time. The regional and democratic consciousness strengthened in the people. These thoughts led to the unification of Italy. Victor Emmanuel merged Rome to Italy in 1870. Opposing this, Pius IX declared himself a prisoner and lived in the Vatican. Through the Lateran treaty made in 1929, the Vatican, consisting of 108 acres of land, became an autonomous independent nation. Conditions were fixed so that the Pope got all the rights and authority, which belonged to a nation. Thus, the problems between the Nation and the Church were remedied through the Lateran treaty.

## Communism

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after the Industrial Revolution, the proletariat had to undergo cruel sufferings. They were subjected to oppression and exploitation. Having understood the need of a new structure for the deliverance of the suffering proletariat, Carl Marx and Fredrick Engels formed a new social structure, which is known as Communism. Carl Marx dealt with the theories of Communism in the 'Communist Manifesto'. Marx clearly stated that wealth controls human history and that religion and morality should be formed related to the wealth system. Communism visualizes a national structure where there is no difference between employers and employees and there is no religion. They taught that any means could be made use of in order to achieve the desired end. Unbridled materialism and denial of private ownership of property are the fundamental tenets of Communism.

The Church does not approve of the communist materialism, which denies the realities of God, religion and morality. The Church rejects the communist teaching that 'the end justifies the means' and she teaches that both the end and the means should be right. The facts that the communists opted for the means of violence, suppressed personal freedom and denied religion, caused the Church to oppose Communism. Communism could cause great damage to the Church in Italy, Poland, Russia and China.

In course of time, Communism got strengthened in many countries. But the financial downfall of Soviet Russia and Eastern Europe became a rebuff to Communism. People hated Communism. Russia and the East European Countries declared loudly to the outside world that the communism envisaged by Marx was a big failure. Communism exists in China even today. But it is modernized, mitigated Communism.

Even though some principles of Communism are contradictory to faith and morality of the Church, the Church does not reject certain good aspects of it. The Church fully agrees with the equality and deliverance of the poor, which Communism proposes. But the Church teaches us to be on our guard with regard to the danger of faith that occurs through communism.

Besides, the Church denies the thought pattern of Communism to see humankind as merely a material thing and to consider that the foundation of every evil is wealth.

## **The Challenges raised by Science**

There was scientific progress in Europe during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Copernicus and Galileo proclaimed that the earth is not the centre of the universe and that it is only a planet, which revolves around the sun. This is opposite to what is said in the Bible. The Bible-description, that the earth is static and that the sun moves (Joshua 10: 12-13) persuaded the Church to oppose the scientific discovery. Similarly, the evolution theory, which Charles Darwin proposed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was also opposed to the description of creation in the Bible. When the Bible says that in the beginning God created everything in seven days, the evolution theory teaches that the living beings came into existence as a result of the evolution of crores of years. With this mode of thinking, it was propagated that science is against the Church and that the Church stands as a stumbling block to the progress of science.

Through the Bible study of the modern times, the conviction is strengthened that science and the Bible are not opposed to each other; but complementary to each other. Today, the recognition is strong that the progress of science is no threat but helpful to the Church.

Thus, the thoughts and revolutions that cropped up in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries were strong enough to assail the Church. But history teaches us that the Church of Christ will resist any tempest and shall exist through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **First Vatican Council**

The most important events of the modern age of the Church are the first and second Vatican Councils. The Church wished to examine the reasons of her weariness in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and in order to find out remedy for them and having studied the threats that the Church encountered, to give repose to them. The result of it is First Vatican Council. Pope Pius IX inaugurated the Council on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1869. About 700 Bishops took

part in this. It is considered as the success of the Council that it could point out the Christian principles very clearly and having discussed the false doctrines to proclaim the official teaching of the Church. It is the faith of the Church that when she officially teaches matters concerning faith and morals, the Pope through the help of the Holy Spirit cannot err. This is said to be the infallibility of the Pope. It is a great achievement of the Council that it could declare this truth as an article of faith.

## **Second Vatican Council**

Second Vatican Council was one of the most important achievements of the Church in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Pope John XXIII convened this Council. Among the modern Popes, he had a very special personality. He was open-minded and had a humble personality that enabled to stoop down to the ordinary people. He made great contributions in the sphere of the unity of the Church and in the social sphere. His social teachings, “Mother and Mistress” and “Peace on Earth” achieved the attention of the world at large. His greatest achievement was the convening of the Second Vatican Council.

In the history of the Church 20 Ecumenical Councils were held before Second Vatican. The aim of all those was to condemn false doctrines or to declare articles of faith, which were called in question. But Second Vatican Council was an exception to this. Pope John XXIII, opening the Council on October 11, 1962 said: “Renew the Church”. The chief aim of the Council was the renovation of the Church and the unity of Churches. The chief thought of the Council was to renovate and reform the Church under the light of the modern transformation accomplished in the fields of science and technology. The thought that the Gospel and the ecclesiastical principles are to be presented in a manner that the modern human being could understand, influenced the fathers of the Council.

The Council was held in four phases. 2540 Bishops were present in the first assembly itself. There was no Ecumenical Council held before, where such a large number of Bishops gathered together. Theologians, lay leaders, priests and representatives of Non-Catholics took part as observers. Most Rev. Benedict Mar Gregorios and Rt. Rev. Zacharias Mar Athanasios, from the Malankara Catholic Church, took part in the Council. On June 3, 1963,



Pope John XXIII passed away. Pope Paul VI, who succeeded him completed the Council. The Council came to an end on December 8, 1965.

This Council approved sixteen Official Documents. There are four constitutions, nine decrees and three declarations. There is no doubt that Second Vatican Council was a great success. The Council brought about revolutionary changes in the life style and thinking pattern of the Church. The Council opened the path for the Churches to march forward in friendliness. It is a big achievement of the Church that the Council, which began with the aim: “Let the windows of the Church be opened so that fresh air may enter into it”, has realized it.



### **Pope Paul VI**

Pope Paul VI succeeded the Holy Pope John XXIII. Pope Paul VI gave strong leadership, after the demise of John XXIII, to continue the Council efficiently, to bring the same to a successful end and to put into practice the decrees. He could strengthen relationship with the other Churches. He strengthened the relation between the nations and the Church by visiting many countries including India. The Encyclical “The Progress of Humankind” (*Progressio Populorum*), he published in 1967 is considered to be the best document in the field of the social teaching of the Church.



John Paul I, who succeeded Paul VI, led the Church for just a month only. He assumed seat on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1978 and passed away on 28<sup>th</sup> September.

### **John Paul II (1978-2005)**

John Paul II is the illustrious Pope, who led the Church courageously into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The College of Cardinals created a new history in electing him as the successor

of John Paul I. Popes were elected from Italy for centuries. But they elected someone from outside Italy. Karl Wojtyla was the Bishop of Krakow in Poland, which was under Communist rule and was elected Pope on 16<sup>th</sup> October 1978, as the 264<sup>th</sup> successor of St. Peter. He took the name John Paul II.

He, who was born as the son of a poor army officer in Poland, had to spend life in a German concentration camp during World War II. There, he lived as a factory worker and as a stonecutter. Later on, he was led to the noble ranks of the Church. After his becoming Pope, he visited several countries and established close relationship with people. There is none in the history of the Popes, who visited so many countries and who addressed so many people. His ability to attract human hearts and to confirm them in faith is unique. He arrived in India in February 1986. He visited the following places: Cochin, Thrissur, Kottayam and Trivandrum in Kerala. John Paul II is the only Pope, who visited Kerala.

John Paul II wrote many Encyclicals. Among them, the Saviour of Mankind, Human Toil and Social Anxiety deserve importance.

Pope John Paul II improved the Code of Canon of the West and published the Code of Canons for the Eastern Churches. The text “The Catechism of the Catholic Church” published on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1992 is one of the important documents of the official teachings of the Catholic Church.

His teachings on the glory of human life in the modern age have awakened the world conscience. Amidst all oppositions, he raised his voice against serious crimes like abortion. He strongly opposed the wrong sides of the system of Communism and Capitalism. He took courageous stand in the problems of human rights and in the problems of the Third World, including Iraq war. The Holy Father Pope John Paul II passed away on April 2, 2005. As the successor of John Paul II, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger was elected as the 265<sup>th</sup> Pope on April 19, 2005 and took the name Benedict XVI.

## Worship

The Church prays at the time of the intercessory prayers in the Holy Qurbono that God may grant worthy Pastors to guide the Church:

“Lord, grant to your Holy Church peace and tranquillity and to its pastors a comfortable old age. Kindly help that there may be superiors, who teach well the true doctrine. We will offer praise and thanksgiving to you and to your Son and to the Holy Spirit now and at all times and forever” (Order of Holy Qurbono).

## Life Witness

The Church, in the modern age, has encountered different challenges and has overcome them through the power of the Holy Spirit. Let us pray that when the Church faces new problems, the strength of the Holy Spirit may be given to the Church authorities to encounter them.

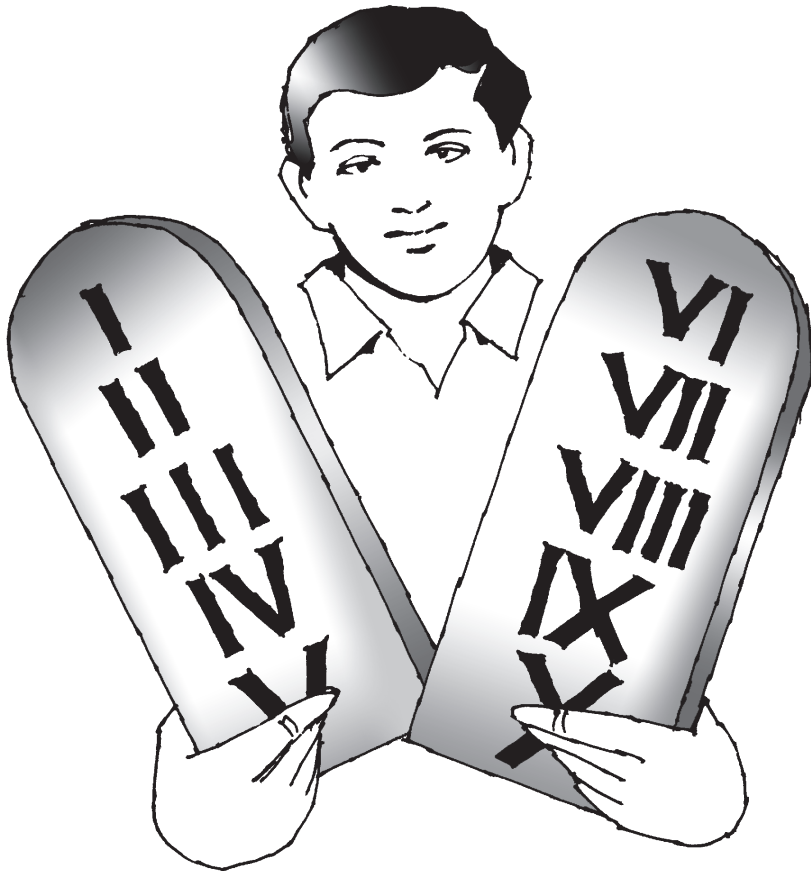
### Memorise

“We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death”  
(1 John 3: 14).

## Questions

1. Describe the repercussions made by the French Revolution in the Church.
2. What is the mentality of the Church about Communism?
3. Describe the infallibility of the Popes.
4. What are the achievements of the Second Vatican Council?
5. Write Short Notes on:  
(1) Pope Paul VI, (2) Pope John Paul II.

**PART - IV**



**CHRISTIAN LIFE**

# THE COMMANDMENTS

The people of Israel, who were delivered from Egypt, the land of exile, continued to journey through the desert under the leadership of Moses. They pitched their tents at the bottom of Mount Sinai. According to the instruction of God, Moses climbed to the presence of God. God talked to Moses on Mount Sinai: “If you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine” (Exodus 19: 5). After having talked to Moses on Mount Sinai God



gave him two stone plates of the covenant (Exodus 31: 18). The conditions necessary for Israel to be the people of God are included in the Ten Commandments. As part of the covenant Israel should have shown commitment to God. The Commandments were the means for observing this commitment. Hence, we can see the outline of the relationship between God and humankind in these Ten Commandments.

## Commandments – The Centre of Life

With regard to the Israelites, the Ten Commandments were the beginning and foundation of all their rules: political, social, moral and religious. These commandments have various names, namely, moral code, covenantal tablet, stone plates of the covenant, covenant, Ten Commandments and words of

God. According to the Semitic thinking, number 'ten' signifies perfection. Every rule necessary for the moral life of humankind is contained in these divine commandments.

God gave the Ten Commandments to the Israelites, as the people of God, and through them to human society. These Ten Commandments have the supreme position in Christian life. It is St. Augustine, who arranged God's Commandments in the manner in which the Catholic Church uses them today.

## **The Ten Commandments**

**(Exodus 20: 2-17, Deuteronomy 5: 6-21)**

- 1. I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods before me.**
- 2. You shall not take the holy name of God in vain.**
- 3. Keep holy the day of the Lord.**
- 4. Honour your father and your mother.**
- 5. You shall not kill.**
- 6. You shall not commit adultery.**
- 7. You shall not steal.**
- 8. You shall not bear false witness.**
- 9. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife.**
- 10. You shall not covet your neighbour's goods.**

The first three Commandments are based on the relationship of human being with God and the remaining seven in relation with their brethren. With regard to the people of the Old Testament, just as the observance of the Commandments was necessary for the relationship with God, each Christian has to obey the Commandments in order to maintain relationship with God.

Out of the Ten Commandments, two are presented in the positive form and eight in the negative form. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> commandments are given in the positive form. Those, which are introduced in the positive form, command 'to do some things', and those introduced in the negative form, command 'not to do certain things'. It is easy to understand the commandments introduced in the negative form. Besides, they are clear and specific. For



example, it is easier to understand ‘do not kill’ than the command ‘preserve life’.

## **The New Commandment**

The advice Jesus gave to those who approached him seeking salvation is the path of the Commandments. Jesus makes it clear that he has come not to abolish commandments but to fulfil them (Matthew 5: 17). Lord Jesus gives a new dimension to the commandments of the Old Testament. Jesus summarizes the Ten Commandments and says: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Matthew 22: 37-39). The commandments of God are founded on love. These commandments make it clear that the centre of human life is love of God and love of neighbour. Jesus, at the end of his public life epitomizes all the commandments into one. After washing the feet of the apostles Jesus said: “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another” (John 13: 34).

The New Testament is the rule of love. God gave rules through the Old and New Testaments. The old rule he gave through Moses and the new one, through Christ. Apart from the strict observance of the commandments of the Old Testament, the New Testament leads us to a life-style stressing on love. We can see in the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus deepens the commandments and their contents (Matthew 5, 6, 7).

St. Paul, the apostle teaches that obedience to the commandments is love. “Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet”, and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, “Love your neighbour as yourself”. Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13: 8-10).

We cannot restrict the given Ten Commandments, to the Jews or the Christians alone. The first three of the Ten Commandments could be seen

only in the background of the Bible and divine faith. But there is a universal dimension from the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> commandments. Those mentioned in the commandments are the most fundamental things for the good and welfare of society.

The Ten Commandments as God gives them cannot change. Human beings have no authority to change them. It is the Holy Church that explains, interprets and teaches these commandments. Besides the commandments of God, the Church also has given some commandments for her children. They are known as the commandments of the Church.

## **Commandments of the Church**

**1. Keep holy Sundays and other days of obligation by fully attending the Holy Qurbano. Refrain from servile works on those days.**

Sunday is the day of the Lord. Sunday is the day of celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Hence, we have to observe Sunday most holy. The teaching of the Second Vatican Council on the observance of Sunday is: 'All the Christian faithful should gather together on this day (Sunday), in order to listen to the Word of God and having taken part in the Holy Sacrifice, commemorate the passion, holy resurrection and glorification and in order to express gratitude to Christ, 'who through his blessed resurrection from the dead has given a new birth into a living hope" (1 Peter 1: 4), (Order of Liturgy 106). The centre of this gathering is the Holy Qurbano. By taking part in the Holy Qurbano, each one shares in Jesus Christ. It is the duty of the Christian to spend Sunday for divine things. Since it is the day of our Lord, we ought to fully set apart the day for things pertaining to God.

**2. Go for Confession at least once a year and receive the Blessed Sacrament at the Paschal time.**

A person, by committing sin, loses the divine grace and he/she separates himself/herself from God and his/her brethren. The Sacrament of confession reconciles human being with God and the society having remitted his/her sins. Hence, the Church instructs that each individual in the state of sin should make Confession and receive Holy Communion and be in divine

grace. What is meant by 'To go for Confession at least once a year' is that, one should make Confession at least once a year, in order that one may enter into the path of conversion. Whenever a person is in the state of grave sin, then, he/she should make Confession and receive absolution of sin. One should not mark any limit to receive the sacrament of reconciliation. Frequent Confession and reception of Holy Communion help to grow in the grace of God. There is no objection for a person to receive Holy Communion whenever he/she is in the state of grace.

**3. Keep Fast on days prescribed and observe Abstinence on days appointed.**

The Church has prescribed spiritual observances such as penance and fast in order to help spiritual growth of the faithful. Two of the inevitable parts of Christian life are penance and fast. It becomes possible for a person to remain close to God and to keep away from a sinful life through these means. The Church considers the period of penance as the time for the real renovation of the children of the Church. The Church helps us to turn away from sin and thus to achieve holiness of life. Hence, each Christian is obliged to observe penance, fast and abstinence.

**4. Do not solemnize marriage at forbidden times nor conduct marriage with outsiders.**

Marriage is one of the sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ. Man and woman become one in Christ through the sacrament of marriage. Thus, the family is sanctified. The Church has evinced great interest in preserving and upholding the dignity and holiness of marriage. That is why the Church has given a commandment related to marriage as its guiding principle. The Church teaches that marriages are not to be solemnized at prohibited times. Marriage is forbidden during seasons of penance and during the ten days of vigil in preparation for the feast of Pentecost. The spirit of the season of penance is that of repentance; not celebration. The celebrations of marriage and other things are not conducive to the spirit of penance. This commandment also prohibits entering into marriage relationship with those, whom the Church does not recognize.

## **5. Contribute to the Church and to her servers the share and portion prescribed by the ecclesiastical superiors.**

It is the duty of the faithful to sustain the priests, who serve the people of God and the servers of the Church. If things are to be properly executed in each parish the cooperation and financial help of the parishioners are necessary. The generous cooperation of the members of the Church is absolutely needed for the easy conducting of the Church.

The commandments of God as well as that of the Church are for the benefit of humankind. The commandments help human beings live as individuals and as members of a community in the path of goodness. Besides the commandments of God and of the Church in general, each individual Church also has its own laws. Each member of the Church is obliged to observe these laws.

### **Worship**

The Church commemorates in the Sedro of the Qyomto, evening prayer, regarding the observance of the commandments and regarding the spiritual joy it renders:

“O Lord, may we and all your children observe your commandments, meditate on them and being obedient to them night and day, may we rejoice in you” (Qyomto, Evening Prayer).

### **Life Witness**

The commandments are the standards; God has given us in order that we live in our daily lives according to the will of God. Let us try to live in a manner pleasing to God, fully observing these commandments.

### **Memorise**

“If you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples” (Exodus 19: 5).

### **Questions**

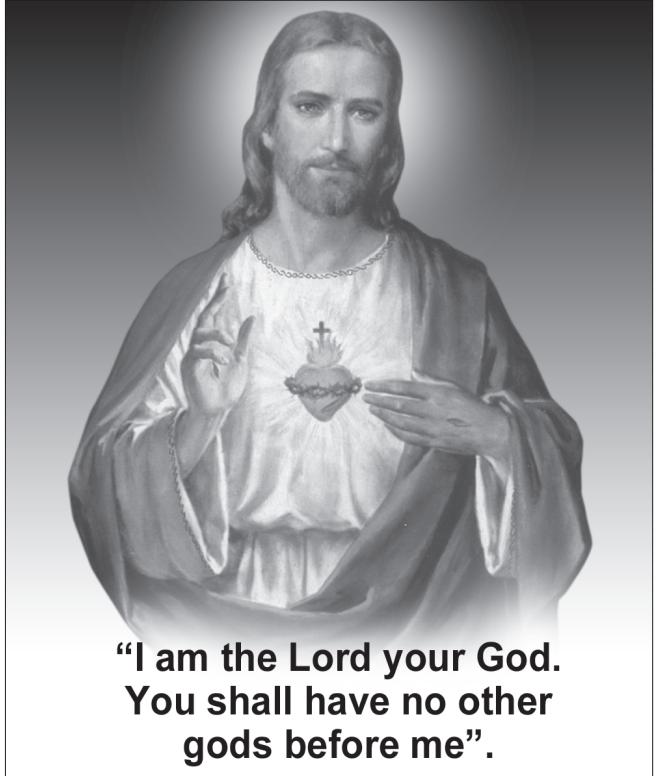
1. Which are the Ten Commandments?
2. How many are the commandments of the Church? Which are they?
3. What does the Church teach about the observance of Sunday?
4. What does the Church mean by ‘Make Confession at least once a year’?

# THE ONLY GOD

## **I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods before me**

God considered Israel as his own people, protected and loved them. The event of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, the house of slavery, is a proof of his love for the people of Israel. God entered into a covenant with Israel, who was freed from slavery. God gave guidelines to the people, who entered into the covenant through his commandments. The first commandment begins with the revelation of God: “I am

the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt; out of the house of slavery” (Exodus 20: 2).



## **The First Commandment in the Holy Scripture**

All the commandments were formed in the history of the people of Israel. In the Book of Exodus (Exodus 20: 2-6) and in the Book of Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 5: 6-10) the first commandment is given with a long description. The event that God freed the people of Israel from Egypt stands as the foundation of the first commandment. What God demands of Israel through the first commandment is that they should accept him as their only God and worship him as such (Deuteronomy 6: 13-15). The core of the first commandment is belief in one God. It is this belief in one God that

kept the people of Israel united. Whenever Israel went after alien gods, split and failure occurred in Israel.

The people of Israel understood that God was one, who interfered in their history through the covenant of Sinai. This experience led them to the faith that God was one. The love and mercy of God made them advance in this experience. The people of Israel, who recognized that when they went after alien gods they would shake their love-relationship with the true God, returned from idolatry and other forms of worship. In the New Testament, on the occasion of the temptation in the wilderness, Jesus orders the devil thus: “Away with you, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve only him’” (Matthew 4: 10). Through this the Lord Jesus absolutely proclaims that no creature should be worshipped.

## **I am the Lord your God**

The gist of the first commandment is the divinity of the Lord God and the dependence the creatures should have on him. It is the first commandment that stands as foundation and centre of all the commandments. The relevance of all other commandments is contained in the saying: ‘The Lord is the only God’. The foundation and source of all moral principles is the reality ‘I am the Lord your God’.

The inner meaning of the first commandment is faith in one God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This commandment invites the faithful to love and worship God with perfect faith and devotion. The active side of the commandment is the worship, which the human being should render to God the creator and protector in the fullness of the divine virtues: faith, hope and charity. The three things God demands of us through the first commandment are: firm faith in the only God, hope in his protection and ardent love towards him. God alone is worthy of worship. The position and consideration like that of God should not be given to human beings or things. Human beings acknowledge God’s perfection and glory through worship. When the first part of the first commandment gives importance to faith in the only God, the latter part prohibits idolatry.



## **Faith**

Faith is the response of the human being to God's revelation. The chief duty of a human being is to believe in God and to bear witness to him. The commandment requires of us to foster faith in God, to preserve the same and at the same time to reject whatever that is opposed to it. The object of faith is to accept whatever the Church has given us to believe, and the truths that the Holy Scripture has revealed. It is this faith in God that we profess in the Creed. The content of belief also is in it.

## **Sins against Faith**

There are many circumstances and ideas that lead us to sins against faith. The sins against faith could be divided chiefly into two classes: disbelief and superstition.

### **Disbelief**

Disbelief is not to believe things that are to be believed and to believe them imperfectly. This is an action against the true faith. There are chiefly three kinds of disbelief: apostasy, heresy and atheism.

What is said to be apostasy is that a believer rejects the true faith entirely. An individual, who is a member of the Church through baptism, by rejecting faith, becomes an apostate.

Heresy is the rejecting of one or more parts of the salvation mysteries revealed through the Holy Scripture and the Church. This is a mortal sin. For example: denial of the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

Atheism is to deny the existence of God. Joining the groups contradicting faith or befriending atheists shall lead one to the denial of the existence of God.

### **Superstition**

Superstition is to deviate from the true faith and to cherish wrong notions. Absence and lack of true faith lead human beings to superstitions. Superstitions shatter the real mentality of a human being towards the immense power of God and his supremacy. A human being becomes superstitious

when he/she is unable to accept that every power and good comes from God. Superstitions are against bodily life, mental health and morality of human beings. There are chiefly two kinds of superstitions: soothsaying and sorcery or black magic.

The following are vices connected with soothsaying: astrology, palmistry, horoscope, star, astro and omen. All these are things capable of deviating human beings from faith. Those who engage themselves in these vices reject the faith in the immense power of God. The following vices are connected with sorcery or black magic: Satanic worship, amulet worn as a waist ornament, witchcraft, black magic and rites to please Satanic powers. To engage in these is deviation from faith in God.

Even if there are these kinds of sins and challenges, each believer is obliged to safeguard his/her faith. Each one will be able to avoid the vices against faith through deepening faith in God and strengthening one's prayer. Along with safeguarding one's own faith, each one is obliged to make occasions for others to safeguard their faith.

## **Hope**

The actions, which God did to the people of Israel, prompted them to have hope in him. The foundation of the hope of the people of Israel was the covenant of Sinai. The first commandment teaches that one should have hope only in the Lord God. The joy contained in reaching God urges us to live with hope in God. Hope is a gift of God. It is a divine virtue, which strengthens the faithful to live as children of God and to obtain eternal salvation and perfection of virtues. Confidence and hope are words used to connote the same meaning.

Perseverance, openness to the future and action orientation, are the fruits of hope. Hope enables the faithful to courageously encounter the challenges against the life of faith and to rely on God.

## **Sins against Hope**

Sins against hope alienate human being from God. Sins against hope are chiefly two: despair and presumption. Despair is the thought of one having

no faith in God and in his mercy and the thought that one will not receive help from God. One, who falls in despair, loses interest in spiritual welfare and in dependence on God. Despair is a mortal sin since it is an insult to the mercy of God and eternal salvation.

Presumption is the self-conceit that without having due hope in God, one can attain salvation with one's own effort. The wrong notion, that since God is immensely good, whatever evil we do, God will save us, is also included in presumption. Presumption is a grave sin, since it cuts away relationship with God.

## **Charity**

Charity is the most sublime among the divine virtues. The Old Testament introduces the history of God, who loves the people of God without any limit. The people of Israel loved and worshipped God, who saved them.

In the Ten Commandments, the most important position is for the love of God. More than all other virtues charity helps to sanctify us. The first commandment demands us to love God and our brethren above all. Jesus introduces, as the summary of the Commandments of God, the two aspects of love: Love for God and love for one's brethren. Jesus says thus: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22: 37-39). We ought to love our enemies just as we love God and our neighbour. That is what Jesus showed us on the cross. Jesus demands that we love others, even at the cost of our own life. Jesus teaches that unless we love our brother whom we see, we cannot love God whom we cannot see. Through this Jesus proclaims that love of God is perfected in the love of human beings. Love of God and love of human beings are complementary.

## **Sins against Charity**

Hatred, enmity, revengeful attitude, stumbling block or scandal and detached attitude are the sins against charity. Hatred against God of a person moves him/her away from all virtues. Similarly to hate one's brother and to foster revengeful attitude are most obvious sins.

Scandal or stumbling block is to create occasion of sin for another through non-exemplary action of another. Scandal is a vice, which produces many repercussions. Jesus speaks about those who cause scandal to others thus: “If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea” (Matthew 18: 6).

Detached attitude is the denial of love. It is the denying mentality of a person to cooperate with God.

We receive the strength for noble moral life from deep faith in God, hope and love. The first commandment invites the faithful to turn to God in the fullness of the divine virtues.

### **You shall have no other gods before me**

God revealed himself to the people of Israel and he commands them not to have any other imaginary gods. The first commandment demands not to give worship to any other person, thing, imagination or reality except to the Lord God. Hence, it is not allowed to install anything else in the place of God.

It was very common during the Old Testament times to make idols of other deities and to worship them. Under this circumstance, since there was possibility of causing obstruction to the faith in one God through making statues or images for worshipping God, God prohibited making idols and worshipping them.

In the early Church, after the 4<sup>th</sup> century, change occurred to this viewpoint. Pictures and images were used in order to remember and honour Jesus, Holy Mother of God and the saints. Through this the Christians could respect and honour Jesus and the saints more. The early Church began to use pictures and images not to go against the first commandment, but in order to make clear the core of the first commandment. Council, Nicea II teaches that there is nothing wrong in respecting and honouring Jesus and the saints through pictures and images and the same custom prevails in the Church.

The first commandment teaches that worship should be given only to the Triune God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. At the same time, the Church promotes veneration towards the Blessed Virgin Mary and saints. For, veneration to the saints is not against divine worship; on the other hand, it is capable of making us grow towards the mysteries of salvation and divine experience. The faithful give to the saints only veneration; and that is not adoration.

Idolatry is a sin against the second part of the first commandment: ‘You shall have no gods before me’. The worship that is due to the true God, when it is given to any other individual or creature, it turns to be idolatry. Idolatry is a mortal sin. Because, it denies the supreme power of God and his uniqueness.

There are several kinds of idolatry; wealth, licentiousness, persons, authority; when they are imagined in mind as idols and are worshipped, it is idolatry. There are people, who give to athletes, film stars, persons in authority and political leaders, position equal to God in their minds and honour and worship them. All these are against this commandment, since they are putting creatures on par with the creator.

Attempts to test the power of God and to insult God are against the first commandment. Along with that, to insult holy things and places of worship and making use of holy things for one’s own benefit, are grave sins. This commandment demands, on the basis of the divine virtues; faith, hope and charity, the worship that is to be rendered to the only God, should be given with the whole heart, with the whole soul and with the whole strength. Thus, let us all try to lead a stable life in the faith of one God.

## Worship

The Church believes and confesses that God is one and in him there are three persons. In the evening prayer of Friday in S'himo, this truth is commemorated:

“Praise is to the Triune God, praise to the Father; honour to the Son;

And glory to the Holy Ghost;

Three are the persons, having three names and let there be,

Praise to the only one true God”  
(Friday, Evening prayer, S'himo).

## Life Witness

Through the first commandment God asks us that believing in one God, we should love and worship him with the whole heart and lead a life full of hope. Let us take the oath that, fully depending upon him, we may grow in the divine virtues of faith, hope and charity and we may live opposing all evils against these virtues and may remain faithful to God.

### Memorise

“It is written,  
‘Worship the Lord your God,  
and serve only him’”  
(Luke 4: 8).

## Questions

1. What is the viewpoint of the Holy Scripture about the first commandment?
2. What is meant by superstition?
3. Which are the sins against hope? Describe.
4. What is meant by: ‘You shall have no other gods before me’?
5. ‘It is not wrong to venerate the saints’. What is the reason?



# GOD'S NAME SHOULD BE GLORIFIED

## **You shall not take the holy name of God in vain**

The second of the divine commandments is about the use of the sacred name of God. This commandment was very important in the life of Israel and it is so in the life of the Church, the new Israel. Though it may appear very small a commandment, its importance is very big in the daily life. The name of God reveals the presence of God. This commandment teaches that the name of God should always be honoured and should be used in the proper manner. The subject that is treated in this lesson is the use and misuse of the name of God.



## **The Second Commandment in the Holy Scripture**

This is the second among the Ten Commandments given to Moses: “You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord, your God; for the Lord will not acquit anyone who misuses his name” (Exodus 20: 7; Deuteronomy 5: 11). The people of the Old Testament understood from this commandment that the name of God should in no way be polluted and no one should take false oath in his name. Jesus the Lord expanded the meaning of this commandment in the New Testament. Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount not to take false oath and not to misuse the name of the Lord.

## **The Sacred Name of God**

The second commandment means that the holy name of God should be honoured. The people of Israel never used to utter the name of God. For, they considered that their God was so exalted and omnipotent that his name could not even be uttered. The name of God was revealed to the people of Israel for the first time. The name of an individual represents that individual and reveals his specialities. Hence 'the name of God' fully represents God. To know the name of God means to know God and to entreat calling the name of God means to rely on God. The name of God is his presence. The second commandment teaches that one ought to approach that presence only with fear, immense devotion and honour. The core of the second commandment is the salutary power of the name of God and the worship we ought to give to it.

## **The Name, Jesus**

It is through Jesus that we got the complete revelation of the name of God. It is the glory of the name of God that Jesus perfected through his life. For that reason Jesus prayed to the Lord: "Father, glorify your name" (John 12: 28). Jesus taught his disciples that they should give the greatest reverence to the name of God. It is the same that he prayed in the Lord's Prayer: "Hallowed be your name" (Luke 11: 2).

The name of the Lord Jesus too, should be honoured together with God the Father. We can see in the public life of Jesus that Jesus granted cure to the many sick people, who called upon the name of Jesus and requested cure.

There was very much importance to the name of Jesus in the early Church. The words of Peter, the apostle: "Rise up in the name of Jesus of Nazareth and walk", cured the lame man, reveals the power of the name of Jesus. Peter, the apostle, after he experienced the power of the name of Jesus, proclaimed: "There is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved" (Acts of the Apostles 4: 12). St. Paul, the apostle of the gentiles, proclaims about the name of Jesus: "Therefore, God also highly exalted him (Jesus) and gave him the name that is above every name,

so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2: 9-11).

Whatever good thing is done in the name of Jesus is blessed. Jesus has revealed during his public life that ‘if two or three gather in my name, I will be in their midst’. Hence, the second commandment demands that we should consider the name of Jesus most holy and honour it. When we worship the name of Jesus, we worship God the Holy Trinity. Therefore, all are obliged to render worship and devotion to the name of Jesus.

### **The Name of God should be Praised**

God is holy. Hence the name of God also is holy. For no reason should the name of God be misused. Humankind is obliged to praise and worship the name of God. When we praise the name of God we praise God. The invitation of the Psalmist to praise God is most deserving of attention: “Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord; praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time on and forevermore. From the rising of the sun to its setting the name of the Lord is to be praised” (Psalms 113: 1-3). Only God is deserving of praise. When the name of God is praised, we are giving due worship to God. We have to be careful to use the name of God with a worshipful mentality. By doing so, we will be able to stop the misuse of the name of God. When we recite the name of God with respect, it will be blessed.

The following are useful occasions to praise, glorify and honour the name of God: vows, professions, blessing in the name of God, exorcism and use of Christian names.

### **Vows**

Vow is a promise, which one makes directly to God and which God receives. Vow is a lofty means to honour the name of God in a noble way. Since they are promises in the name of God, vows glorify God. Through vows, one is able to serve God better and to dedicate oneself to God. The second commandment insists to observe faithfully the vows one undertakes, one’s offerings and promises. The breaking of vow is the breaking of the

second commandment. The promises made in the name of God have authenticity, truthfulness and fidelity. When one shows infidelity to these promises, one misuses the name of God and makes God himself a cheater. The proper observance of vows is obedience to the second commandment.

## **Profession of Faith**

Profession of faith is a means to honour the name of God. Through the profession of faith done in the name of God, we glorify God. At the same time, the one who does the profession of faith should have perfect conviction about the veracity of his words. For, we depend upon God, who is truth itself, for the assurance of the profession.

## **Blessing in the Name of God**

We are glorifying God by blessing us as well as others in the name of God. Whatever we do in the name of God is worshipping God. Through blessing others in the name of God, we share the peace and love of God. Everybody can bless and offer best wishes to each other. When we bless in the name of God, God is present there.

## **Exorcism**

Devils are the evil spirits, who do evil things against humankind. Priests have the authority to drive out Satan. Exorcism is the function to drive away Satan in the name of God from one who is possessed with the evil spirit. It is through the power of the name of God that the priest is able to drive out Satan.

## **The Taking of Christian Names**

An individual enters into the divine life through baptism. The Christian name, which the candidate receives on the occasion of baptism, is being blessed in the name of the Holy Trinity. This Christian name will be either any of the names of saints or related to any of the Christian virtues. It is better for the individual, who takes the Christian name at the time of baptism, be known by the same name throughout life. The Christian names will help us to advance more in virtuous Christian life. By being known by a Christian

name, one is proclaiming his/her Christian personality. One's baptismal name manifests honour to the second commandment.

## **Sins against the Second Commandment**

Obedience to the second commandment is giving honour to the name of God. Along with the right use of the name of God, the misuse of the name of God also is very common in society. The name of God is often insulted for selfish motives. The most important negative aspects of the second commandments are dealt with here.

### **Impure Conversation**

To make false statements about others, to propagate false news and to address others using abusive words are all vices. The second commandment demands to keep away from such circumstances. When we insult human beings created in the image and likeness of God, we insult God himself. When we use bad words against our brethren, we use them against God. This commandment demands that our speech should always be true and be pleasing to others.

### **Blasphemy**

Defiance towards God, insult, contempt, and abusive words are all blasphemy. There are two kinds of blasphemy: direct and indirect. Direct blasphemy is the denial or insult made directly against God. Indirect blasphemy is insult or speaking ill of persons, places or things dedicated to God. To speak indiscreetly against God and divine things, to call in question the providence of God and to insult God saying that God is unjust and unmerciful are all blasphemy.

### **Meaningless Swearing**

To swear meaninglessly and unnecessarily is a grave sin. The Old Testament teaches, to swear falsely in the name of God is a grave sin. A false swearing makes God a false witness. When we swear to do an evil thing, we deny and insult the name of God. To swear for fun or to swear meaninglessly in order to convince someone about anything is denial of the second commandment. To use the name of God without respect, to break

vows, and to curse others in the name of God also are sins against the second commandment.

The inner meaning of the second commandment is that the name of God should be respected with due honour. That is, human beings should glorify the name of God in thought, word and action. Let us also assume the mentality of the Psalmist: “Sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day” (Psalms 96: 2).

### **Worship**

The Church prays thus in the Lord’s Prayer, glorifying the sacred name of God:

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”.

### **Life Witness**

Let us prepare ourselves so that we glorify the name of God in thought, word and deed, thus to worship God and be faithful to him.

### **Memorise**

‘Praise the Lord! Praise, O servants of the Lord; praise the name of the Lord. Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time on and forevermore’  
(Psalms 113: 1-2).

### **Questions**

1. The second commandment means that the name of God should be honoured. Describe.
2. How is the breaking of a vow, breaking of the second commandment?
3. Assuming Christian names is honouring the second commandment. Prove.
4. Impure conversation is against the second commandment. Why?
5. Blasphemy is trespassing the second commandment. Elucidate.
6. To swear meaninglessly is against the second commandment. Clarify.



# SUNDAY OBSERVANCE

## Keep holy the day of the Lord

Sabbath was the day, Israel had set apart to worship and serve God, the Creator and Saviour. It is God himself, who gave Sabbath to the people of Israel for worshipping God and for taking rest when he gave them the stone tablets. Thus, the Jews set apart the seventh day of the week for divine worship and for taking rest. During the period of the New Testament, observance of Sunday started instead of Sabbath. The Church began to observe Sunday holy, the day



of the remembrance of the Lord's resurrection. The 3<sup>rd</sup> of the Ten Commandments and the 1<sup>st</sup> of the commandment of the Church point out the importance of the observance of Sunday.

## Sabbath, in the Old Testament

The word 'Sabbath' literally means 'to retire from work' or 'to stop work'. Sabbath is the day set apart for serving God and keeping away from all servile works. God ordered about the observance of Sabbath thus: "Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord, your God. You shall not do any work" (Exodus 20: 8-10). It is God, who marked the beginning of Sabbath.

With regard to Israel, Sabbath was the remembrance of creation and deliverance. The events of creation and deliverance are the decisive intervention of God in the history of humankind. “In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it” (Exodus 20: 11). The basis of the observance of Sabbath is the example of God, resting on the seventh day.

In the Old Testament Sabbath had a religious meaning; namely to refrain from all kinds of labour. The Old Testament even insisted that those who work on Sabbath, the holy day of the Lord’s rest, should be killed (Exodus 31: 15). Sabbath was the day of enjoyment, rest and worship. With regard to the Israelites, the observance of Sabbath was an inevitable part of their life.

According to the covenant, God made with humankind, the day of Sabbath was a reminder. The people of Israel confessed that the Lord was their God and that they were his people. Sabbath existed as a sign of reminding the covenantal relationship of God with the people of Israel.

The important observances and celebrations of the Jews were on the Sabbath. The observance of the Sabbath had great influence in the religious and social life of the Jewish people. The offering of sacrifice, in the background of the Church and reciting prayers and reading the Holy Scripture in synagogues, were practised on the Sabbath days. In the course of time, the Jewish teachers made the observance of the Sabbath difficult so as not to do any kind of work on the Sabbath. All descriptions about the Sabbath are related to Jesus in the New Testament.

## **Jesus and Sabbath**

The topic about the observance of the Sabbath in the Gospels is the severity of the observance of the Sabbath and the human aspect, which Jesus gives to it. Jesus once cured a cripple on a Sabbath day asking the question: “Which is lawful, to do good or evil on Sabbath, to save life or destroy it?” By doing so, Jesus taught to do good things on Sabbath. “The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath; so

the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath” (Mark 2: 27-28). So saying Jesus showed his thinking about Sabbath. Jesus strongly criticized the observance of Sabbath of the Jews, who rejected human consideration. Jesus never rejected Sabbath, he only tried to uphold and honour it.

We can see in the Holy Scripture Jesus observing Sabbath during his public life. Jesus considered Sabbath as the most opportune occasion for divine worship. On all Sabbaths he used to go to the synagogues of the Jews (Luke 4: 16), and having read the Holy Scripture, he explained the same. According to what Jesus taught and did, Sabbath is the most suitable day to do good. Through curing on the Sabbath, Jesus repeatedly proclaimed the reality that Sabbath is the sign of salvation. He taught that there is no place in Sabbath for prohibitions contrary to the good of human beings and the actions, which aim at the good of mankind render nobler meaning to Sabbath.

## **Sunday Observance**

The early Christians observed Sabbath like the other Jews. The observance of Sunday, the day of the resurrection of the Lord grew among the Christians along with Sabbath. In the course of time, the observance of Sabbath stopped and Sunday became the day of rest and worship. Sunday is qualified as the completion of Sabbath and Christianized Sabbath.

Regarding Christians, Sunday is the first among all days and feasts. The observance of Sunday is not merely a developed form of Sabbath, but entirely a different one. The basis of this difference is the resurrection of Christ. Sunday is called the Lord’s day because on that day he rose from the death. As a remembrance of the commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus, which is the most important moment of the salutary works, Sunday was changed into the most important day of the life of the Christians.

## **Sunday Observance - in the Early Church**

The early Church considered the day of the Lord as an occasion of celebration. The early Church experienced Sunday as the commemoration of the resurrection and at the same a foretaste of the second coming of the Lord. The early Christian community gathered together and took part in the

worship on the Lord's Day. The form of the service that the Christians used in the Lord's Day was based on the synagogue service of the Sabbath. The early Christians observed the day of the Lord through the breaking of the bread, preaching of the word of God and fellowship (Acts of the Apostles 2: 42). In the early centuries, Sunday was not permitted to be a day of rest. In the course of time, when Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, Sunday turned to be the day of common rest.

### **Sunday Observance – the View of the Church**

The whole Church gathers together in order to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice on Sunday and to enrich the body of the Church. The faithful, who became the members of the Church through baptism, have set Sunday apart for preaching and celebrating their faith. It is the day of the Church. The Church qualifies Sunday as the day of days.

The first commandment of the Church is about the observance of Sunday. According to this commandment, the parish community has to gather together for the observance of Sunday and for the celebration of the Holy Qurbono in the parish church. It is against the spirit of the commandment of the Church, not to take part in the Holy Qurbono on Sunday without grave reason.

The Code of Canons of the Church and the official document 'Order of Worship' of Second Vatican Council stress the observance of Sunday. The Council points out that the day of the Lord is the first of the feast days and Sunday is the foundation and centre of all order of worship (Order of Worship 106). The Council again teaches that the members of the parish, with the conviction that they are one community, should maintain active participation in the Holy Qurbono of Sunday.

Pope John Paul II stresses the importance of Sunday observance in his encyclical 'The Day of the Lord', published on May 31, 1998. Sunday, the day of the commemoration of the event of resurrection, the foundation stone of Christian faith, is the Easter day of each week. The faithful get the occasion each Sunday to meditate on the mysteries of resurrection and to participate in it.

The Church had faithfully maintained Sunday observance from the early centuries it decreed that all members of the Church should strictly and actively participate in the Holy Qurbono of Sunday. The Church teaches that Sunday observance be considered not as a burden imposed by law, but an essential element of Christian life. The Lord God created the universe in six days and rested on the seventh day. Hence, the Church considers Sunday as the day of rest.

### **Sunday Observance – in Practical Life**

One should do nothing to obstruct in the partaking of the Holy Qurbono or engage in any kind of action, which destroys the holiness of that day. The faithful are obliged to keep aloof from every entertainment, that is inconsistent with the spiritual life and obstructs the divine worship. Sunday observance should be most holy. The perfection of the Sunday observance is contained in the active participation in the Holy Qurbono. Sunday observance becomes more meaningful when we take part in the Holy Qurbono with preparation and receive Holy Communion. Besides, taking part in the activities of pious associations and other practices of devotion make the Sunday observance more sublime.

All activities against Sunday observance are an insult to God, the creator. When we offer due worship to God, we are accepting him as the Lord and Saviour of our life. If we do not find time for God, who created and arranged everything for us, it is ingratitude towards God. It is a grave sin to consciously stand aside from Sunday observance.

The offering of the Holy Qurbono by those who faithfully partake in the Sunday worship does not stop at the door of the Church. It will extend to their life. The faithful should find time on Sunday to perform deeds of mercy and charity. We should be able to visit the sick and to give consolation to those who undergo pain and suffering. All actions of the Sunday observance should be centred on love. Christians should love God above all and also their brethren. Since the resurrection of the Lord is the prime cause for salvation, we should spend Sunday fully for divine things only.

## Worship

We remember in S'himo Monday, evening prayer about Sunday, the day of the resurrection of the Lord and its special quality:

“The Lord is noble and one, who is made noble

Noble – Sunday, who respects it through the faith

Is indeed! The blessed one

The Lord has resurrected and Gentiles, in the name

Of Father, Son and Holy Ghost

Halleluiah; have confessed it”.

## Life Witness

The core of the Sunday observance is the celebration of the Holy Qurbano. Let us try to keep this commandment by actively participating in the Holy Sacrifice and by maintaining relationship with the parish community.

## Memorise

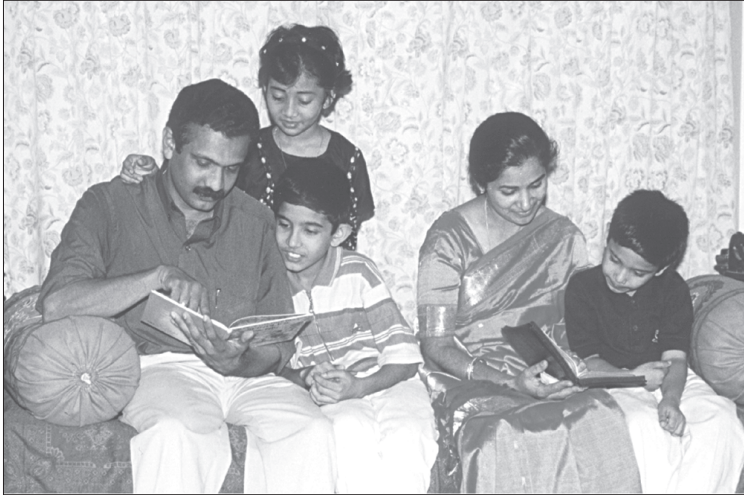
“Ascribe to the Lord the glory due to his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts. Worship the Lord in holy splendour; tremble before him, all the earth”  
(Psalms 96: 8-9).

## Questions

1. What does the Old Testament teach about the observance of Sabbath?
2. What was the mentality of Jesus about the observance of Sabbath?
3. Describe the Sunday observance of the early Church.
4. Clarify the viewpoint of the Church about Sunday observance.
5. What is the importance of Sunday observance in Christian life?



# AN IDEAL CHRISTIAN FAMILY



## Honour your father and your mother

The Commandments, which God gave to Israel on Mount Sinai through Moses, are chiefly about the love of God and others. Among the Ten Commandments, 'honour your father and mother' is the first one regarding love for others. After the commandments for love of God, what God demands is the honour that is to be given to our parents. We ought to understand this commandment in a very broad sense. The primary aim of this commandment is the duty of the children towards parents and the honour they have for their parents. Additionally this commandment means the duty of parents towards children, the relationship between teachers and students and between employers and employees. God demands through the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment that we should consider priests and religious as representatives of God and honour those who have authority over us.

## Fourth Commandment in the Scripture

The fourth commandment is the strong proof for the God-given power of the parents. It is very clearly described in the Bible about the need and importance of respecting the parents and elders. God promises through this commandment that by respecting the parents, an individual shall live long

and that individual shall have goodness in the land, which God shall give (Exodus 20: 12; Deuteronomy 5: 16). St. Paul also teaches that this is the first commandment, which is given with a promise (Ephesians 6: 1-3). Jesus repeatedly proclaims this commandment during his public life: “Honour your father and your mother, and whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die” (Matthew 15: 4). In the Old Testament, for the transgression of this commandment, capital punishment was given. Jesus taught that this commandment should no way be transgressed.

It is noteworthy that in the description of Jesus’ infancy the Holy Scripture draws attention to his obedience to his parents (Luke 2: 51). This is the thing that gives us the greatest encouragement to honour parents. The Lord says that to honour the parents is the means to enter into eternal life (Matthew 19: 17-19).

## **Ideal Family**

The primary end of this commandment is the good of family life. This is a social arrangement, which is as old as human history. It is God himself, who blessed the first marriage, combined the bride and bridegroom and put the foundation for family.

Parents are the representatives of God in the family. It is God, who guides the family through them. The parents also are sharers in the authority of God. By giving birth to children, parents share in the creative work of God. The wife and husband have the same position and glory in the family. In the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are in mutual unity. In the same way, in the family life, the husband, wife and children should be in the unity of love. The relationship of the Holy Trinity is a model for family life.

The basic unit of society is family. Hence, the good and prosperity of society depend upon families. Just as the family is the fundamental unit of society, it is the radical unit of the Church also. A Christian family is the image of the Holy Church. It is because of that, Second Vatican Council calls the family the ‘Family Church’. It is the family that is the beginning and foundation of all moral principles and social virtues. It is in the family life

that we learn about the moral principles and to begin to honour God. Hence the common good of society depends upon families.

Since the foundation of social life is in families, if the relationship of family is holy, so will be the social relationship. The 4<sup>th</sup> commandment admonishes that good families are the foundation on which good society is built. Hence, the family relations should be based on deep love. The basis of the love-relations of the family is the love between wife and husband. Just as Christ the bridegroom, and Church the bride, are inseparably one, so the relation between husband and wife also is inseparable. The family, which begins in the love-relationship of husband and wife, should also be rich in love between parents and children, above all in the love of God and in the love for others.

## **Honour the Parents**

The natural duty of honouring the parents is raised to the rank of moral duty by God through the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment. There should be love towards parents in thought, word and deed. Obedience to parents is related to the honour towards God and to the arrangements God created. To give honour to parents, which the commandment demands, is also part of justice. Children are obliged to love parents by natural reason. For, it is the parents, who engender children and bring them up and give them whatever is necessary.

By giving birth to a child, the parents share in the creative act of God. They work for God. Children see the glory of God through the parents. In the mind of each child, there is the parent in the place of God. Parents have a great share in creating the idea about God in the minds of children. Sirach says thus about the need of honouring parents: “With all your heart honour your father, and do not forget the birth pangs of your mother. Remember that it was of your parents you were born; how can you repay what they have given to you?” (Sirach 7: 27-28).

Children should fully obey their parents with regard to their education, formation of life, training in faith, etc. Children should happily receive the directions, which the parents are giving for the good of their children. Besides, it is the duty of the children to pray for their parents, to deal in love

with them, to render necessary service to them and to help them in their old age. The invitation of Paul, the apostle: “Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is your acceptable duty in the Lord” (Colossians 3: 20) should ring in our ears always.

## **The duty of the Parents towards their Children**

The commandment has two aspects: the respect of the children towards their parents and the responsibilities of the parents towards their children. It belongs to the parents to bring up their children in faith. It is the parents, who have to preach faith first to their children and to teach them faith. Parents have to nourish the spiritual life of the children through their own example and advice. Parents have to create a family atmosphere of love and honour to God and human beings. From childhood, children should be given training in families to grow in faith, to love all people and to advance in virtues. Parents have equal obligation to bring up the children.

Parents have the great obligation to give education to children. Together with that, the parents should give continuous training and encouragement to children for the acquisition of moral values. There should be good habits in families, like the members of the family praying together and reading Holy Scripture. Parents should also be solicitous in the matter of religious instruction of their children.

The influence of the parents in the success of the life of the children is great. Parents, who live in love and for service, are the biggest treasure of the children. The spiritual growth of the children depends upon the parents. Parents should give good example so that the children may grow in obedience and truthfulness. Parents should never compel children to do anything sinful.

## **Other Moral Values, which the Commandment demands**

This commandment instructs, that we should also honour our spiritual fathers and teachers who are the protectors and governors of our spiritual life. When we honour spiritual fathers, we honour God himself. For, they are the visible representatives of God in this world. This commandment also demands that we should obey the legal authorities and the just political system of government for the common good. It is just and logical to love

and honour the elders. Those who are subject to authority should consider the rulers as the representatives of God.

The duties of the citizens of nations also come under the orbit of this commandment. Every individual is obliged to love one's own country. The characteristics of a good citizen are: to obey the laws, to pay taxes, to use the right of franchise, etc.

### **Sins against the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment**

The following are the sins against the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment: to disobey the parents, to cause them mental pain, to oppose them, not fulfilling the responsibilities, not growing according to their expectations and living according to one's own pleasure. To love and serve them minding on their wealth only, denying the necessary love, service and respect in their old age, to expel them from home, not to give necessary medical treatment, and to insult and dishonour priests, religious, elders and those in authority are all violations of this commandment.

This divine commandment, which invites us to recognize authority and revere those in authority, exists for the growth and maintenance of society. The 4<sup>th</sup> commandment stipulates the welfare of the family, Church and society. When it is said to honour parents, this commandment teaches that we should respect the elders of the family and those who deserve honour in society and the Church.

## **Worship**

We entreat in the Evening prayer to bless our parents and elders:

“Lord, bless our parents, brothers and sisters, relatives, teachers, friends and those who have done any good to us. Bless this land and all its inhabitants”.

## **Life Witness**

We are obliged to love and honour our parents and superiors and to render necessary service to them. Let us also share the rank of the children of God by fulfilling these duties lovingly and faithfully.

## **Memorise**

“With all your heart honour your father, and do not forget the birth pangs of your mother. Remember that it was of your parents you were born; how can you repay what they have given to you”  
(Sirach 7: 27-28).

## **Questions**

1. Why is it said that the Holy Trinity is the model of the family life?
2. What does it mean by saying: ‘Honour your parents’?
3. Which are the sins against the 4<sup>th</sup> commandment?



# LIFE, THE GIFT OF GOD



## **You shall not kill**

The theme of this lesson is the value of life and the challenges against life. Under the existing circumstances, when attacks against life are increasing constantly, the commandment, 'You shall not kill' is most necessary for the existence of humankind. This is the commandment, which proclaims perfect respect for life and responsibility for the preservation of life.

## **Fifth Commandment in the Holy Scripture**

Even though the people of Israel received the commandments in the background of the covenant at Sinai, we can see that the commandment 'you shall not kill' existed from the very beginning of creation. Whenever man destroyed life God reacted against it. God proclaims forcefully that no one has any right over the human life, created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 9: 5-6). God means through the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment that all should honour human life (Exodus 20: 14; Deuteronomy 5: 17). The Old Testament teaches that those who take away human life should be punished with death. Jesus taught all commandments on the basis of the commandment

of love. Jesus told that there should be no kind of fraternal hatred. Jesus taught and showed it through his life that one has to honour one's brother and deal with him in a loving manner. Human beings should live in harmony. The teaching of Jesus: 'to call a brother 'fool' is worthy of judgment' is a proof of how much God honours a human being. We ought to respect and honour human life in all its aspects. Jesus proclaimed that we should love our enemies and should pray for them; and he showed the same through his life. Lord Christ gave a new dimension to the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment.

## **The Glory of Man**

God said thus before creating man: "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness" (Genesis 1: 26). God created human beings thus. The glory of the human being consists in that he/she is created in the image and likeness of God. God is the fountain of life. Only God has the power to give life and to take it back. The entire authority of life belongs to God alone.

The fact Jesus the Messiah, who is himself God, when he came to this earth, took the image and likeness of us, human beings, increased the glory of human beings. Thus, man shines more than all other creatures. What made human life so glorious is that man has the image and likeness of God. Man, the crown of creation holds a noble position in the scheme of the salvation of God.

## **Life is to be Protected**

The life of the human being and whatever he/she is, is in God's ownership. Hence human being is not the owner of life, but he/she is only its custodian. The 5<sup>th</sup> commandment demands that life should be protected and promoted. By respecting and protecting life, each individual is fulfilling his fundamental duty and protecting his right. Human being, the custodian of life should not only guard his/her own life, but also should show honour and love to every human life.

If life is to be protected and honoured, there should be circumstances conducive to it. Hence, each individual is obliged to maintain a peaceful atmosphere helpful for human society to survive. Each one should take

special care to live in mutual love and unity. There should be peace among communities, religions and countries. Only through this human life can be protected.

There should be no action from anyone, which would degrade the value of life. If human life were to be maintained, ecology should be protected in the proper manner. Humankind has the obligation to protect the natural wealth around us. Unless humankind protects the animal and plant wealth in the right manner, it will be dangerous even to life in general. If proper growth and protection of human life should be possible, the other living beings, animals and plants are also to be protected. Hence, humankind is obliged to love and protect nature. Nature's protection is the fulfilment of the 5<sup>th</sup> commandment.

If only health is protected, humankind can protect life. Hence it is the serious responsibility of humankind to protect health. Health is inevitable to resist attacks against life and to maintain life. To protect health in the proper way, is showing honour to life. The life of an individual is protected in a lofty manner when the health of the body, mind and soul is protected.

As protectors of life, each one is obliged not only to protect one's own life, but also the life of others. This is what is evident from the life of Cain and Abel. We should understand that those around us are the children of God and that they are also created in the image and likeness of God. Hence, all human beings are brothers. On that account, just as we protect our life, their life also is to be protected. This commandment stabilizes the fundamental right for all to live.

## **The Evils against Life**

Life is a gift of God. Hence, life is especially glorious and valuable, but, under present circumstances, attacks against life are on the increase every moment of the day. Human being is being looked upon as a mere thing and there is around us the tendency to destroy human life from its very inception. Many are the evils against human life.

## **Murder**

Murder is destroying the life of another human being. What happens in murder is the transgression of another human being's fundamental right to live. Murder is depicted as a grave evil in the Holy Scripture. The Holy Scripture bears witness that God will demand retribution from the murderer. The reasons that often lead towards murder are: jealousy, selfishness, hatred, vindictiveness, disgust, boundary problem, wealth, licentiousness, etc. In the present day community, the number of murders is increasing daily. This is an act devoid of humaneness which does not honour life. Murder is a mortal sin. Murderers are a threat to society itself.

## **Abortion**

From the first moment, a foetus is born in the womb of its mother, there begins a new life. Abortion is an action, which consciously destroys that life directly, using any sort of means. The baby in the womb of its mother is a human person created in the image and likeness of God. Among the attacks against life, abortion is the most heinous and inhuman. The greatest cruelty of abortion is that the attack is directed against human life, which cannot in any way resist for self-protection. What happens in abortion is the destruction of a person having body and soul. By the very fact that the foetus has existence, it has every right to live. Second Vatican Council teaches: "Life, from the first moment of its existence in the womb of its mother is to be protected with the greatest care. Abortion and killing of baby are unpardonable sins" (Church in the Modern World 51).

## **Mercy Killing**

Mercy killing is an action through which those who are weary of sickness; the aged, and the handicapped, are killed either with their consent or without, in order to remove their sufferings and to avoid inconvenience. Under this circumstance, with the help of the doctor, either by having recourse to means, which cause death to the patient, or by stopping medication to the patient, death is hastened. Thus, mercy killing, which is thought to be a good thing, is cruel murder. Mercy killing is an action against the glory of man and against the paternity of God, the creator. Since human being has

no authority over life, to destroy life in order to get relief from suffering is a challenge against God. The sick people should be able to see the suffering, which results from illness and bodily deformity in Christian viewpoint and to undergo them uniting with the sufferings of the Lord. Society has the responsibility to take care of the patients, who experience inconvenience through pain and sufferings and by giving them love and happiness, to engender hope for life.

## **Suicide**

Suicide is to consciously destroy one's own life, which God has given gratis. One puts a stop to one's own life forsaking the authority of God on life. Since one has no sufficient understanding about life or about its value, one decides to end one's life. Suicide is an escape and a self-retraction from life. What happens in suicide is a transgression of the responsibilities towards family and society. Often the reason for suicide is emotional bewilderment. In the rush of emotions, human being, who loses reasoning, considers suicide as the only means in order to escape from his responsibilities. Suicide is a grave evil in itself.

The state in India, where suicide takes place most, is Kerala. Today, in our community, the number of those who commit suicide is enormously increasing. Just as the one who committed suicide has his personal responsibility, the society too has its responsibility in it. Psychological, social and financial reasons cause suicide. Society should deal with those who would commit suicide with love and sympathy. The tendency to commit suicide will decrease when we impart knowledge about the immense mercy of God, about conviction of the high value of life and the knowledge for protecting life.

## **The Use of Intoxicating Drugs**

In the present day community, use of drugs is a very fast growing evil. It is an evil that indirectly destroys life, which is to be rightly protected. In the present generation, the youngsters consider the use of drugs as a symbol of social status. Drugs affect greatly the health of the body, mind and soul. Drugs ordinarily used are: liquor, tobacco, intoxicating drugs, panmasala,

etc. The functioning capacity of many organs of the body is lost through the use of intoxicating drugs. Hence the users of drugs become unable to think properly and to act discreetly. The use of drugs prevents one to lead an ordinary life. The use of drugs is indirect suicide. The duration of human life is reduced due to the use of intoxicating drugs. Human being considers life as a mere thing for pleasure instead of taking good care of it. The use of drugs will gradually lead human being to great disaster.

To cut away the limbs of a person, to inflict heavy blows and to persecute one are evils against life. Human being, who ought to honour life, by oppressing it, is oppressing God the giver of life.

### **Mental assault**

Not only the bodily attacks of human beings around us are evil. But, to oppress others mentally, to talk badly, to insult others and to speak ill of others are grave faults. It is because of this the Lord Jesus said: 'If you call your brother 'fool', you will be liable to judgment' (Matthew 5: 22). If, through someone's speech and actions, another one is mentally oppressed, that is indirect murder. Good form of speech and dealing is part of honouring life; that is, it is honour to God, the giver of life.

Besides evils of this kind against life, to kidnap human being, to forcibly keep someone under custody, terrorist activities, etc are evils against life. All these happen because one sees the value of life small and God is not recognized as the source of life. We have the responsibility, as good Christians, to eradicate these kinds of actions from society.

The commandment 'you shall not kill' primarily means to honour life. Together with that, this commandment aims to prohibit all activities against life. Humankind has the moral responsibility to respect and safeguard life, the gift of God. It is part of this responsibility to protect this universe, to maintain ecological balance, to prevent atmospheric pollution and to safeguard human life from its very inception. Thus we have the obligation to love and honour life and to gratefully glorify God, the giver of life.



## Worship

Human beings, the creatures of God, without loving each other, hates and destroys life. About these people, who do not fear the judgment of God, we remember in the morning prayer of Saturday in S'himo thus:

(Stuthyan punarudhanathe...)

“Our life resembles us

The wealthy long for profit,

The poor people are deceived

People like venomous serpents

Are disliking each other

And kill people, as if blind

And they do not see

The judgment of Almighty God” (S'himo. Saturday, Morning)

## Life Witness

Life is the gift of God. We have the obligation to safeguard and nourish the life of others also. Hence, let us try to avoid all evils that destroy life and become protectors of life.

### Memorise

“Upon you I have leaned from my birth; it was you who took me from my mother’s womb. My praise is continually of you”  
(Psalms 71: 6).

## Questions

1. What is the new interpretation Jesus gave the commandment ‘you shall not kill’?
2. Clarify the glory of human life.
3. What do we mean by saying ‘life is to be protected’?
4. Why is abortion said to be evil?
5. How does the use of intoxicants become sin?

# BEAR WITNESS TO TRUTH

## **You shall not bear false witness**

After the resurrection of Jesus, with the coming of the Holy Spirit, a Christian community came into existence under the leadership of Peter, the apostle. The faithful lived as one community with one mind. Nobody considered one's properties as one's own. Everything was common. Those who had house and property sold them and entrusted the whole amount to the apostles. That was used in common and distributed according to each one's need.



A person, Ananias and his wife Sapphira together, sold their property. A portion of the price, Ananias set apart with the knowledge of his wife and the rest of the amount he entrusted to the apostles. Ananias told a lie to Peter the apostle saying: "We give the whole amount we got". Peter said to Ananias thus: "You told the lie not to man, but to God". As soon as Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. Sapphira also told Peter that the property was sold for the amount that was placed before the feet of the apostles. Since she lied, she also died at once (Acts of the Apostles 5: 1-11). These actions and words caused the death of both. Hence, this event teaches us that all of us should always be truthful.

What God expects from humankind is truthfulness. The 8<sup>th</sup> commandment admonishes that we should respect truth and that we should maintain truthfulness in all things in our life. All have the obligation to deal truthfully in word and deed, in our relationship with God and our brethren. The commandment ‘you shall not bear false witness’ tells us that we should forsake all evils against truth.

### **In the Holy Scripture**

All the teachings of the Holy Scripture give to this commandment the meaning ‘Do not steal’. The evil, which the people of Israel should have avoided in order to keep the covenant with God, was ‘you shall not steal’. During the Babylon exile, the elders, who got capital punishment (Daniel 13: 1-64) for bearing false witness against Susanna, wife of Joachim, shows the gravity of this commandment. Lord God asks through this commandment not to bear false witness against anyone (Exodus 20: 16; Deuteronomy 5: 19).

Jesus reveals in the New Testament that he is the truth (John 14: 6). He teaches thus: “Let your word be either yes, yes or no, no”. St. Paul teaches how to practise this commandment in life, “So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours, for we are members of one another” (Ephesians 4: 25). Peter, the apostle also invites us “Rid yourselves, therefore, of all malice, and all guile, insincerity, envy and all slander” (1 Peter 2: 1). Holy Scripture has strictly forbidden either to tell lie or to commit falsehood. This commandment means that all shall tell the truth and shall bear witness to truth.

### **The Commitment to Truth**

Humankind tends towards truth, by nature. Human being is obliged to honour truth and to bear witness to truth. For, God is the source of truth. Since God is truth, the children of God are called to live in truth. Jesus, the Son of God came to this world in order to testify to the truth (John 18: 37). Whenever we act, speak and think, we bear witness to God. All members of the Church, the body of Christ, ought to keep truthfulness in life. Each individual, member of the Church, shares in Christ. His very life was that of

truth. Hence, all members of the Church should maintain commitment to truth.

It is the mutual faith and love founded on truthfulness that builds up community life. As individuals, each one is obliged to reveal truth, to live truthfully and to honour the truth.

## **Live the truth**

What we mean ‘by living the truth’ is that life should be truthful. That is, we should keep truthfulness in thought, word and deed. To think, say and perform truth is the positive side of the commandment ‘you shall not lie’.

Through thinking, saying and performing truth, one is bearing witness to truth. It is for that Jesus the Lord also came to this earth. He bore witness to the truth offering his own life. It is the noblest thing to bear witness to truth even by offering one’s own life. Martyrdom is offering life in this manner. Martyrs, who bore witness to truth, are our models.

Media has a very great share to spread truth in the present world. News and matters of periodicals are to be introduced truthfully without manipulation. Media has to fulfil the message of imparting true knowledge. Together with that, we should seek from media only things that agree with truth. Each individual should be ready to keep the truth in every sphere of life.

## **The evils, which the 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment forbids**

The responsibility for truth is grave in itself. The evils against the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment are against the plan of God, who is truth itself. The 8<sup>th</sup> commandment forbids all things against truth.

## **Lie**

Lie is to inform others a thing wrongly when one knows the truth about it. This may be talk or action against truth. The right of another to know the truth is denied by saying lie. One is ridiculing God and is deceiving others by saying lie. Lie is the misuse of the power of speech, which God has given as a gift. To say lie or untruth is transgression of the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment. False oath, false witness, exaggeration, boasting and flattery are all varieties

of lie. When we say a lie for entertainment or fun, its gravity may be less, but when it is said to deceive others, there is evil in it.

### **To reveal Secrets**

It is a grave fault to reveal secrets and things, which should not be revealed. Secrets, which cause another one loss or suffering or defamation should not be revealed. It is a breach of rule to intrude into the personal matters of others without permission. It is transgression of promise to reveal a secret, which one has promised not to reveal. Lawyers and doctors, who come to know secrets related to their profession, should not reveal them. Confession secrets are to be kept absolutely. All matters revealed in confession are to be kept as secrets most perfectly. Under any circumstance it is mortal sin and liable to punishment not to observe this duty. Revealing secrets loses the truthfulness of human being.

### **Unjust Judgment**

It is wrong to believe that there is evil in others and proclaim judgment against them without clear evidence. On account of that, the right of another one to live honourably is denied.

### **Flattery**

Flattery signifies words used to praise others without sincerity in order to obtain their favour. This kind of praise, hiding inner things for the sake of selfish motives, is evil.

### **Boasting**

It is against the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment to hide the reality of one's own state of life and to pretend and show to be something else. Such people are self-admirers, who pretend that they have more greatness than what they have. They deceive the society and cheat themselves.

### **Infamy**

Infamy is attributing to someone a fault, which he/she has not committed. Thus that person is defamed and his/her good name is spoiled.

## Copying in the Exam

It is not right to secure success through immoral means instead of writing the exam truthfully and securing success. Copying in the exam and all malpractices concerned with examination are acts against truth. It is abuse against the ability God has given for study.

The phases of meaning of the commandment ‘you shall not bear false witness’ are very vast. This commandment demands that we should give the greatest importance to truthfulness in life. Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, gave great value to truth in his life. The name of his autobiography itself is “My Experiments for the Search of Truth”. The watchword we ever heard in our country is “*Satyameva Jayate*”. It means: “Truth alone wins”.

We should be ready to accept truth and to live obedient to it. Each Christian is called to bear witness to truth. We should not think or speak or perform anything against truth. Thus let us try to make our life truthful.

### Worship

Lord, you are the truth itself. Make us that we also keep truth always in our life. Grant us the grace to imitate you more closely by truthful thinking, speaking and performing. Bless us thus to be noble witnesses to truth.

### Life Witness

A Christian is called to bear witness to truth. Let us strive to stand for truth in our daily life and to encounter with sacrifice all challenges that may come against it.

### Memorise

“Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who act faithfully are his delight”  
(Proverbs 12: 22).

## Questions

1. What does the saying: ‘maintain commitment to truth’ mean?
2. Briefly describe the evils, which the 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment prohibits.

# CONJUGAL LOVE AND FIDELITY

**You shall not commit adultery**

**You shall not covet your neighbour's wife**

God-established family is the basic unit of society. The following are two commandments for the existence and growth of family: “You shall not commit adultery” and “You shall not covet your neighbour's wife”. The 6<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> commandments make clear the loftiness of marriage and the importance of conjugal holiness. Both these

commandments are intrinsically related to the gift, sex, in order to love each other and to lead married life. These commandments admonish that the spouses should safeguard mutual love and fidelity.

Both these are included in the commandments, God gave to the people of Israel on Mount Sinai (Exodus 20: 16, 17; Deuteronomy 5: 18, 20). Through these commandments, God prohibited all sexual relationships and actions outside the marriage bond. These commandments teach how the spouses should have unity and fidelity to each other in married life. The Lord Jesus gives a new explanation to the viewpoint of the Old Testament about married life. Jesus teaches in the Sermon on the Mount that all actions against conjugal fidelity are evil (Matthew 5: 27-32). The viewpoint about married life in the New Testament is very lofty.





## **Marriage – part of Divine Plan**

At the end of the act of creation, God created humankind, man and woman. God blessed them like this: “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it; and have domination over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth” (Genesis 1: 28). Thus, along with the act of creation, married life also started. God created human beings as man and woman in order to complement each other. It is because of that, when Adam saw the woman, he said thus: “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called woman” (Genesis 2: 23). We see in the book of Genesis the relationship between man and woman: “A man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh” (Genesis 2: 24).

It is God, who established the family. It is God, who created Adam and Eve and gave the blessing to live together and to have children. It is through the grace of sex, which God gave, that the partners feel mutual attraction and love in married life.

We can see the continuation and completion of the viewpoint of the Old Testament in the New Testament. It is the biggest proof that God recognizes and glorifies family life that the Messiah, the Son of God was born man in a family background. Jesus honoured the arrangements that existed in family life and he lived obedient to his parents (Luke 2: 51). Jesus did his first miracle in the background of the marriage feast at Cana. The teachings of Jesus about marriage and about its indivisibility were the recognition he gave to married life.

What God first asked of man is to increase and multiply and to fill the earth. It is for that, God created human beings as man and woman. God established marriage and family in order that they love each other and in the fullness of love to generate children. Hence, married life has great relevance in the history of God’s plan of salvation.

## **The relationship of Husband and Wife**

The relationship between God and Israel is compared to the marriage relationship in the Old Testament. The love of God for Israel is like the love

the husband has towards his wife. The people of the Old Testament attributed sacredness to the marriage relationship. The infidelity of the married life is compared to the idolatry of Israel in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament the relationship of wife and husband is compared to the relation, which Christ has towards the Church. It is in the Epistle to the Ephesians that St. Paul, the apostle, depicted the relationship between husband and wife in this noble way. The Church is the body of Christ. The head of this body is Christ. Thus Paul, the apostle, teaches that husband is the head of the wife. Just as Christ loves the Church and offered his own life as sacrifice for her, husbands should love their wives; should protect them, and live for them. Just as the husbands love their own body, they should love their wives. The apostle teaches that he, who loves his wife, loves his own self.

Just as the Church is obedient to Christ, wives should be obedient to their husbands in everything and should perfectly love them. Through the sacrament of marriage the woman and man become one in the Messiah. Hence, they are one body. The apostle teaches that the love between husband and wife should be intense and deep (Ephesians 5: 22-33). When it is said that wife should be obedient to the husband, it is not degrading the woman. But it means that the wife and husband, who are but one body, should live with one mind.

The relation of wife and husband is the stage for obedience, love and cooperation. In married life, there is the call to become one spiritually, bodily and mentally. Wife and husband should lead married life united to each other.

## **Marriage, a Sacrament**

On the occasion of creation, seeing that it is not good for man to remain alone, God gave him Eve as his life-partner. Thus, there was the first marriage. Man and woman were united. The family arrangement of the Old Testament was continued in the New Testament also. Christ raised marriage into a sacrament during his public life. Spouses and children, who are born to them in their mutual love, are sanctified through the sacrament of marriage.

The word ‘sacrament’ itself means sanctification. The spouses share with Christ and his body, the Church through marriage. The sacrament of marriage, which begins with the mutual consent of the spouses, should last till their death. It is Christ, who unites the husband and wife in the sacrament of marriage. The spouses begin their life in Christ. Hence, the spouses are obliged to safeguard the divine grace obtained through marriage.

### **The Indissolubility of Marriage**

It is through the sacrament of marriage that family, the basic unit of society, marks its beginning. Woman and man enter into the life of marriage being attracted by mutual love. God grants sanction to the free consent of the spouses through the sacrament of marriage. Marriage that began in Christ can never be ended. Marriage relation lasts till death. Lord Jesus teaches about the indissolubility of marriage thus: “They are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate” (Matthew 19: 6). St. Paul, the apostle also teaches about the indissolubility of marriage: “The wife should not separate from her husband...the husband should not divorce his wife” (1 Corinthians 7: 10-11). The Church also admonishes that wife and husband united in God should not separate their bond. The foundation of this indissolubility is that they are ‘united in the Lord’.

### **The Elements of Married Life**

The power that unites wife and husband is the love of God. Man and woman united in marriage should be faithful to each other until death. Mutual fidelity is the most fundamental quality required for the success of married life. They can safeguard fidelity if only there is spiritual, mental and bodily unity between the spouses. Their mutual dedication and dependence will increase this fidelity. Spouses should be ready to share with each other and to forgive in their married life. Spouses are able to safeguard fidelity in married life, when they keep the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> commandments,

The love of the married life should be perfect and unconditional. The spouses should be ready to share whatever they have, having loved each other from the fullness of their heart. It is from the fullness of the conjugal

love that new life should emerge. The Church understands that the begetting of children is one of the chief ends of marriage.

The conjugal fidelity and love are the fundamental elements of married life. Fidelity and love are complementary in married life. It is these elements that keep the spouses united until death.

## **Sex and Purity**

Sex is meant as the God-given ability of man and woman to love each other and to impart life in the fullness of that love. It is the right use of sex, the God-given gift, that leads each one towards conjugal holiness. The aims of sex with regard to human beings, is mutual love and the begetting of children. Sex is considered most holy and sacred in the Holy Scripture. Holy Scripture prohibits sexual relation outside marriage. Sex has meaning only in relation to marital life.

Purity is the virtue that leads sexual act to its real end. Sexual enjoyments apart from the background of marriage and married life, are against the virtue of purity. Spouses should observe the virtue of purity for perfect conjugal love. Purity is the mature employment of the God given gift of sex for its genuine purpose. What is most important is purity of the heart. Internal purity forbids us from committing evil. The married life of the spouses, who keep purity in mental attitudes and actions, also will be filled with purity.

## **The Sins against Sexual Morality**

The gift, sex, which God has given to love each other to become one, is realized in the perfect love between man and woman in married life. Hence, if either of them tries to give his/her love to anyone else at any time, it is sin against the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> commandments. Therefore, married woman and man, if they give their love to anyone else, it is considered as adultery and as sin against purity. This God-given gift, given for the perfection of marital life, if misused before marriage, it is a great evil. They misuse here before marriage the love, which the spouses should give each other in married life. By doing so, the spouses become unable to perfectly dedicate themselves and love

each other when they marry. For this reason, all sexual enjoyments outside marriage are against the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> commandments.

Masturbation, the sexual pleasure, which one enjoys in one's own body and homosexuality, sexual pleasure enjoyed through sexual acts between people belonging to the same sex, are evils against these commandments.

It is evil against sexual morality to publish through audio-visual media and writings, excessive sex-provocative creations. Sex is made use of in the filthiest manner in the advertisement and utilitarian culture. It is against purity of life to show interest in sexy pictures, books, and films.

Rape is to enter into sexual relationship with a person against the person's consent. The bodily integrity and holiness, which one has earnestly safeguarded is lost through this. As a result of this, those who engage in this evil, destroy the freedom and glory of others.

It is God, who binds those who have entered into valid marriage. It is grave fault to try to separate the marriage relationship, which God has united.

God is demanding from us through the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> commandments to forsake all evils against sexual morality and conjugal fidelity. These commandments teach that those who have entered into married life should observe fidelity.

## Worship

In the admonition addressed to all the faithful in the sacrament of marriage, it is taught thus, how the husbands and wives should love one another and how to dedicate themselves:

“Attend each of you, how your relationship with your wives should be. For, she, having left her own people, is united to her husband. Hence, he should please her and should deal with her benignly. He should deal with her as his own life. Even if he is hungry, he should give her food. Even when he is thirsty, he should give her drink. She is also obliged to serve him befittingly. She should deal with him in everything with love and concordance. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be upon us and you forever” (Service of Marriage).

## Life Witness

God has created man and woman in his own image and likeness. Hence, they are obliged to respect and honour each other. Hence, let us try to love and respect all people in our daily life. Let us pray especially for those who are leading married life that they may live in mutual love and fidelity.

### Memorise

“If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing”  
(1 Corinthians 13: 3).

## Questions

1. Why is marriage said to be part of divine plan?
2. How is the relationship of husband and wife depicted on the basis of the Holy Scripture?
3. Why is marriage said to be a sacrament?
4. What is the foundation of the indivisibility of marriage?
5. What are the important elements of married life?
6. How is sex and purity related?

# CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TOWARDS WEALTH

## **You shall not steal You shall not covet your neighbour's goods**

The 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> commandments are about owning wealth and using it justly. These commandments forbid abusing wealth and amassing it unjustly. These commandments mean that each one in society has the right for ownership of private wealth and that it is to be used without causing pain to others. Thus, these commandments ensure the security of man, who is a social being.



These commandments are given in the Old Testament in the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy. There was not much importance for the idea of private wealth in the Old Testament before the rule of the kings. The viewpoint of Israel about wealth was social. Wealth and properties were considered as common for each tribe. Consciousness of private wealth was formed along with the royal rule. The Old Testament opposed the destruction of common and private wealth. During the reign of the kings, we see in the Holy Scripture that the prophets raised voice against corruption. In the New Testament, Jesus alludes to the rich young man about the commandment 'you shall not steal' (Matthew 19: 18).



Through the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> commandments, we learn what our attitude to wealth should be and what God demands in this matter.

## **Private Wealth**

The Lord God, after creating human beings, gave authority over the whole earth and over all the living beings on it (Genesis 1: 26-29). Whatever is seen in the world, God created for humankind. All people have the right to enjoy the things created. Private wealth is needed for the livelihood of human beings and to fulfil the many needs and obligations of their lives.

Private wealth is the right of an individual and is necessary for his existence. As private wealth was approved, the commandment ‘you shall not steal’ has become necessary to protect this right. Private wealth is the fundamental right of every individual. Everybody has the right to earn private wealth through just means and to use it. The means to earn wealth should be one’s own ability and earnest work. By wealth, is meant properties movable and immovable. The expenditure of personal wealth should always be helpful to the common good also. The right for personal wealth will help to strengthen welfare, protection and freedom of individuals and families. When the right for personal wealth is upheld, we understand that justice is upheld. At the same time the right for private wealth should be conducive to the good of society.

## **Wealth and Justice**

The commandments, ‘you shall not steal’ and ‘you shall not covet your neighbour’s goods’ should urge to honour the rights of each individual. The proper expenditure of wealth, and the right attitude towards wealth will exist only in a society where justice is maintained. When a person is trying to take hold of another’s wealth through stealing and covetousness, injustice will prevail in society. Thus, abuse of wealth happens. Justice is transgressed due to the effort of someone, who tries to own what does not belong to him. Justice is intrinsically related to the right use of wealth.

Justice is the firm decision and action to give to God and neighbour what is due to them. What stands, as the practical side of justice, is the free assent of a person to give what is due to the other and to earn what is due to

oneself. The New Testament gives importance to justice founded on love more than to justice founded on law. About the justice that is founded on love, our Lord said thus: "...For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me clothing. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me" (Matthew 25: 35-36). Jesus the Lord taught that we should thus respect the rights and needs of those who are around us. These kinds of works of mercy will impede the selfish motives of wealth.

The 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> commandments ensure the protection of justice and aim at the peaceful life of creatures. It is against justice to keep under custody the things of others unjustly. Christians should be ready to raise voice against injustice in all spheres - financial, social or political. The instruction St. John the apostle gives about wealth and justice is much note-worthy: "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help? Little children, let us love, not in word or speech; but in truth and actions" (1 John 3: 17-18).

### **Side with the poor**

These commandments forbid unjust taking over of the wealth of others. They point out that one should give consolation and help to those who undergo pain and suffering. It is also against these commandments that some people enjoy abundance of wealth while some others experience penury. These commandments have yet another dimension that those who have wealth should share the same with those who do not have. Thus, all should try to fulfil the Christian duty to side with the poor.

The Church always has option for the poor. Teachings and actions of the Church are in favour of the poor. Second Vatican Council makes clear the care of the Church for the poor thus: "There are many people in the world, who suffer severe torments of poverty. Let all individuals and governments give whatever they have to others according to their ability. The poor people and nations are to be specially aided in such a way as to be able to stand on their own legs and develop" (Church in the Modern World 69). The Church

always raises her voice and takes her stand for the poor and for their rights. Along with that the Church strongly opposes all transgressions against the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> commandments.

## **Evils against the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Commandments**

The primary meaning of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> commandments signifies that one should not steal. Stealing is robbing the wealth of another in any manner. Stealing is the transgression of the right of an individual for having private wealth. It is the inordinate interest for wealth that leads one to theft and sins connected with it.

### **Avarice**

Avarice is hoarding wealth relying on self only without relying on God, seeking to possess too much wealth, and amassing wealth for one's own enjoyment of life without considering the need of others. The use of wealth should be with the aim of common good. It is transgression of the right of others for wealth that one hoards wealth for one's own sake. Those who are slaves to avarice consider wealth as God and adore it. This kind of people will do anything to amass wealth. It is sin to earn wealth without any moral or human value.

### **Envy**

Envy could be seen as an emotion, which one feels for another, just because the other has what one does not have for oneself. Envy is the negative mental attitude, which arises from the apprehension that one would be disregarded when someone equal to oneself or below in rank will rise in wealth, influence and recognition. Avarice and envy will lead human beings to the various phases of the sin, theft.

### **Theft**

Theft is the appropriating of wealth, which belongs to a person, institution or society, without the consent of its owner. The commandments; 'do not steal' and 'do not covet' prohibit all kinds of theft. One appropriates through theft, property or wealth, which is not one's own, but belongs to someone

else. In the modern progressive-life-circumstances, we can see numerous sins against the commandment ‘not to steal’:

- To cause financial loss to others in whatever way.
- By not giving just wage to workers.
- To levy unjust interest.
- To keep false accounts, to put false signature, to smuggle.
- To cheat paying tax; not to pay tax.
- To deceive in trade: hiding things, adulteration, etc., to deceive in measuring and weighing.
- To influence superiors unjustly; to give and receive bribe; to possess wealth through unjust means; to cause loss to others through misusing authority.
- To levy excessive rent; to pay less than due when the owner is hard pressed.
- To destroy common properties; to cause loss to individuals and societies through strikes and labour agitation, to appropriate common properties.
- To work insincerely, indifferently and badly.
- To manipulate cheques and price lists.
- Extravagance, wasteful expenditure and pomp. They are the spending of wealth without the sense of responsibility.
- To encourage stealing; to keep the stolen things in possession; to share in the fruits of theft; to keep in custody things, which belong to another.

All such activities are against the 7<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> commandments. The very thought to appropriate properties of others may lead to evil.

## **Restitution**

If one, through cheating or stealing takes possession of things belonging to others unjustly, one could obtain remission from the evil only by doing restitution for the same. All have the obligation to return the thing stolen and if there is cheating, to retribute the same. Restitution is to be made in

accordance with the conditions laid down by the court of justice of society. If one should have relation in life with Jesus, one ought to make this restitution. When Zachaeus met Jesus, he said: “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much” (Luke 19: 8). We should have this mentality in our life.

Only through the observance of the commandments: ‘Do not steal’ and ‘Do not covet the goods of others’ we can build up a good social system. When we say ‘right for private wealth’, it means also that we should side with the poor. These commandments teach that restitution is to be made for any wealth that is usurped from others. By keeping these commandments we can form a good mentality to share with those in need, the wealth, which one has earned for one’s own welfare.

### **Worship**

The Church reminds the faithful in the prayer of Soutoro that unjust earning of wealth, which leads to spiritual destruction and death is evil:

(Karthave krupa cheyyaname)

“Hoard not venomous silver, gold  
Riches that ruin your life  
Do seek always wise counsel  
So that your Lord may love you”.

### **Life Witness**

Let us try to understand that the wealth and abilities we have, are all the gifts of God and let us make use of them according to the will of God.

### **Memorise**

“Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions”  
(Luke 12: 15).

### **Questions**

1. Justice is intrinsically related to the right expenditure of wealth. Clarify.
2. How does the Church fulfil the Christian message: ‘Side with the poor’?
3. What is meant by avarice?
4. One will obtain absolution of sin, only when one returns the wealth unjustly taken possession of. Describe.

# CONSCIENCE

Conscience is a word commonly used by human beings in social life. Many people used to say: “I am living and acting according to my conscience”. It is inevitable for Christian life to understand what is conscience and what is the right conscience, for those who do the good and those who do visible evil, both claim that they acted according to their conscience.

## What is Conscience?

The English word ‘conscience’ is derived from the Latin word ‘*conscientia*’, The word conscience means, the final decision about a thing one is about to do at the present moment. There are other meanings also for conscience, such as: inner knowledge, inspiration, mental sense of knowing thoughts in advance (inner eye), etc.

Many have tried to understand conscience in different periods. There are some, who consider conscience as the knowledge about virtue and the idea about it. There are others, who understand conscience as the signpost of morality and the voice of the soul that urges us to discern between good and evil. In short, conscience is the voice of God or the divine inspiration, which God has engraved in human beings to differentiate between good and evil and having realized the morality and immorality of an act, to do good.



When one has to determine the morality of an act, conscience will help that person to take the decision based on reason. Conscience will compel the person to love and to do the good and to avoid evil. It is conscience, which gives one the courage to undertake the entire moral responsibility of an act.

In each man there is a congenital urge to do good and avoid evil. All people have joy while doing good and the guilt feeling and disquiet of mind while doing evil. Thus conscience prompts us to do the good in every kind of life situation.

### **In the Holy Scripture**

The word conscience is used only in the Greek-influenced book ‘Wisdom’ in the Old Testament and that only once (Wisdom 17: 11). The Jews had understood conscience through the word ‘heart’. We can see indirect allusion in the Old Testament in several places to conscience. When the first parents committed sin, their conscience seemed to convict them (Genesis 3) The Old Testament introduces the Ten Commandments as the measuring rod of conscience.

We do not see any word alluding to conscience in the Gospels. But all the Gospel counsels invite to live a life according to conscience.

In the Epistles of St. Paul, conscience is clearly dealt with. He teaches that the foundation of Christian life is to form a genuine conscience.

Paul meets with the soul-inspired conscience in his life situations, which we see in the Gospels: “I am speaking the truth in Christ – I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit. I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart” (Romans 9: 1-2). St. Paul sees conscience as a reckoning, which one makes about one’s own action in the background about the viewpoint of sin, both in the Old and New Testaments. Paul takes pleasure for having fulfilled the job entrusted to him beautifully and according to his conscience (2 Corinthians 1: 12; Acts of the Apostles 23: 1; 24: 16). Here St. Paul is evaluating his own conscience.



St. Paul summons that the gentiles, who have not received the rule of Christ, should discriminate good and evil according to the rule of conscience (Romans 2: 15). He states, those having weak mentality should not be led into sin and not to wound the conscience of others (1 Corinthians 10: 29). He states that virtue and love should spring from good conscience and to reject right conscience is equal to rejecting one's own faith itself.

## **Conscience and Christian Faith**

With regard to a Christian, his faith and conscience are complementary to each other. The foundation of the conscience of a Christian is his Christian faith. Thus, on the basis of faith, the moral and spiritual inspiration, which a person has, can be understood as conscience.

Conscience is not a phenomenon, which is suppressed by faith. On the other hand, faith always promotes the actions of the conscience. With regard to a Christian, to live according to conscience, is the same as to live according to faith (Romans 9: 1). St. Paul advises: 'Faith makes conscience clear and enlightened. Conscience always protects faith. The mystery of faith should be held fast by pure conscience and all should act with faith and good conscience (1 Timothy 1: 19; 3: 9).

## **Good and Evil**

We understood that all people have an internal inspiration to do good and to avoid evil. If so, why is it that a human being does evil? What is the basis why a human being does evil in spite of his knowing it evil? Freedom is a great gift, which God has given to human beings. They have the freedom to choose either good or evil. Since man is weak, tendency towards sin is strong in him/her. The momentary joy and happiness, which one derives while doing evil, persuade one to do evil. Even though one knows that theft and alcoholic drinks are evil, one does them for the momentary pleasure they give. St. Paul describes the mental struggle in human beings between good and evil: "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do" (Romans 7: 19). Thus, the transitory pleasure and happiness continuously persuade us to act against the inspiration of our conscience

and our Christian faith strengthens us to fight against the force of evil and reinforces the voice of our conscience.

## **Conscience, the Voice of God**

We understand conscience as the voice of God. The voice of God, which incessantly inspires human mind to accept the good and to reject evil is in every human being. But with regard to a Christian, who is sanctified by the Holy Spirit through baptism and sealed through the sacrament of confirmation, there will be the presence of the Holy Spirit in the decision of the conscience, St. Paul says: “ My conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit” (Romans 9: 1). With regard to a Christian, who grows in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, there will always be the help of the Holy Spirit in every decision of his/her conscience.

If conscience is the voice of the Spirit of God, the person, who acts according to the dictates of conscience, lives through virtue. That is, the act according to the right conscience and the life through evil, will never go in harmony. Sin is the deviation from God. The right conscience is always God-oriented. As a result of this, the one, who lives according to conscience, experiences tranquillity and peace. The other one experiences dissatisfaction and discord. There are some, who say: “I have acted according to my conscience” after doing visible evil. The problem is whether the conscience of the one, who says so, is formed properly in a Christian manner. Hence, the formation of a Christian conscience is necessary.

## **Formation of Conscience**

The inner call of the mind to embrace good and to avoid evil is innate in all individuals. Just as the mind and intellect become mature as one reaches the age of reason, the conscience also should achieve maturity. The formation of conscience or its maturity is to happen throughout one’s life.

With regard to a Christian believer, his/her conscience should receive maturity from the family environment. Especially, the moral mentality, which a child gets from its parents, brothers and sisters, gradually will form its conscience. The intellect should get the training from early age to differentiate between good and evil. The following will help to form a right Christian

conscience: attendance of catechetical classes, reading of Holy Scripture, prayer and taking part in liturgical services.

Since the human mind is inclined towards evil, there will be in the human mind a continuous instigation to choose evil in order to get temporary good, joy and comfort. Thus, when there will be challenges in the mind, one should have discipline in order to choose always good and to reject evil. When one chooses the good always, that will turn into a good habit. Thus, through choosing the good, our conscience will become mature Christian conscience.

With regard to Christians, there is great importance for the teachings of the Church about faith and morals for the formation of conscience. The faithful should be able to learn always from the early age, the faith and morals of the Church and to gain strength from them. Since the Church has the God-given authority to explain the revelation of God, a believer should live accepting and honouring the teachings of the Church. In this way when one forms conscience in consonance with the faith-life of the Church, that will become the real voice of God. One, who acts in accordance with such conscience, will never act against God or do evil.

## **Best Conscience**

The decisions, made by those who haven't got the right formation of conscience, often go wrong. The influence of selfishness, ignorance of goodness, emotional influences, and the false instigations of others may vitiate the decisions of conscience. Those who desire to safeguard the best or right conscience should strengthen themselves against these possibilities. The good quality of the right conscience is the mature moral attitude formed in accordance with the divine laws, sacred words, teachings of the Church and the natural laws.

First of all, it is necessary to acquire clear knowledge and practice about human and Christian values. Secondly, one should try to clearly understand what is goodness and when there is doubt, one should, make decisions only after clarifying doubts. If there is no possibility for clarifying doubts, having weighed the various values, choose what appears most acceptable. Thirdly, the decision of conscience should be free from the evil influence of

emotions and from the excessive compulsion of law or authority. Fourthly, in order to perpetrate the best conscience, we should seek through prayer the incessant help of the Holy Spirit. Through the actions of the Holy Spirit we will be able to discern selfish interests. Thus, let us try to grow as true followers of Christ, being owners of the best conscience.

### **Worship**

The people of God pray as follows, in the prayer of Sedro of the Holy Qurbono that they may be made worthy to perform virtuous deeds according to the best conscience, standing apart from all evil, which corrupts the human mind:

“Lord, the lover of humankind, come to our midst graciously accepting this incense. Examine our thoughts and remove from us every impurity: deceit, envy, pride, rivalry, revenge, censure, vain words, and fraud, and from every thought, which displeases you. On the other hand, O Lord, being engaged in humility, justice, mercy, peace, and love, make us worthy to stand before your holy sanctuary without any fault or shame” (Order of Holy Qurbono).

### **Life Witness**

Let us try to safeguard the holiness of conscience, to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit through conscience and to act according to the inner inspirations.

### **Memorise**

“I am speaking the truth in Christ- I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit – I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart”  
(Romans 9: 1).

### **Questions**

1. What is meant by conscience?
2. How does the Holy Scripture introduce ‘conscience’?
3. Why is conscience said to be the voice of the Holy Spirit?
4. What is meant by the formation of conscience?
5. What is meant by the best or right conscience?

## PRAYERS

### **Psalms 134, 119, 169, 176, 117**

Barekmor. Bless the Lord, all your servants of the Lord. You, who stand by night in the house of the Lord.

Lift up your hands to the holy place and bless the Lord.

May the Lord bless you from Zion, he who made heaven and earth.

Let my prayers enter before you, Lord, and give me life by your word.

My tongue shall pour forth your word; because all your commands are just.

My lips shall speak your praise when you have taught me your commands; let your hand help me because I have taken pleasure in your commands.

My soul has longed for your salvation and I have meditated on your law.

Let my soul live and I will praise you and your judgments shall help me.

I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek for your servant; because I did not forget your commands.

Praise the Lord, all you nations, praise him all you peoples.

For his grace is strong over us, the Lord is truly forever.

And to you belongs praise, O God.      Barekmor.

### **Chant (Luke 1: 45-55)**

Mary said: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.

Because he has looked upon the lowliness of his handmaid; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

Because he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

And his mercy is from generation to generation on those who fear him.

He has won victory with his arm, he has scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart.

He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and has exalted the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away.

He has given help to Israel his servant, mindful of his mercy, even as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever. Barekmor.

# CATECHISM OF THE SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH

ST. JOHN  
THE EVANGELIST



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