

ORIENTAL INSTITUTE OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES, INDIA

No. 30



INDO-CHALDEAN LITURGY

DR. VARGHESE PATHIKULANGARA

St. Thomas Apost. Seminary, Vadavathoor,
Kottayam 686 010

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Indo-Chaldean Liturgy

Author

Dr. Varghese Pathikulangara
Pontifical Institute of
Theology and Philosophy
Bangalore

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P R E F A C E

Very precious is the treasure, inherent in the Tradition, Liturgy and Life-style of the Thomas Christians of India. Only very few attempts have been made to bring it out. It is really strange to see that many among the Thomas Christians themselves are not conscious of this. The fundamental reason seems to be the ignorance of one's own identity. Since the middle of the 16th century, the leaders of this Church were being trained by the European missionaries. The catechetical instruction, imparted to the community, included only the translation of western text-books; and the Sacred Liturgy, the expression of authentic Christian life, was thoroughly latinized. This sort of 'brain-washing' for more than four centuries destroyed from them even the sense of appreciating their own heritage. Everything western, whether right or wrong, good or bad, has become the best for them. They are even afraid of taking up any initiative, and at the same time desirous to translate anything from the west.

But I have great hope in the younger generation. They show a genuine interest to imbibe the authentic spirit of their church. They know that only by imbibing the authentic spirit they can somehow help the growth of their Church. Theirs is a challenging age. So I wish them a brightest future and full success. It is only to give an insinuation to their inquisitive mind, I have dared to publish this small book. It is the class-notes, I prepared in 1976, to give a course on "Introduction to Sacred Liturgy" in Dharmaram Pontifical Institute of Theology and Philosophy, Bangalore. Of course, I have touched it in some parts; still I have to confess that I could not, due to circumstances, improve it as I wanted to.

The title of the Book is purposely chosen. Indo-Chaldean Church seems to be the most fitting title to the present Syro-Malabar Church. The history of the Thomas Christians shows that it was a Church with all-India jurisdiction. She was ruled by the Metropolitan and Archdeacon, the Gate of all-India. It was after the so-called Synod of Diamper (1599) that this all-India jurisdiction was gradually restricted to the middle regions of present Kerala. Still, the Thomas Christians were known as the 'Syro-Chaldean's of India. They began to be called 'Syro-Malabarians' only after the Rokos and Mellus schisms, perhaps, to show that the Chaldean Church of MiddleEast has no jurisdiction over them. In a letter written to the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda Fide

Congregation by the vicars, parish priests and the faithful of the Syro-Chaldean churches of the vicariates of Trichur, Ernakulam and Changanacherry on March 19, 1899, we read like this: "In addition the above superiors recommended to the sacred congregation of Propaganda, to have the name 'Syro-Chaldean' removed; agreeably to this, the sacred congregation has styled them 'Syro-Malabarites' in the "Missiones Catholique" (cfr. Samuel GIAMIL, Genuinae Relationes inter Sedem Apostolicam et Assyriorum Orientalium seu Chaldaeorum Ecclesiam, Romae 1902, p. 626). Even after this, we see that the first Vicar Apostolic of Ernakulam, Mar Aloysius Pazeparambil, calling himself a priest of the 'Syro-Chaldean Church of Malabar' in a letter written to his Holiness Pope Pius X, on November 1, 1903 ("Ego... sacerdos Indianus ritus Syro-Chaldeo-Malabarici,..." cfr. Mar Aloysius PAZEPARAMBIL, An Account of a very Important Period of the History of the Catholic Syrians of Malabar, Puthenpally 1920; documents, p. 230).

In the 50s of this century, the limited jurisdiction of this Church was a bit expanded to the north and south, and then in the 60s and afterwards, seven Mission dioceses, in different parts of India, were entrusted to her care. In the Papal Bull of erecting the diocese of Tellichery, the Syro-Malabarians are called the 'Chaldeo-Malabarians'. Afterwards we have several Vatican documents with the same title. The President of the Pontifical Commission for Oriental Canon Law codification is entitled as "Metropolita Ernakulamensis Chaldaeorum Malabarensium" (cfr. Nuntia, Cittadel Vaticano 2 (1976) 3). The same is the title given to all the consultants to the same commission from this Church (cfr. Ibid. pp. 8-11).

But now, the Church is again grown up beyond the restricted Malabar territories. We cannot ignore here the case of thousands of her children scattered in different parts of the Indian Republic without their own pastors, only because the latin local ordinaries do not like it. When we take all these facts into consideration, it is quite natural that the present Syro-Malabar Church be called by her original title, the 'Church of all-India' or the 'Church of the Thomas Christians' of India. Still, respecting the feelings of other Churches in India, she may call herself better the Indo-Chaldean Church. The semitic term Chaldee means biblical Syriac or Aramaic (cfr. Oxford Dictionary). It has a religious implication far beyond its relation to any particular place. The

Indo-Chaldeans, therefore, are the Indians who use biblical Syriac as their original liturgical language. This title is the result of my recent researches and I hope that it will be acceptable to both the Indo-Chaldeans and others. Anyhow, in the present work I have often used the term 'Syro-Malabar' to avoid immediate confusion.

I am greatly indebted to my professors in Rome, Profs. Tommaso FEDERICI, Salvatore MARSILI and Placid J. PODIPARA, both to their classes and class-notes, for preparing the present work. I express here my most sincere thanks to them all. My special thanks goes also to The Oriental Institute of Religious Studies India, St. Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Vadavathoor, Kottayam, for taking up the task of publishing it. Again I extend my hearty thanks to my friends, especially, John Punnolil and Sebastian Kizhakkayil who have helped me in the publication of this work.

Finally, I would like to place this humble work before those who love the 'Indo-Chaldean Church', as the first of a series of works on Indo-Chaldean Liturgy, which may come out in course of time. May I hope that it will be helpful and useful to the teachers and students, both in the seminaries and outside.

Rome

January 1, 1979

Fr. Varghese Pathikulangara CMI

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CHAPTER I

A. LITURGY, ITS UNDERSTANDING AT VARIOUS STAGES

The term *Liturgy*, which is today exclusively used in a cultic sense, has a pre-history, connected with its etymology in classical Greek.

Leiturgia is a word composed of two roots, *leit* (= public or pertaining to the people) and *ergon* (= action or work). Thus the composite word has the meaning, work (or action undertaking) for the people. But taking into account of the secondary or shade meaning of the term, it can be also translated as *publicaction* (or work or undertaking). From this comes the meaning of the verbal form, *leiturgein* as the exercise of a public office in the state. The history of the evolution of this term's significance is really interesting.

a. In the Civil Usage

In classical Greek it signifies usually a public service in favour of the people by certain persons, undertaken either freely, due to the love of the country, or being obliged by their social and economical position, or being motivated by the desire of glory or ambition.

There are two types of such liturgy:

1. **Cyclic:** entrusted to certain families in turn—for the whole state or for certain *demos* or districts.
eg. games, feasts etc.
2. **Extraordinary:** being compelled by particular circumstances such as war, epidemic etc. It extends generally to the duration of such circumstances.

Note: Cyclic liturgies were very often a source of squandering wealth to show one's own richness and glory (Aristotle, *Politica* 5, 8).

In the Hellenistic age the term *leiturgia* stands for an obligatory service of work such as:

- imposed on certain communities or categories of people; or
- obliged by the advantages received from the state; or
- as punishment imposed for eventual revolt against the authority of the state.

This sense is evolved first in Egypt during the reign of Ptolemeis (2nd cent. B. C.), and was in vigour also during the Roman Empire.

Besides this original technical sense, it acquires a very wider sense during this period of evolution, i.e., a service in general:

- either burdensome as that of the servant to the master; or
- benevolent and voluntary because of the pleasure in doing something.

Note: Here the *public* character of the term liturgy fades to be lost.

b. In Cultic and Religious Usage

In the Hellenistic age, the term appears also in the cultic and religious sphere, but less frequent than in the political and civil sphere; and it signifies 'the service that ought to be rendered to gods by deputed persons'.

This meaning may be compared with the original meaning of the term— the public action— and hence can reveal the public value of the religious rite. In course of time the public and official sense of the term is rather ignored and the popular sense became more and more recognised. Thus the use of the term *liturgy* in the political and civil spheres disappeared and in religious sphere it acquired a new technical sense— 'the cultic service due to God'. It can be both public and private, burdensome and voluntary. It is this new technical sense of the term liturgy that is assumed by both Old and New Testaments.

c. In the S. Scriptures

In Old Testament the term Liturgy is used about 170 times as verb, substantive or adjective. It is the Septuagint (LXX) translator who uses this term for the first time. The Hebrew text of OT uses two terms to express this idea of service:

Sheret expresses the basic sense of service— service more affective and unconditional from the part of the servant and more of fidelity from the part of the master. It expresses rather the internal attitude of service.

'*abhad* (and the substantive '*abhodah*) expresses burdensome services as that of a slave to his master and shows the material aspect of the work. Hence it expresses more or less the external attitude of service.

Whatever be the service, profane or religious, the author of the Hebrew Bible uses these terms with the above mentioned consistence of meaning.

But the Septuagint translator has made a conscious selection of various Greek terms in translating these two Hebrew words. He uses consistently the term *leiturgia* or its verbal form, when it refers to the cult rendered to Yahweh by priests and levites. On the contrary he uses the term *latría* or *dulia* or their verbal forms, when it is the cult rendered to Yahweh by the people.

Hence in Septuagint, the term *liturgy* attains a new technical meaning, i.e., the levitical cult according to the ceremonies fixed by the Books of the Law and reserved to the particular category of people.

It is not easy to find out the reasons why the Septuagint translator has furnished the term *liturgy* with all the splendour of Hebrew official cult.

1. The Septuagint would not have thought of returning to the classical sense of the Greek composite word; for, we do not find the term acquiring the sense, "an action for the people". Only once it is said that the cult rendered by the levites to God is for the people of Israel (Num. 16,9), and there the term used is the verbal form of *latría*.
2. The fact that the Septuagint translation was done in Alexandria of Egypt, where the term *liturgy* was generally understood as "an obligatory service of work", may not have induced this selection. If it were so, the translator must have used it only to translate '*abhodah*' which means for the Israelites "an obligatory service of work".
3. It may not be also to imitate and assimilate the technical and cultic sense it had in the paganism of the time, because the Septuagint translation is anterior to pagan classical written testimonies. Moreover, the translation was done at a time when there was strong opposition to all kind of hellenistic infiltration to Hebrew religion.
4. Hence we may conclude that the Septuagint had unified in one term *leiturgia*, the two terms *sheret* and '*abhodah*' which are only partially synonymous (namely, the idea of service), the first expressing the interior attitude of service and the second principally the action of service. It uses the term *leiturgia* not to indicate cult in general, nor the cult of Yahweh in particular; but as a special term adapted to indicate the mode of cult practised by the priests and levites of Israel. It sees the term *leiturgia* in a special light—a term worthy and capable of expressing everything ritual in one word:

- (a) the *cultic action* with which God is served, and only He in His tent, in His temple, and on His altar;
- (b) the *performers* of this cult, i.e., men specially destined to it by divine election;
- (c) the *unicity* of a cult destined to God, the only true God, is also one and true because it is regulated by unforeseen divine norms.

In other words, they have selected the term *leiturgia* because it could show in a better way the cult of Yahweh, according to an exterior form divinely established and joined to the levitical priesthood, namely, a category higher and more noble than the others, of the people of Israel. Note well the original nobility of the term *leiturgia* in classical Greek, which gave this inspiration.

In New Testament, the term *leiturgia* appears only 15 times in all its forms:

1. in the profane sense: Rom. 13,6; Phil. 2,25.30; 2Cor.9,12, Rom. 15, 27; Heb. 1,7.14.
2. in the sacerdotal and ritual sense of OT: Lk. 1,23; Heb. 8,2.6; 9,21; 10,11.
3. in the sense of spiritual cult: Rom. 15, 16; Phil. 2,17.
4. in the sense of christian ritual: Acts. 13,2.

Interpreters and commentators are divided in opinion on the only text in NT, *Acts 13,2*, which expresses the christian sense of *leiturgia*: "While they were *worshipping* the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said".

Authors like L. Cerfaux, J. Renie and others say that this text in NT, refers precisely to the new christian liturgy and principally to the Eucharistic celebration.

Some others like A. Romeo, A. Wickenhauser and so on, say that it precisely refers to a specific christian liturgical celebration, but not sure to the Eucharist itself.

According to Strathmann and others, we have in this particular text something remarkable of NT language. The novelty is in applying a word, which was exclusively used in OT to the levitical cult, to the prayer of the christian community—a cult purely christian and spiritual.

Each of these opinions has its own value. The text itself does not affirm in what consisted the liturgy. Whether this qualification is a positive or negative note for the christian cult is yet to be explained. Of course in the primitive christian cultic reunions of Antioch, there were no Israelite

priests; yet it is known by the technical term of Israelite sacerdotal cult. Is it to show that the christian cult is a continuation of Israelite cult or called so by analogy? Comparing Acts. 13,2 with Heb. 8,2,6, we may conclude in favour of the former.

d. Transition from OT to NT

It is not casual nor without significance that *leiturgia* appears only once in NT to indicate the cultic celebration of the Christian community. We have already seen how, liturgy as the levitical form of cult failed to indicate the interior attitude of cult and the cult of the people as such.

Until the establishment of the tribe of Levi as a caste set apart for the cult of Yahweh, the Septuagint has not used the term *leiturgia*, even when it was precisely explaining sacrifice, a sacerdotal act par excellence. This is very significant. The Septuagint interpreter sees the *Exodus* as a liberation of Israel from the slavery of idolatry in Egypt and as a passage to the faith in the love of Yahweh, to honour Him and render Him cult (service) "hearing His voice and observing His covenant" (Ex.19,5); or "loving and giving cult to the Lord, its God with all its heart and with all its soul" (Deut. 10, 12). So doing Israel becomes "the people of God, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex.19,6). Israel is thus called to a spiritual cult. It is not the external sacrifice of animals and birds that He asks (Ps.50,5-13) but an internal sacrifice a sacrifice of thanksgiving (Ps. 50,14). Only by hearing His voice and observing His commands that Israel can stand as His people (Jer. 7,22-23; Amos. 5, 25). The external sacrifices have any meaning only when they are united with the internal sentiments of love and thanksgiving, of repentance and conversion (Pss. 50-51).

But the people of Israel, under the influence of the surrounding religions and cultures practically denied their vocation as priestly people to a spiritual cult. Here appears the priestly caste with their external ceremonies of cult, as a symbol to substitute the spiritual cult of the people to be expressed by the sanctity of their life.

This false *liturgico-sacerdotal* concession, identified with the temple of Jerusalem is partly destroyed by the long period of exile. Thus the people could understand better the words of the prophets: "I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice; the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings" (Hos.6,6) The result is the cultic spiritualism and the erection of synagogues in several places.

It is in this atmosphere that Jesus Christ comes as the last of those who are sent by God (Mt. 21, 33-34). His discourse

on the destruction of the temple (Jn. 2,18-21) shows that the time for spiritual cult is at hand. It is no more bound with the institution of temple priesthood of Jerusalem or Garizim (Jn. 4,19-26).

Thus in New Testament, the term *leiturgia* acquires a new meaning - *the spiritual cult of the christian community*- replacing the Old Testament meaning of levitical external cult.

Note: In the postapostolic Church, the term liturgy indicates "the rite of christian cult". *Didache* 15,1 speaks: 'the Bishops and deacons do the same liturgy as that of the prophets and doctors'. But the priesthood in NT is understood quite differently from that of OT. *I Clement to Corinthians* says: 'liturgy indicates the cultic action of the bishops, priests and deacons; but it may also stand for the rite prescinding from the person and thus we may also say, the divine liturgy, the liturgy of Baptism, the evening liturgy and so on'.

In the East, the term *leiturgia* was kept in use all through the centuries and was understood without any further explanation. In the West, on the contrary, the term was forgotten for many centuries. The only author who knows the term *leiturgia* in its cultic sense is St. Augustine, but of course identified with the significance of *latria*: "Ministerium vel servitium religionis, quae in graece liturgia vel latria dicitur" (PL. 37,1757).

It was in the 16th century, due to Renaissance, that the West came in contact with the Greek sources and thus began to understand the cultic significance of the *leiturgia*. But in the official ecclesiastical language of the Latin Church this appears only in the 19th century with Pope Gregory XVI, *Inter Gravissimas*, 1832; and becomes a common term only by Pius X, *Inter Sollicitudinis*, 1903. By Vatican II, the term acquires again the spiritual attitude it had at the time of New Testament.

B TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF SACRED LITURGY

At the very outset we have to distinguish between Liturgy and Liturgiology. Liturgy is the very act of worship, while Liturgiology is the scientific study on sacred liturgy. Similarly the liturgist is the celebrant of very liturgical celebration, while one who is well versed in the scientific study of sacred liturgy is called the liturgiologist. It is from this elementary knowledge that we have to search into the concept of sacred liturgy itself.

Liturgy is not a concept that can be easily defined. If we look into the history of liturgy, we do not find an effort

in the East to define it; for, it was always self-evident to the Easterners. In the West, on the contrary, we see a united effort to define this concept. As we have seen, the term liturgy was introduced rather late in the Western Church. So, naturally they tried their best to define and understand this concept. Moreover, the Western mind used to the Roman legalism and Greek philosophical distinctions, could not but analyse and define whatever happened to come in their way.

There had been so many definitions so proposed. According to Jean Navatal, "liturgy is but the purely sensible, ceremonial and decorative part of Catholic worship" (1). It seems that he is content with mere external celebration. He could not understand the real significance of liturgical symbolism. For C. Callewaert, "liturgy is the ecclesiastical regulations of the exercise of public worship" (2). His attempt is to limit liturgy into mere rubrics. Emile Mersch goes a bit deeper. He says that "liturgy is the sacred context given to the Saviour's Sacrifice" (3). Still his definition is defective in so far as he could not bring out the real involvement of the community in such celebrations. The majority of the theologians and liturgiologists define liturgy as the public worship of the church (4).

It was Odo Cassel, the German Benedictine, and his *mysterium* school who began to think of liturgy from a different angle. "Liturgy, for him, is the ritual accomplishment of the redemptive work of Christ in and through the Church" (5). It is "a holy ritual action in which a salvific act is made present and brings salvation for the worshipping community which participates in it" (6). This line of thought was given great emphasis in all later explanations of Sacred liturgy both official and unofficial.

Here we may quote certain passages from the famous Encyclical *Mediator Dei* of Pope Pius XII to have a clearer understanding of what sacred liturgy is. "It is an error and a mistake to think of the sacred Liturgy as merely outward or visible part of divine worship or as an ornamental ceremonial" (Para. 25). "No less erroneous is the notion that it consists solely in a list of laws and prescriptions according to which the ecclesiastical hierarchy orders the sacred rites to be performed" (Para. 25). "Worship rendered by the Church to God must be in its entirety, interior as well as exterior. It must also be exterior because the nature of man as a composite of body and soul requires it to be so. ... Divine Providence has disposed that while we recognise God visibly, we may also be

drawn by him to love things unseen. Every impulse of the human heart expresses itself naturally through the senses" (Para. 23).

"But the chief element of liturgy must be interior.... Otherwise religion clearly amounts to formalism, without meaning and without content" (Para 24). "It should be clear to all, then, that God cannot be honoured worthily unless the mind and heart turn to him in quest of the perfect life" (Para 26). "The sacred liturgy is the public worship which our Redeemer as head of the Church renders to the Father, as well as the worship which the community of the faithful renders to its founder and through him to the heavenly Father. In short, it is the public worship rendered by the mystical body of Christ in entirety of its Head and members" (Para. 20).

Vatican II also gives us clear norms for liturgical worship in the Church. All through the constitution on Sacred Liturgy we can read such things. We may quote here only a few passages: "Liturgy is the outstanding means by which the faithful can express in their lives, and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church. It is of the essence of the Church that.... Day by day the liturgy builds up those within the Church into the Lord's holy temple, into a spiritual dwelling for God (Eph 2,21-22), an enterprise which will continue until Christ's full stature is achieved (Eph. 4.13). At the same time the liturgy marvelously fortifies the faithful in their capacity to preach Christ. To outsiders the liturgy thereby reveals the Church as a sign raised above the nations..." (Para. 2). "The liturgy is the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the foundation from which all power flows" (Para. 10).

Finally, I would like to give a provisional explanation of Sacred Liturgy, taking into account all the official and unofficial definitions and explanations mentioned above. *Liturgy may be said to be the authentic, official and communal response to the call of God.* Bible as the call of God and Liturgy as the human response to this call, is yet to be explained in the following chapter on Bible and Liturgy. Still, I would like to give a summary explanation of the terms I have employed to explain the liturgy. By saying *authentic* I mean that it is a fully conscious and personal action. It is a human action par excellence. All the external and internal human faculties are to be fully involved in every act of liturgical celebration. By the term *official* I

mean that every liturgical prayer, being an action of the Church, must be approved by the legal teaching authority of the Church. The norms for such official approval, we have in the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy no. 22 and in the Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches nos. 19 to 23. *Communal* means that it must be an action of the whole Church. It must be a community founded on an Apostolic Christ-experience and every member of that apostolic community is to be involved directly or indirectly in every liturgical celebration. Two or three individuals gathered together to share their own life-experiences can never claim to be the true form of the Church. Of course there may be the Lord among their midst, if they are gathered together in the name of the Lord. It is because of this emphasis on the communal aspect that the holy Mysteries were sent even to the absent members in the primitive Church. By adding *the call of God* I mean the sum total of Revelation i. e., the call of God extended to us through the revelation of God, the call of salvation addressed to us both through the S. Scriptures and the Tradition. In short, the Sacred Liturgy is the authentic involvement and participation of the man of today in the mystery of Christ and in the history of salvation.

Notes

1. Jean NAVATAL, L'Apostolat liturgique et la piété personnelle, Etudes 137 (1913) 452.
2. C. CALLEWAERT, Liturgicae Institutiones I : De Sacra liturgia Universim, Bruges 1933, p.6.
3. Emile MERSCH, Prière de cretiens, prière de membres, Nouvelle revue théologique 58 (1931) 100.
4. L. Beauvain, J. Brun, J. Hanssens, M. Righetti, J. Jungmann etc.
5. Odo CASSEL, Mysteriengegenwart, JLW 8(1928) 145.
6. ID., Mysterienfrommigkeit, Bonner Zeitschrift für Theologie und Seelsorge 4(1927) 104.

CHAPTER II

BIBLE AND LITURGY

The salvation history can be summarised into two precise concepts – the Bible and the Liturgy. Bible is the written Word of God – it is the divine call to man. Liturgy on the other hand, is the positive human response to the divine call. Hence the christian life is basically an uninterrupted, efficacious and vital exchange between God and man. The primordial and perfect organ of this vital exchange is the Divine Word. The origin and source of this vital exchange is the creative initiative of God. What man can is either to respond to it by accepting it in faith or to refuse it in infidelity and enmity.

A. The Divine Call in the History

“In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets” (Heb. 1,1). Thus the New Testament resumes the past history of the Divine Word.

Note the importance given to the word *laléo*, which means to speak or to communicate. In fact, God communicates the salvation to be accomplished through His Word, *dabar*, the active, dynamic and efficacious Word of God. It is the most important form of divine communication and the Lord does not communicate except in concrete forms, i.e., the Lord conceives, communicates and actualises it simultaneously.

Bene L. Ramlot in his article *Prophétisme* in DBS 8(1971) 1215, explains the original meaning of the word *dabar* as to communicate. from which follows the derivative meaning ‘to bring to effect’, and hence to create. For the creative power of the Word of God, cfr. Prov. 12,25; 18,20, Pss. 33, 9; 107, 20; Jer. 4. 28; Is. 46, 10-11; Ez. 17, 24; 22, 14; 36, 36; 37, 14. The theology of the sacerdotal school (P) in Gen. 1, 1-31 has got the same understanding of the Word of God. Thus the Lord, while speaks, creates; because the divine revelation in its essence is constituted of gestures and words (*gestis verbisque*). This fact was so much forgotten in western dogmatism; but today clearly defined in *Dei Verbum*, the constitution on Divine Revelation of Vatican II, nos. 1-2.

This efficacious divine word permeates all through the history of the world. The world itself and its history is an *action-word*, or actions explained, or efficacious elucidations against which the word executes all its designs: to create, to

save, to effect communion within the people of God, to proclaim, to threaten, to punish and to pardon. The transcendental and all the more mysterious essence is that the word goes around each and every man, so that there may be the possibility of discerning it from the rest and of entering in profound relation with the Lord. It is the word informing, but it has already scrutinized the confines of human reality in its totality. "Before they call, I will answer; while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Is. 65, 24; cfr. also Mt. 6, 8; and Jn. 16, 26).

In every preannouncement, there is always an historical sign. Let us analyse two texts, morphologically similar, the call of Moses and the birth of Jesus:

Ex. 3, 12: The Lord said: "But I will be with you (Emmanuel = God with us); and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought forth the people out of Egypt you shall serve (adore) God upon this mountain". In *Ex. 4, 31*, we have the factual verification of this sign: "And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the people of Israel (*Bnai Israel* = Sons of Israel) and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped". Note well the final cultic and liturgical gesture in response to the word accepted in faith.

Finally in *Ex. 14, 31ff.*, the grip of conscience in front of the Pascal Event explodes in choral form. Here we understand the importance of hymns in liturgical celebrations. These versicles are to be explored word by word: "And Israel saw the great work which the Lord did against the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord; and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses". Note the historical and psychological evolution of faith - they saw (and understood), feared and believed. The fear of the Lord confirms the attachment in faith and induces to turn to God in cultic gestures.

Lk. 1, 26-38: Mary welcomes the word of the Lord (v.38) with all humility and submission - the word of the "Lord, who is with you" (v.28 - Emmanuel). The great sign here, is the birth of Jesus, Son of the most High (v.32) by the work of the Holy Spirit.

In *Lk. 2, 8-20*, we have the culmination of this event. The word communicated through the angel of the Lord indicates a sign: "you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger" (v.12); and the shepherds hasten to under-

stand the word, the word-event, made known to them (v.15). Also here we have the liturgical ending: "the shepherds returned *glorifying and praising God* for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them" (v.20). But already in vv. 13-14 the cultic gesture of the heavenly choir is expressed.

In the Old Testament, the Word even when it is addressed to individuals, it has only one destination, the community. Moses, prophets, priests, are all bearers of this word, not as private individuals, but as the representatives of the people. The people in their turn are to respond to it with all their ability and life.

Always this response assumes a dynamic liturgical gesture. It is true in the case of Moses - the covenant on Mount Sinai (Ex. 24,7ff.): Moses reads the Book of the Covenant; the people accepts it, and then it is signed by the liturgical gesture, the sprinkling of the blood of the covenant (v.8). It is also true in the case of the priests in the renewal of the covenant (Neh. chs. 8-10). The Psalms are also some forms of such response of the community, which in their turn have become Word of God to the future generations. In *Deut. 26*, the response to the Word assumes the form of a profession of faith (vv. 5b-9); and of distributing fruits of earth to the poor among the people of God - levites, strangers, orphans, widows etc.

Finally, the insistence with which the Lord urged the prophets to speak out his word is to be specially noted. The prophets are *word-bearers*; whether they will or not they had to speak out. In *Is 6,9-13*, the Lord entrusts the prophet with a word of ruin, which is to be proclaimed. There the salvation comes only to a qualified minority, *the Remnant*, who responded to it. It is the *Holy Seed*, the effect of the Word of God. The Word, which is the cause of ruin to those who reject it, is at the same time extremely beneficial to those who accepts it. Thus in *Ez. 37,1-14*, it transforms the prophet and the people alike. It resuscitates a dead people (i.e., impure, idolatrous and corrupt in all possible ways), to bring them to their fatherland as a living army.

The same biblical text, we quoted in the beginning, *Heb.1,1-2* gives orientation also to the New Testament theology of the Word. In the days of old, God spoke to our fathers through the prophets in many and various ways; but today, in these last days, there is only one way and He speaks directly to us through his only Son. The parallelism here is

a growing one both in time and in ways; in eschatology and in person. The word *latéō* stands here in aorist tense. It shows that the action is ultimate, irreversible and eschatological. The vv. 2b-4 narrate the qualities with which the Son is adorned.

Thus in New Testament, Christ presents himself as the Word, the Power, the Dynamism, the Wisdom and the Person of God in the Holy Spirit. He presents himself as the revealer of the Father, and finally as the only donor of the Spirit of the Father.

Any analysis of the New Testament economy of the Word must start from *2Cor. 13,14*: from the grace of Christ, there follows the love of the Father and thus we reach the communion of the Holy Spirit.

a. **The Lord Jesus:** He is the *dabar, logos, rhema melà* of the Father in the Spirit. He is the only Word of the Father to men as a community. He is the only bond and the only means of communication, which the Father allows in these last days between God and man. He is the mediator, himself being God, brings God to man and man to God through himself. He himself is the reality and the content of God's communication to man. His work is to be continued in this world up to the consumation of time and history by the Holy Spirit.

He is the Word in action, unfolding all his powers. Not only he is an efficacious word, but he is the exclusive efficacious word. "Without me you can do nothing" (Jn. 15,5); and those who have not yet received the word are inert and lifeless.

This Word of God, that exists in eternity in the bosom of the Father (Jn. 1,1-20-14,18), is now sent to and comes to the world and to all men. He wishes to be understood and to be accepted by all (Jn. 1,10-12,16). The exclusive finality is not his own glory, though every law is always dependent on him (Jn. 1,17), but the glory of the Father and to bring back everything to the Father, giving freely to all the Spirit of the Father (Jn. chs. 14-16).

It is for this that the Word was incarnated. He assumed the horrible concrete human weight in its historical, biological and social dimensions, in order to transform it. He alone can do that, because he is the sole source of life for man (Jn. 7,37-39). He is the only light of the world, which illuminates everything in the world, or according to the Oriental imagination, which gives life to everything (Jn. 8,12). Light in Oriental conception always means life.

Christ, therefore, is really the divine Word in its true form of communication. He is the centre of communication in between God and man. Properly speaking, in this humanity, he has responded "yes" to the Father and his salvific will, keeping his intimate communication with Godhead; and at the same time he has responded "yes" to the mortal necessity of man at all times, incapable of saving itself from evil, pain death and sin. The crucial moment, of this communication is his supreme sacrifice, where this "yes" to the Father and to men becomes one single "yes" of love by the work of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 9,14). What happens in the Eucharistic Liturgy is this double "yes" or double communication or double communion—the communion of the divine word with the Father and with the Church. Lord Jesus (God-man), who offers himself eternally in sacrifice to the Father, himself is communicated to the community in sacrifice the Holy Spirit.

b. The Father: The Father whom we adore in the liturgy is the one revealed by Christ in the Holy Spirit during his earthly life and above all in his Resurrection. It is the Father who sends the Word and the Holy Spirit in his own initiative and it is he who communicates himself to men through them. This he does because of his desire to 'stand with men' (Emmanuel). Already in Old Testament, the divine Wisdom announces to men that he desires to be with them, to teach them the divine reality and to suffer with them (Wis. 9,10).

In New Testament, we meet only with four contexts where the Father speaks directly to us. They are also very precise. (1) At Jesus' Baptism in Jordan: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Mt. 3,17). (2) During the Transfiguration: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased, listen to him" (Mt. 17,5). (3) The third context is prayer of Jesus at the temple of Jerusalem, at the end of a discourse on his suffering, evoked by Philip and Andrew, who wanted to bring some of the Greeks to Jesus. The answer to the prayer to glorify his name was, "I have glorified it, and I will glory it again" (Jn. 12,28). This is interpreted by biblical theologians as a Johannine composition of his experience during the Transfiguration, agony in the garden and Resurrection, (4) Finally at the end of time (at the eschatological end), the Father announces: "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21,5). In the resurrected Christ, in the gift of the Holy Spirit and in the liturgical context of the feast of Tabernacles, the Father

has pascalised the whole reality, both celestial and terrestrial realising fully the promises of old (Is. 43,19; cfr. also v 18; 65, 17 cfr. also v. 16). St. Paul has proclaimed it several times in his Churches: 'Everything old has now disappeared and is forgotten and the father has recreated everything in Christ and in the Holy Spirit. (Gal. 6,15; Rom. 8,1.10; Eph 2,10.15; Col. 3,9-10)

It is the Father who speaks always, but only through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. He speaks directly to men only four times and they were to present the Son and his works to men as well as to show his special delight on the person of the Divine Word. Similarly, our prayers are responded always through the Son and in the Holy Spirit. Due to the eternal power of Christ's sacrifice, he is the authentic witness of God to men (Rev. 1,5; 3,14), and the divine liturgy is the authentic forum of Divine and human response.

c. The Holy Spirit: In Liturgy, the Holy Spirit is not to be considered according to the dry terms metaphysical procession, but as the spirit of the Revelation, made accessible and operative in every day life of the community. He is the Spirit of sanctity (Rom. 1,4) and of the divine truth (Jn. 14,17; 15,26; 16,13; 1Jn. 4,6). According to the word of our Lord, only the Spirit can produce effect to the Word of Revelation, which includes acts and words. Already in Old Testament, we see the priest-prophet calling on the Holy Spirit to render the word of God effective (Ez. 37,1-14)

In New Testament, he appears as the one who renders the messianic works and teachings and also the very sacrifice of Christ effective (Lk. 3,22; 4,1.14.18; 11,20). It is he who raised our Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 1,4; 8,11).

He gives Christ himself and is indicated as the one who makes effective the salvific sacramentality of the Church, instituted by Christ: Jn. 3,5 = Baptism; Jn. 6,63 = Eucharist; Jn. 7,37-39 = probably Eucharist and Baptism; Jn. 20,22-23 = Remission of sins.

It was the explicit faith of the primitive Church that no one can have the gift of baptismal faith but by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12,3) and without the Spirit neither Baptism nor Eucharist can have any effect (1 Cor. 12,13).

In short, it is in the Holy Spirit, in the Spirit of the Father, in the Spirit of Christ resurrected, that we see in synthesis every event of the divine economy. Thus, in him is the sending of Christ by the Father; in him Christ fulfills his

mission and the perfect will of the Father (Heb. 9,14); only he can work out the *koinonia*, the unity of the Church (2 Cor. 13,13 Phil. 2,1); only in him and through him can one proclaim the word in liturgy and in the apostolic missions (Acts. 13,1-3) only in him can one read and understand fully the meaning of the Scriptures (2 Cor. 3,12-18); only by the power of the Spirit can man be renewed and prompted to respond to the Word of God; only he can give origin to the liturgy of the Church and it is he who is operative in the liturgical celebrations of the Sacraments, and only in him can one fulfill the liturgical reality (Eph. 6,20); and finally, only he, who unites to himself the whole Church, in order to bring her to her spouse, can fully consummate this liturgical reality: "The Spirit and the Bride say, come" (Rev. 22,17); "Amen, come Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22,20).

Thus in short, in the Liturgy of the community, the Word of New Testament appears as: the supreme initiative of the Father who sends, of the Son who comes, and of the Spirit who gives ultimate effect to everything; the proclamation of the Father continually depending on the Son and being rendered effective by the Holy Spirit; the perennial proclamation of the love of the Father for his Son, and in the Son for all men without exception. For this the Father has sent his Spirit, his life, over the Son and men in community; the universal vocation of men to live such love in community. The death and resurrection of Christ has obtained this divine unity of the Spirit of God to all men.

B. The Church as the Necessary Mediatrix of the Word

Our analysis of the New Testament theology of the Word, makes it clear that the Word and the Spirit works immediately in the community of the faithful and through the community in the individual.

It is the great and inevitable law of divine initiative that there should be a human mediator between God and man. Any Christian who makes a reflection on his faith, understands this mediator as Christ himself. Much less self-evident or clear is the fact that the *Church*, with Christ and after Christ, is the necessary and inevitable mediatrix of the Word, the privileged place of contact that the divine Word demands from the faithful. It is this great law that constitutes really the community as *ekklesia*, i. e., as the sole depository of the Word (note that depository does not mean (disposer); as the sole mediatrix and dispenser of the Word, except for

the directions of the Holy Spirit, who 'blows where he wills'. It signifies that the ultimate meaning of the Scriptures will be understood only in the community of the Church, the body of Christ; as the sole object, which in the power of the divine Word is continuously gathered together by the work of the Holy Spirit.

This great law confers many duties too to the community in faith: the duty to proclaim and witness to the Word. It is the duty not only of her ministers, but also of each one of the community – the proclamation and witnessing to the Word, both within the community and in the missions; secondly the duty to celebrate this Word as the Mystery, by now rendered accessible to men for their salvation. The content of this celebration is the reconciliation with God and the unity among men, gained by the blood of Christ. It is the central theme of the Epistle to Ephesians and the predominant reflection in the whole Pauline writings. It is already proclaimed to the world and the Church is the living organism of such obligatory proclamation of salvation. It has its beginning, progress and culmination in the Eucharist of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Even the Apostles, who were the depositaries and interpreters of the Scriptures, do never act alone without their community. If we read *Rom. 16* attentively, we can understand how St. Paul salutes his collaborators in the apostolate of the Word – without them, he thinks, it was very difficult to proclaim the Word. The four Gospel narrations on the apparitions of the resurrected Christ, and then that in *I Cor. 15,5-9*, show clearly how Jesus himself gives accent to the community as the depositary and witness to his Resurrection. Even when Peter or John, Magdalene or James, or the two to Emaus is mentioned, always the object of revelation is the twelve or all the disciples. Paul himself looks to the Mother Church at Jerusalem to compliment to the personal revelation he got directly from the Lord. Thus the great law of the necessary human mediation obliges the community to proclaim the Word and to proclaim it fully. With this understanding, let us read the emblematic text of *Gal. 1,6-10*.

C. The Human Response

a. **The Word Postulates the Liturgy:** The divine word is *kerygma*, the proclamation to men, a proclamation both divine and human. Man, in his turn can accept it or refuse it. If he accepts it, it becomes the living, vital and definitive instrument of divine embrace.

This acceptance of the *kerygma*, both for one's own sake and in favour of others, happens always in a liturgical context: here, the liturgical response to the Word is Word itself, which turns to God as invocation, profession of faith, pledge of communion and expression of love, received and exchanged.

In Old Testament, the liturgy of response to the Word, is first of all seen in the historical context of the call of the prophets. In *Ex. 3, 12*, the acceptance of the Word by which the Lord proclaims himself as the God of the Fathers and actual Liberator, signifies to render worship to the Lord in the very place of revelation. *Sinai*, In *1 Sam 3, 1-18*, the call of Samuel, which is to change the whole face of Israel, happens in the mystery of the night, within the sanctuary of Siloh, which protects the arc of the covenant for the people of Israel. In *1 King. 22.13-18*, the prophet Michea receives his call during the vision of heavenly sanctuary, where the Lord in his throne receives adoration of the heavenly bands. Amos as the centre of his prophetic call has the schismatic sanctuary of Bethel, where the priesthood is corrupt and where still the living God is adored.

Isaiah receives his call in the context doubly liturgical: he stands in the temple of Jerusalem, officiating a liturgy, and he sees the heavenly liturgy, officiated by the Seraphims to the Lord in correspondence and together with that of men. In heaven one of the most supreme attributes is proclaimed with *Trisagion*. The Seraphims exclaim the divine glory with *Qandis*... It exhibits the infinite divine sanctity, the fulness of his sanctity in front of which the poor man, the young prophet, feels himself to be a miserable sinner to be in need of pardon and grace.

Jeremiah, the priest-prophet, opens his ministry within and against the temple which does not and cannot save the people, threatened by the neighbouring enemies, the Babylonians; only the Lord and that too when turned towards him, can save the people. In his painful Lament, after the torture and imprisonment inflicted by the head of the temple, the priest *Pashhur bar-Immer* (*Jer 20,1-2*), Jeremiah recalls that his prophetic call is the liturgical proclamation of the name of the Lord (*Jer. 20,7-10*), and that it has become impossible now, because of the suffering and aversion. Anyhow, the prophet cannot but render adoration and praise to the Lord, who knows everything and does justice to all (*Jer. 20,13*).

In New Testament, the proclamation of salvation is also a call. We have already analysed the typical text of *Lk.2,8-20*, where we have a double liturgical context, expressed almost in the same words: (1) The *angels* were praising (*ainéo*) God and were proclaiming glory (*doxa*) to God in the highest.. (v. 14). (2) The *Shepherds* glorifying and praising.. (*doxazo* and *ainéo*, v.20).

In the Book of Revelation (*passim*), to all proclamation, which is also a universal call to men for conversion (*metanoia*) of heart from evil doings, corresponds a liturgy in heaven; moreover, without this liturgy none of the last events happen. Besides, the whole context of Apocalypse, which always is of prophecy, of proclamation, of witnessing, is also liturgical and eucharistic: the visions take place "on the day of the Lord" (Rev. 1,10), and are sealed by the communitarian celebration of the Eucharist of the Lord.

b. The Divine Amen: As we have seen already, the personal divine Word, the *melta* of God, is also the *Amen*, which the Son pronounces irreversibly to the Father in the Holy Spirit, and also to men by the power of the same Spirit. Therefore, when the community responds its *Amen* to the Word, it must also be sure that Christ, man and God, has responded to the Father and has obtained through himself and through the Holy Spirit the sanctity and the power, without which no profession of faith or liturgy is possible (1 Cor. 12,3).

c. The Stages of Human Response: We can distinguish between different stages in the human response to the Word. They are true, vital and permanent conditions or states of life. Each of them may include the others implicitly, and often they are complementary to each other. In the sacramental economy of the New Testament, they are conversion of heart, faith, baptism and the eucharist. Other dispositions and other sacraments are only compliments to these four.

The Conversion: Conversion or repentance or return or penitence is the most primitive effect and fruit of the Word heard, accepted and obeyed. We consider here, three important texts of New Testament, at three important moments of revelation, to understand clearly the relevance of conversion in responding to the Word heard. They are: (1) the eschatological preaching of John the Baptist (Mk. 1, 4-5); (2) the first discourse of our Lord (Mk. 1,14-15); and (3) the pentecostal preaching of St. Peter at Jerusalem (Acts. 2, 38-39). We are not going to give an exegesis of these texts, because they are evident and clear by themselves.

Conversion is the true openness to God and it is a necessary factor for every liturgical celebration. In fact, without such a permanent state of life, it is impossible to have a true prayerful approach to God. It is the immediate, unconditional and irreversible remorse over individual and collective sins and imperfections (Rev. chs. 2- 3); it is the real will to die for the past and perishable, and more concretely, to turn away from the present real and sinful existence. Thus the directions of conversion are fourfold: (1) *To Return to God*: the personal or collective sin is fundamentally a separation from God; hence the first trait of real conversion is the re-entrance into the communion with God. (2) *To Return to Himself*: each and every sin brings in a horrible separation within one's own personality; this wound is also healed by real conversion. (3) *To Return to the Nearest*: through every sin we are putting on a mask before our neighbours and we are really deceiving them; by true conversion we open ourselves to our neighbours. (4) *To Return to the World*: we are to be the real images of God in the world; the whole world has to reach the Lord through man; by every sin man fails to do his duty towards the world; conversion rectifies this disorder (Rom. 8,19-25).

The Faith: Once man turns away from his real present situation, he has to commit himself to something or somebody else. In our case, it is a commitment to the Supreme Good, and this unconditional commitment to the Lord, we call the faith. *Mk. 1,15* really speaks of this natural consequence of repentance: 'The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel'. The marvellous sequence, both biblical and liturgical, of the proclamation of the Word of God and the personal commitment to it, we have well explained in *Rom. 10,8-17*.

The faith has a dimension vaster than generally conceived and thought of. It is because of its double dimension; it turns to God and to men. Only when we consider the different psychological phases involved in this permanent state of faith, that we understand its double dimension clearly. Conviction, trust, obedience, fidelity, fear of God with generous love and faith in man with true hope are the different psychological phases of true faith. The conclusion is crystal clear—a true act of faith happens only in the context of a community, namely, that it is always liturgical.

Baptism: The authentic conversion and faith postulate a full response, a communitary confession of faith in the Resurrected Lord, i.e., a sacramental liturgy where the conversion

and faith, the permanent states of life, are sealed by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor. 1,22). The Holy Spirit in fact introduces us to the death of Christ against Baptism, and in view of his Resurrection. He induces us to accept the Word of God with its central dynamism, the death of the Lord; he induces us to die as the Lord in him and together with him—a death for resurrection.

The Eucharist: It is the ultimate and supreme response of man to the Word of God. Against the Eucharistic liturgy, one lives typically the conversion, faith and the sacrament of Baptism as the response to the Word. Only the Eucharist properly makes to live these realities which form one single context of life of faith. In this celebration, the community replies to the Word announced through the mediation of the Lord and in the Holy Spirit by deeds and words. It eats the Body and drinks the Cup, which represent irresistible power of the death of the Lord through his Resurrection. It accepts voluntarily such a death for resurrection and it proclaims this accepted reality till the Lord returns (1 Cor. 11,26).

In the Eucharist, the omnipotent effusion of the Holy Spirit signs definitively the permanent condition of faithful, who have received in faith the divine Word. In short, the Eucharistic proclamation presents the following fundamental points: the profession of proper conversion and permanent faith; the profession of the proper sacramental death with Christ in the Holy Spirit; the profession of the Resurrection of the Lord as a pledge of human resurrection; the proper incorporation into the Body of Christ—not into the mystical body of Christ, but into the individual, risen, eucharistic, living and organic body of Christ, i.e., into the real Body of Christ; and the proclamation of the great works of God (Magnalia Dei—Acts. 2,11) in view of the salvation of man.

In this chapter, we were analysing the Sacred Scriptures as the call of God extended to man, provoking him to give a positive response. In the salvation history, we feel this call in various ways and modes. Man is placed in such a precarious position, that he cannot but respond to this compelling call. His positive response is known as the Liturgy. The special character of this divine call is that it is addressed to the community. So naturally, the human response also is to be in the community. In the present economy of salvation, this community is the Church of God in Jesus Christ. The human response, however, passes through various stages to become an authentic one. It is an historical and psychological formation of man's personality and being. The condensed expression of this divine call and human response, we have

in the Eucharistic celebration. Man lives his faith in and through this specific celebration. The other sacramental formulas, symbols of faith, professions of faith, liturgical songs and so on are all different forms of this human response to God. Besides the Eucharistic celebration, which is the expression of the life of faith, there are the Sacramental celebrations at certain critical moments of human life, where he responds in a special way to the special call extended to him in those moments. The 'Liturgy of the Hours' and the celebration of the Liturgical Year took shape according to the human response in time and season. Thus, the Eucharist, the other Sacraments and the Liturgy of the Hours, form a unity in expressing the perfect and positive response of man to the Divine Call.

CHAPTER III

RITE AND LITURGY

The notion of Rite and Liturgy is intimately connected with the notion of an 'Individual Church', which is very often confused with that of a 'Local Church'. These notions are, of course, related to the very foundation of the Church. As we go deep into the formation of a particular Church, we can distinguish there between two constitutive elements: Christ experience on one side, and the life-situation of the community on the other. The notion of an 'Individual Church', is more based on Christ-experience, while that of the 'local Church' is more dependent on the life-situation. First of all, let us explain them briefly.

The modern cry, both in Liturgy and in personal prayers, is for Christ-experience, an experience of the risen Lord. At the same time, it is hardly possible to have real and authentic Christian believers without Christ-experience, for, it is stupid to commit oneself to something non-experiential. Now the problem is, how can one come to an experience of Christ? Christ, we know, is a person. To experience a person means, to identify oneself fully with the details of his life and life events, in our context, with the Christ events. Christ being the centre of salvation history, it is also an identification with the history of salvation.

Looking back to the historic Christ events, the Apostles were the most favoured ones to enjoy them most intimately. They were living with Christ and were witnesses to all Christ events, the most important of which is the Resurrection, the basis of Christian faith (1 Cor. 15,14). Still, the Gospels testify to the fact that the Apostles themselves had varying experiences with the Lord. Let us take, for example, the Christ-experience of St. Thomas the Apostle. This we do precisely because we want to establish the relation between an Individual Church or Rite and its Liturgy, in the context of the Thomas Christians of India.

When Jesus heard that his friend Lazarus is dead, he called his disciples together, and wanted to go to Judea. His disciples forbade him saying: "Rabbi, the Jews were but now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?" Jesus, however, showed his interest again. Now, St. Thomas

takes the initiative and encourages his fellow Apostles saying: "Let us also go that we may die with him" (Jn. 11,16). It must be his intimate personal relationship with Jesus which inspired him to identify even with the most trying ideal, Jesus has preached: "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn. 15,13).

It is during the last supper that St. Thomas makes his second appearance. After having spoken at length about his farewell to this world, Jesus added: "And you know the way where I am going" (Jn. 14,4). When the other apostles stood staring at the Lord on hearing this, Thomas takes courage to ask: "Lord, we do not know where you are going; how can we (then) know the way"? (Jn. 14,5). The answer of our Lord to this question was so spontaneous: "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me" (Jn. 15,6). Thus, St. Thomas was also instrumental for an important piece of Revelation, the revelation of the real salvific mission of Christ.

It is after the Resurrection of the Lord, that St. John brings Thomas to the stage again. He was not there in the company of the apostles when Jesus appeared to them after his Resurrection. The news brought him the greatest grief. He could not contain himself and burst out saying: "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and place my hand in his side, I will not believe" (Jn. 20,25). This is an expression not of his unbelief, argue the biblical scholars today, but of his deep faith and intimate personal love for Jesus. See, how sincerely Jesus satisfies this desire of his Apostle! My Lord and my God", is the most complete affirmation of Christ's nature, to be found on the lips of any one in the Gospels,—writes Bruce Vowter in Jerome Biblical Commentary of the Gospel according to St. John (1). Moreover in St. Thomas, we have the indisputable witness to Jesus' Resurrection. Resurrection, which is the unique basis of Christian faith, can never be fixed on rumours.

The above explanations clearly substantiate the specific and unique Christ-experience of St. Thomas the Apostle. The other Apostles also had such specific and unique experience with Christ. They all went out to different parts of the world, impelled by their varying experiences. As they encountered different people, they shared their own Christ-experience with those people. The very sharing itself was unique to each Apostle. Thus Christian faith assumed 'concrete form' only when various Christ-experiences were coupled with different

life-situations; and such distinct 'concrete forms' of Christian faith are called the *Rites* or *Individual Churches*. It is not that one Church divided into many, but the very existence of the Church of God is as many. They are all fully Churches of God in Christ. It is not the quantity but the quality that makes an Individual Church or Rite. The loss or neglect of any of these Churches or concrete forms of Christian faith will prove to be irreparable to the richness and universality of the Church of God in Christ. It seems that the Fathers of Vatican II were fully conscious of this fact. Any how, they have expressed their ardent desire concerning the preservation and development of all such forms (2).

The different expressions of Christian faith, i. e., the different "styles of Christian life" are not a threat to the unity of the Church, but rather they do manifest her universality more vividly and clearly. This fact, proclaimed in Vatican II, has recently been reinstated by Pope Paul VI (3). The unique nature of Christian faith is that it is never enslaved to any people or any culture or any place or any time; it identifies itself with all given cultures at all times, and at the same time transcends all of them. The real Christian magnanimity is, to accept all these different Churches or Rites as they are, respect them and rejoice in their growth and development. It will be absurd if one of these Churches insists that all others should merge into it, or that the others should adopt her own style of life. Nor is it ideal to put pressures on other Churches to rid them of their own identity and individuality, and thereby to serve the interests of one Individual Church. But what is being done in India today is precisely this.

There are four distinct factors which determine the identity of an Individual Church or Rite. Vatican II makes special mention of them (4). *Sacred Liturgy* is the most important among them. The constituent elements in the formation of a Church, i. e., the Apostolic Christ-experience and the life situation of the people, are also the constituent elements of its Liturgy. With regard to the Thomas Christians of India, they were the Christ-experience of Apostle St. Thomas and the life-situation of the ancestors of the present Thomas Christians. As far as the tradition goes, the original community had Jewish and Dravidian elements. Of course, it might have originally grown assimilating other elements with which they had contact in course of time. The important communities to which they related themselves were the Churches of Edessa, Persia proper and Mesopotamia. All of them had the same Apostolic patrimony and Jewish

cultural background common in their formation and expression. Hence it is quite natural that they complimented each other. As far as our knowledge goes, compulsory and involuntary changes were introduced into their Liturgy by Latin missionaries. But today they are left alone to correct themselves and tread the right path.

Spirituality constitutes the second factor in the identity of a Rite. It is always related to its liturgy. It is rather difficult to define the concept, spirituality; yet we may explain it as a special style of God-experience. With regard to each individual, the summit of divine contact and experience, he has in the celebration of the Word in his Church, i. e., in his own proper Liturgy. Because of certain undesirable circumstances, the Thomas Christians are in a tension today. Their liturgical celebrations, to a certain extent, are closely connected with the inner structure and spirit of their Church; but the other activities of piety, paraliturgical or personal, are all fully in the spirit and diction of the Latin Church. Only a radical change in this situation will make them capable of ascending the higher steps of spiritual life.

Another factor, through which the life of an Individual Church is expressed, is its *Theology*. The thought pattern differs from people to people and place to place; so also the intellectual attempt to know God in the light of the revealed truths. Plurality in theological thinking was once heretical; but today we have come so far as to recognise that every individual Church can have its own theological thinking, closely related to its liturgy and spirituality. Here again the Thomas Christians are in a predicament. Most of them doubt whether they have a theology at all. They all, including their own prelates, are trained fully in western theological and moral systems. The formation they impart in catechism classes and even in their own Seminaries, is not an exception to this general rule. It is high time that they put an end to this slavish imitation, and try at a radical change in this formation systems, of course, giving importance to their own Apostolic heritage and life-situation.

The fourth essential requisite of an individual Church is, its own *Administrative System* or Canon Law. Here the socio-cultural factors count a lot; but at the same time, they must also be faithful to their Apostolic Traditions. The Thomas Christians had a fully decentralised system of administration before the 16th century. It was fully in tune with the life-situation of the time. The Bishops were real spiritual

leaders in the Church. The temporal administration was fully in the hands of the Archdeacon or Parish Councils. The Archdeacon was also the social and political leader of the community. The *palliyogam* or parish council, comprising of the elders from all families, had even the power to excommunicate and absolve such excommunications. Thus the local communities were given due respect and essential autonomy. The present centralised church administrative system was imposed on them by the latin missionaries. Why not they throw it off now, and go back to their own decentralised system of administration, which is also very modern and democratic?

The collegiality and collective responsibility of Bishops is yet another important contribution of Eastern Church administrative system. No single Bishop is the dispenser or interpreter of a particular Apostolic heritage. In the case of an Apostolic or individual Church, all the Bishops in it, united in one heart and soul, should dispense or interpret its spirit and patrimony. As far as possible they have to take into consideration the mind of the community too. In this situation, we have to consider the precarious existence of the Thomas Christians today. Is it not strange that they, the most resourceful Church in the East, are left to be governed by two Metropolitans of equal power? Why they are not given a Patriarch or Major Archbishop? In this case, the other Individual Churches in India are to take lead, I think. If they are united in spirit and action, they can make unprecedented progress and thus enrich the universal Church.

Here, we must add a word on the existential duties or obligations of an individual Church or Rite. They are the celebration of the Word of God, i.e., the realization of Christ experience, and the proclamation of the Word, i.e. the sharing of the same experience, to others.

a. The Celebration of the Word of God: The historic accomplishment of the salvific action or Christ-event happened years back. Only a limited number of people like the Apostles could take part in it personally. But the action was precisely for everyone in the world. Hence, it is quite natural that this experience of Christ-event be extended to everyone at all times. The Church, which is the continuation of Christ in the present economy, has made all arrangements for this, through the re-enactment of Christ-event in her Liturgy. But the mode of this re-enactment differs according to the Apostolic tradition and life-situation. We call this liturgy of the Church by the general term, the celebration of the Word of God;

In the Eucharistic celebration, the Syro-Malabar Church (5) re-enacts the whole of the mystery of Christ together with its principal effects. The spirit, theology and spirituality characteristic to this Church are more revealed in this celebration. All religious and spiritual enterprises in this Individual Church or Rite have to draw their vitality from this celebration. They begin their Qurbana (6) with, "Glory to God in the highest", the hymn of the angels at the birth of the Lord. Thus, beginning with the birth of the Lord and its background history, they re-enact all the principal stages and events in the salvation history, such as the Lord's private and public life, Passion, death and Resurrection, the continued work of the Spirit in the Church, the reconciliation of man with God and finally, the complete union between God and man. It seems to be an easy exposition that all may enter into its spirit without much effort and may enjoy the original Christ-experience; only that the participants must be fully aware of the symbolic meaning of the different parts, prayers and gestures of the celebration.

There are also moments in our life, so delicate and so precarious, when we feel God's predilection for us, and when he opens out his blessings exclusively for us. They are special occasions in our life, where we have to make critical decisions and give positive response to the compelling call of God. And this we have to do on our own accord and in the context of our community, of course, relating it to the totality of Christ-event. All these we accomplish in the proper celebration of the *Sacraments*.

Time and Seasons are the gratuitous gifts of God for us, the human beings. Only we can understand their real value and make them fruitful. The salvific call of God is extended to men through these time and seasons. Here again, we are bound to give a positive response to this call. The Church as a community of God's people, awaiting attentively to hear and respond to God's call at every moment, ought to make arrangement also for this timely and seasonal responses to the call of God; and this we call the "*Liturgy of the Hours*". The Syro-Malabar Church has got a magnificent arrangement for this celebration (7). They have special prayers for every day in the whole cycle of the year. Her seasonal cycle is unparalleled in the history of liturgical tradition (8). The mystery of salvation is so vividly and clearly celebrated through the gradual unfolding of Christ-events in the Liturgical Year.

The Liturgy of the Hours is the prayer of the community, the prayer of the whole Church (9). We can never dream of a

Church without lay people. Hence, the Liturgy of the Hours is the common prayer of all, priests or religious or lay people. We can never justify the discriminative attitude and the priestly domination over the laity, which tries to reserve the Liturgy of the Hours as the official prayer of the priests and of the religious, prescribing a few 'non-liturgical' activities of piety for the laity. In this context, let us pray in all sincerity for a brighter tomorrow, when the Syro-Malabar Church as a single unit, the laity together with the priests and the religious, not withstanding their status of life and mutual respect emerging therefrom, will make a proper response to the call of God, through the celebration of the same Eucharist, the same sacraments and the same liturgy of the hours. The Thomas Christians had such a Christian vision and life-style till their Rite and liturgy were forcefully latinised and mutilated in and after the 16th century. Their sister Churches, the Jacobites, the Malankarites and the Nestorians still continue the cherished practices of ancient days, of celebrating the official liturgy of the hours also in their families. This is a noble and healthy example for the Syro-Malabarians!

Sacramentals are yet another set of prayers and rites existing in the Church. Benediction, blessings, Office of the dead and burial ceremonies etc., belong to this group. They owe their relevance to their relation and semblance to the Sacraments. These prayers or rites took shape in certain particular historical and liturgical context. They too should reflect the particular liturgical spirituality of the Individual Church. Unfortunately, the Syro-Malabar Church has failed miserably in this regard. Her office of the dead and other prayers for the departed alone bear the proper spirit of the Church. All the rest are behind-imitations of the latin Rite. This, all the more lamentable, as these prayers have purely western context and cultural origin. It is high time to re-examine the fitness of these rites and prayers to the present context of the Church.

There are also prayers such as rosary, way of the cross, novenas and so on, which we conduct in the community; still they are all in the realm of personal prayers. Of course the church has encouraged the practice of all these devotional exercises; only that we have to distinguish them from the liturgical celebrations.

The liturgical worship amounts to be the existential duty of the Church. The Qurbana, the Sacraments and the Liturgy of the Hours are the constitutive elements of liturgical worship. These can never be substituted with personal prayers

and devotions. Nor should such personal prayers and devotions diminish the priority enjoyed by the liturgical prayers. It is also ridiculous to call such personal prayer forms "liturgical" making them somehow to resemble the official prayer of the Church.

The social consciousness constitutes an inevitable factor in the formation of the official prayers of the Church. In the liturgical assembly, I cannot limit my conversation or prayer between myself and my God; it is with my community that I should march towards God. Nor can liturgy be reduced to a conversation 'about God' between the community and the celebrant. This naturally urges us to prefer the interests of our community to our own, to adapt ourselves to the common pattern of the community. Each Individual Church in its liturgical celebrations, is trying to realize and experience, what is being handed over to her through her own Apostle. The proper circumstantial setting is also an essential element for such experience.

b. The Proclamation of the Word of God: The second obligation or rather privilege of an Apostolic community or Rite is to share her unique Christ-experience with others. It is not appropriate to keep concealed one's own treasures. The deeper and dearer is our Christ-experience, the stronger and compelling will be our desire to share it with others. The Apostle, in the force of this inner urge, could freely go over to unknown places and could face all unknown consequences. It is with the force of this experience that St. Paul advises us to proclaim the Gospel in time and out of time. Thus, we see that every Individual Church or Rite has to share by necessity the Apostolic Christ-experience she has.

Unfortunately, the Oriental Churches as a whole, and the Syro-Malabarians in particular, were denied this fundamental right of sharing their own Christ-experience till recently. In order to preach the Gospel, they had to say good-bye to their prestigious age-old Apostolic heritage and accept the traditions of the Latin Church. In India, the Thomas Christians could hardly stomach the situation they were put in. It is doubtful whether we can find anywhere else in history a parallel to this bitter experience of paying the loss of one's own identity in Christ-experience as the cost of preaching the Gospel in one's own mother land. A telling majority of the priests and religious sisters working in the latin dioceses of India are the Syro-Malabarians. Thus, the Syro-Malabar Church has become so altruistic to build up another Church (the latin Church) even at the expense

of their own Apostolic individuality. Still she is singled out always as narrow-minded and conservative. The initiative to put an end to this biased propaganda once for all, even at this bilated stage, should come from her own folds. This can be worked out only by safeguarding her identity in the universal Church and in the mission fields.

It is right indeed to reflect at this juncture, who missed the magnanimity and where did generosity run out. The growth of each and every Apostolic Church is the growth of the Universal Church, the Church of God in Christ. The true Christian charity demands to accept, to appreciate and respect all Churches as they are. As far as possible each one has to help the growth of the other Churches. But it is neither just nor Christian to exploit the personnel and property of other Churches in the interest of one Individual Church. No Church should grow to the detriment of a sister Church, especially by raising barriers on the latter's way of growth and expansion. Therefore, the Syro-Malabarians have to work out definite programmes to train at least their younger generation in the spirit of their own Apostolic heritage. They should fight for the complete freedom to share their own Apostolic Christ-experience in their own way at least in their own mother country.

The striking contrast between their healthy stock of vocations and the pathetically limited scope for the proclamation of the Word of God, was a topic of discussion even in the second Vatican Council. The Council took a benevolent stand on this issue. Thus, all Oriental Churches, including the Syro-Malabar Church, are allowed, or rather authorised to look after the spiritual needs of their own wards, wherever they are, by sending their own priests to their care, and wherever it is necessary, to establish parishes and even their own hierarchy (10). No lesser body can decide against this decision of the Ecumenical Council. There are thousands of Syro-Malabarians residing in the big cities and industrial areas of India, outside the present restricted territory of this Church. There are also Syro-Malabarian priests residing in many such places. But these priests are never allowed (11) to help their own faithful by the Latin Ordinaries of the place. Is it not something painful for the Syro-Malabarians? It is high time that the system of territorial jurisdiction give way to that of personal jurisdiction (12). It seems that the Latins in India are afraid of a diminution in personnel to work in their institutions and missions, which, to a great extent, is supplied by the Syro-Malabar Church today. If it is so, it is a new version of slave trade - to restrict the freedom of Orientals through territorial barriers and force them to work for the Latin Church! Let the Syro-Malabarians

be set free to preach and live everywhere, at least in India, according to their own Rite and Liturgy, and then let them freely go and help other Churches too. This will be the ideal of Christian fraternity – to respect and help each other.

Our primary concern in this chapter was to trace out the relation between the Rite and its Liturgy. In our analysis of an Individual Church, we saw that Liturgy is one among the four constitutive factors which determine the identity of a Rite. And it is the most important factor as it is the expression of the whole Church. It is also inseparably related to all other constitutive factors.

In this context, we have to add a word on some sort of a false universalism penetrating the Church today. Some people pretend themselves to be more catholic than the catholic Church itself. The teachings of the Ecumenical Councils and that of the Holy Fathers clearly enunciate the line in which the term 'catholicism' is to be understood. Everything beyond that can only mar the real image of the Church in the world. We saw that the origin of Christian faith itself is in diversity, and that makes the Church of God in Christ more catholic and more beautiful. Unity in diversity and diversity in unity is the real ideal of the Church. The unity and diversity in the life of the most Holy Trinity is the real model for the different 'styles of Christian life' in the world. This radical understanding and the consequent action alone can enable us to give due respect to all other Churches. In this fast developing world, the ideal is to help each other to live fully in one's own spiritual and religious traditions; and this is also the true world-vision.

Notes:

- (1) Jerome Biblical Commentary, Bombay 1972, p. 464
- (2) OE, the Decree on Eastern Catholic Churches, nos. 2,5,6
- (3) Cfr. L'Osservatore Romano, May 19, 1977, p. 3
- (4) UR, the Decree on Ecumenism, nos. 15-17
- (5) Syro-Malabar Church or better the Indo-Chaldean Church, is the principal part of the Thomas Christians, who were always with Rome, in spite of so many undesirable treatments.
- (6) *Qarev* in Syriac means 'offered' and hence the noun form *Qurbana* means offering. The Thomas Christians generally call their Eucharistic celebration, *Qurbana*.

- (7) Cfr. Varghese PATHIKULANGARA, Divine Office in Malabar Liturgy, Eph. Lit., 88/11 (1974) 131-141
- (8) Cfr. Varghese PATHIKULANGARA, The Liturgical Year of the Syro-Malabar Rite, Eph. Lit. 90/2 (1976) 173-196.
- (9) SC, the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, nos. 83-101, esp. 83, 90, 99, 100: and OE, no. 22
- (10) OE, nos. 3-4
- (11) Two Syro-Malabarian priests are recently sent to Bombay to look after the spiritual needs of all the Malayalees! Here again the language is given more importance than the Rite itself or the particular spiritual heritage. And what can these two priests do for more than 20,000 Syro-Malabarians!
- (12) Personal jurisdiction, is the age-old custom among the Easterners. Territorial jurisdiction, even among the Latins, is a contribution of the Feudal system. Cfr. Eugenio PACELLI (later Pope Pius XII), La Personalità e la Territorialità delle Legi, Specialmente nel Diritto Canonico, "Studio Storico-Giuridico", Roma 1912, p,6

CHAPTER IV

A. THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF LITURGICAL FAMILIES

Jerusalem is the mother of all Churches and of all liturgies. It was there that the fullness of messianic times promised; it was there that Jesus preached, died, risen and ascended to heaven; it was there the Apostles received the eschatological gift of the Holy Spirit and were confirmed in faith; it was from there that they went out to all quarters of the world to preach and baptize; and it was there that Jesus instituted the great command of love and ordered to celebrate his remembrance. According to the ancient Hebrew tradition, Jerusalem is the seat of the *Great Day* of the Lord; so too the Christians considered it to be the seat of the *Great Return* of the Lord, the Parousia.

The first christians were all Hebrews and hence they transferred to Christianity the practices and spirituality of the Hebrews; and above all, the Scriptures of Old Testament, and the way of reading, interpreting and living it in their liturgy. In addition, they had also the special rites of *Anamnesis*, *Eucharistia*, *Epiclesis* and *Doxology*.

Although Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 and 135 A.D., its influence extended to more than two centuries. By the time of Constantine, there was a revival and with St. Cyril of Jerusalem (+387), we have a flourishing Church there. Thus it had a decisive influence on all liturgies of the East and West; but on that of the East-Syriac liturgy is only indirect.

Now, we may ask what is the cause of the distinction of Eastern and Western or Oriental and Occidental Churches. In 395 A.D. the then Roman Emperor Theodosius I died. His successors divided the Roman empire into two - the *Eastern Empire* comprising the provinces of Illyricum and Oriens, and the *Western Empire* comprising those of Gallicum and Italia. Those Churches which developed in these empires or in relation to them are known as the Eastern and Western or Oriental and Occidental Churches. Both in the East and in the West there developed several Churches assuming diverse forms.

The Rites of the Western Empire

1. Romano-African Rite
2. Gallic Rites
 - a) Mozarabic Rite of Spain
 - b) Gallican Rite of ancient Gaul
 - c) Celtic Rite of Ireland and Scotland
 - d) Ambrosian Rite of Milan

There were several Rites and Liturgies also in the West just as it was and is the case in the East. All of them can be reduced into two liturgical families - the Romano-African and Gallic. The whole of Europe including the north Italy and the British Isles come in the domain of Gallic liturgies. Rome and North-Africa were the regions where the other family - the Romano-African family - flourished. Let us analyse the liturgies of the Gallic Rites first:

a) **Mozarabic Rite:** It is also known as Visigothic liturgy or old Spanish liturgy. By 6th century its prayer types were fully evolved. In most ancient prayers, we see the mediatorship of Christ more stressed; but in more recent ones, the consubstantiality of the divine Persons is the important theme. The liturgical prayers are indifferently addressed to the Father or to the Son or to the Holy Trinity itself. Today it is celebrated only in the cathedral at Toledo in Spain.

b) **Gallican Rite:** It was the official liturgy of the Kingdom of the Franks. Most of the prayers show an anti-Arian tendency. The restless or turbulent character common to all Gallic liturgies is being more expressed in this liturgy (1). It exerted visible influence in the formation of one Rite, the Latin Rite, in the West.

c) **Celtic Rite:** It was the liturgy of the Celtic people on the British Isles, especially the Irish and the Scotch. Only very few documents are preserved on this liturgy, and almost all of them show that it was a mixture or hybrid of Mozarabic, Gallican, Roman and Oriental liturgies.

d) **Ambrosian Rite:** It is also known as the Milanese Liturgy, and it is the only liturgy of the Gallic family which exists even today in a whole Province. But today it is mostly permeated with elements from the Roman liturgy. In the province of Milan, they use this liturgy. The special celebrations of the Holy Week are very common even today.

In short, all these four liturgies belong to the family of Gallican Rites and they have great similarity to the Oriental rites and liturgies.

Romano-African Rite: The very name itself is self-expressive. It is a combination of two liturgies, that of Rome and that of North-Africa. In the beginning it was celebrated in Greek language. Of this stage of the Roman liturgy, we are very well informed by Justin and Hippolytus (2). At least by the end of the third century, Latin began to be used in liturgical celebrations. What we have of this liturgy till Gregory the great, are two sacramentaries, *Sacramentarium Leonianum* and *Sacramentarium Gelasianum*. These were discovered in the 17th and 18th centuries and are arbitrarily named after the two great liturgical Popes, Leo and Gelasius. Anyhow, these two Popes are considered to be the champions who gave real shape to the Roman liturgy. This does not mean that all the prayers and symbols in these Sacramentaries are composed or formed by these Popes. They may be of even ancient origin.

The Rites of the Eastern Empire:

Among these, we have the Churches that developed in the Eastern Roman Empire and also those Churches that developed outside it, i. e., in the Persian Empire and in India. We can trace three important families among these Churches and their liturgies. They are:

1. Antiochean Family:

- i) *West-Syriac Liturgy* of the Syrian Jacobites, of the Syrian Catholics or Antiochean Syrians, of the Maronites, of the Malankara Church and so on.
- ii) *Byzantine Liturgy* of the Greeks, of the Slavonic Churches (Russians, Ucranians, Bulgarians, Serbians etc) of the Rumenians, of the Albanians, of the Arabic Melkites, of the Georgians, and so on.
- iii) *Armenian Liturgy* of the Armenians.

2. Alexandrian Family:

- i) *Coptic Liturgy* of the monophysite, Orthodox and Catholic coptics.
- ii) *Ethiopian Liturgy* of the Ethiopians.

3. Persian Family:

East-Syriac Liturgy of the Chaldean Nestorians and Catholics and of the Syro-Malabarians.

In the beginning, the communal liturgy in every Church was in a fluid state. Only in course of time, that they were consolidated into fixed families with definite branches. This consolidation happens during the 4th and 5th centuries. Certain centres, theological schools and eminent fathers played great role in the formation of these liturgical families. The Apostolic heritage was an important element in fixing up these families. We may mention here, only the important centres:

a) **Antiochia:** From Antioch went out missions to the whole ancient world, including the Greek cultural areas and the Latin West (Paul and Barnaba and then St. Peter himself). They went out to the East even beyond the territories of the Roman Empire, to Persia, Armenia, Arabia and so on.

b) **Alexandria:** It is from Alexandria, the Egyptian missions start. They reached even upto the actual Tunisia, Libia, Ethiopia and all neighbouring provinces. They were also closely related to Rome. According to tradition, St. Mark is the founder of the Alexandrian Church.

c) **Asia Minor:** The Church of Asia Minor had close relation to that at Antioch; but it was fully independent in administrative level. Under the influence of the great Capadocian fathers they achieved a sort of liturgical independence and was the source of the formation of the Byzantine liturgy.

d) **Constantinople:** Constantinople becomes prominent only after 330 A.D., the year of its foundation. Yet, the fathers at Chalcedon (451 AD) in canon 28 establishes it as the second Patriarchal See of the Christian world (after Rome, but comes before Antioch and Alexandria). The Patriarchate extended even up to Asia Minor. It had good relations with Antioch. Its famous Patriarchs, St. Crysostom and Nestorius, were from Antioch itself.

e) **Armenia:** In its foundation, the Armenian Church was dependent on Caesarea of Capadocia. But after the death of St. Basil in 379 A.D., it separates itself from Caesarea and gradually attains autonomy in 384 A.D.

f) **Persia:** The Church of Persia, due to political circumstances, had a particular way of development. Everything developed under its Catholicos without much contact with other Churches in the Roman Empire. It is, more or less, an independent evolution from the Gospels themselves. The Church of India associated itself with that of Persia, most probably in the 4th or 5th century.

Liturgy is the expression of Christian faith. As we have already seen in the previous chapter, Christian faith becomes concrete only when a specific Apostolic Christ-experience is coupled with a specific life-situation of a community. The first expression of this concrete faith might have been more spontaneous, and this initial stage in the origin and development of Sacred Liturgy, we call the stage of fluid liturgy. The community under the vigilant care of the Apostolic fathers developed and perfected this liturgy. The community also grew larger and larger through the centuries. By 4th and 5th centuries, we have the stage of consolidation in the history of liturgical development. Of course, the Apostolic centres and theological schools gave lead to this consolidation. Thus we have the different liturgical families and their branches. We could only very briefly explain this process of origin and development of different liturgies. Those who like to have more about this, may read through the Bibliography we intend to give at the end of this book.

Notes:

1. Josef A. JUNGSMANN, The Early Liturgy, London 1976, p. 228
2. Apologia of St. Justin and Apostolic Traditions of Hippolytus.

B. THE EAST SYRIAC CHURCHES

The history of the origin and development of the Churches of Mesopotamia, Persia and India is really interesting. They all share one and the same liturgy, the East Syriac liturgy, the only liturgy that developed outside the 'limes Romanus'. Although, many scholars attribute it to the Antiochean family, it stands as distinct type or as a distinct family by itself. The Church itself was autonomous under its catholicos or Patriarch.

The Churches of Persia and Mesopotamia

For the time being let us set aside the Thomas Christians, the Church of India, and consider only the Churches of Persia and Mesopotamia. Due to political reasons, they were cut out of the other centres of Christianity. They had actually great misunderstanding with regard to the Council of Ephesus in 431 A.D., in which Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople was condemned. They heard that it was a partial Synod and the power of Cyril of Alexandria prevailed allthrough it. So they refused to accept the decisions of this Synod. In 484 A.D., they formally rejected Ephesus in their council at *Bet-Laphat*.

Whatever be the case, we have in the Persian Church, a Church developed fully in the Judeo-Christian atmosphere, in the Semitic cultural context, in which the whole of Christian revelation is given. It is a Church developed without any impact from the Roman legalism and Greek philosophical distinctions. Thus they could keep up even to this day a theology of the rites and practices of old, even those of the Jewish time. The Jewish nucleus among the first converts of Persia and Mesopotamia, who were left behind after the Babylonian captivity, helped a lot this orientation of the first Christians in those places. Liturgy being a response to the divine call, the liturgy of these Churches in the same *sitz-im-Leben*, the life-situation, of the divine call, is really a source of inspiration even to all other Churches.

The important personalities, who were the true organisers of these Churches and their liturgy, were Isho-Yahb I (581-582) and Isho-Yahb III (650-658). The most famous fathers of these Churches are Aphraates (ca. 308-353) and St. Ephrem (ca. 305-373). Theodore of Mopsuestia became famous as the *Interpreter* of the Syrian Churches. In the 13th century, they have another great author, and codifier of Liturgy and Church discipline, Abdisho or Ebed Jesu bar-Berika (+1318), the Metropolitan of Nisibis.

The missions of the Persian Church extended even upto Peking, Malasia, Siberia and Mangolia. Before the Muslim invasion, the Church of Persia had about 80 million faithful, with hundreds of metropolitans, archbishops and bishops, comprising the two-third of Christianity. In all other Christian Churches together, including that of the West, there were only 40 million faithful.

Roman Primacy and the East Syriac Churches

For the sake of clarity, may I add a few words on the Roman primacy and the East Syriac Churches or the so called Nestorian Churches. They emphatically proclaim the primacy of Peter, his journey to and martyrdom in Rome, as well as Rome's ecclesiastical superiority over all other Churches, in their writings. Time and again such writings as the so called Nicean or Arabic Canons and their commentaries, insist that the Roman Patriarch is the successor of St. Peter and as such has authority (Sultana) over all other patriarchs, not excluding their own. They believe that Pope Celestine of Rome was deceived by Egyptian Ruler and Cyril of Alexandria in the case of Nestorius and Ephesus. Hence, we conclude that they had not given up the belief in their communion with Rome, although there were no contacts in between them till the time of crusades. They were not informed also of the dogmatic developments and canons of the Ecumenical Councils of the past. During the crusades or after that, as soon as they came into contact with Rome, spontaneous was their explicit union with that Church.

After 1552, the East Syriac Church, which was known as Nestorian, was divided under two Patriarchs. To do away with the hereditary succession of Patriarchs, one of the two parties sent one by name *Sulaqa* to Rome to be consecrated and installed as Patriarch, since there were not among them Metropolitans to perform these ceremonies. *Sulaqa* was installed Patriarch of the East Syriac Churches in Rome. It is crystal clear from the profession of faith *Sulaqa* made in Rome, that the East Syriac Church had ever kept up the faith in Roman Primacy (1). *Sulaqa's* successors were explicitly confirmed in office by Rome.

Meanwhile, the other party, the hereditary line of Patriarch, was standing against *Sulaqa*, without however denying the Roman primacy. Years after the 16th century, the successors of *Sulaqa* ceased to ask confirmation from Rome, and they gradually formed the present Nestorian Church, which openly deny the Roman primacy, but at the same time possesses those

writings which admit the Roman primacy. Later on due to the Anglican and Protestant influence, they removed from their writings almost all such passages.

The line that stood against Sulaqa, however, began gradually to contact Rome and got their Patriarch confirmed by it. The successors of this line forms the present East Syriac or Chaldaic Church of Iraq, Iran and so on.

The Church of the Thomas Christians of India

Now, what is the stand of the Thomas Christians? Long before the dawn of Christianity and also during the first centuries of Christian era, India and especially the Malabar coast had commercial relations with Mesopotamia and other countries of the Middle East, where Aramaic was the spoken language. This is admitted by many scholars. Aramaic was the *lingua franca* or commercial language of the East before the advent of Islam. The same Aramaic was the vehicle of the Gospel in all places east of Antioch. Cranganore in Malabar known to the Greeks and Romans as *Muziris*, was a very important commercial centre in those days.

The fact that the Jews who spoke Aramaic were very influential in India, is testified by one of Asoka's edicts promulgated also in Aramaic (2). According to the traditions of the Thomas Christians, among the converts of St. Thomas in Malabar, there were also the Jews. Six of the seven churches or communities, which St. Thomas founded in Malabar were in places in which, or in the vicinity of which, it is said that there were Jews. These churches or communities are at Cranganore, Palayur, Parur, Kokkamangalam, Niranam and Quilon. The seventh one, Chayal, too is spoken of as a Jewish colony and commercial centre for forest articles (3).

From these facts we arrive at a conclusion that Apostle St. Thomas, himself a Jew, who spoke Aramaic or Syriac, ought to have made use of this Jewish nucleus for the propagation of the Good News. And the original community in India was a mixture of Jews and the natives. Aramaic was also the language of our Lord, and the natives knew it sufficiently to deal with the Jews. So, naturally, there is all probability that the first liturgical celebrations in Malabar took place in Aramaic; and thus the roots of ancient Christianity in Malabar is directly Aramaic or Syriac. Yet nobody can rule out a sound process of indegenisation, of which we are to speak later on.

We have already spoken in Chapter IV, about the relation this Church entered into with the Churches of Persia and

Mesopotamia, with regard to liturgical questions. At least from the 6th century onwards, the Thomas Christians had hierarchical relations with these Churches. But when did this relation begin, nobody knows. The Chief Bishop of the Thomas Christians was called the *Metropolitan and Gate of all India*. The effective administration, however, was in the hands of a local priest called the *Archdeacon of all India*. The Archdeacons were also the political and social leaders of the Thomas Christians. As the head of all the Thomas Christians, there was only one Archdeacon at a time. As the titles of the Metropolitan and the Archdeacon shows, the whole India belonged to the Thomas Christians ecclesiastically.

Until the end of the 16th century, these relations with the Mesopotamian Church, were kept up intact. After 1552 until they were put under the latin rule at the end of the 16th century, they were juridically related to the East Syriac Patriarchs, who were explicitly confirmed in their office by Rome. We do not deny here the fact that some bishops from the other Patriarchs also came to Malabar. But almost all of them disappeared from the scene without much delay.

The East Syriac polemical writings did not reach the Thomas Christians in any controversial atmosphere. Fr. Roz S.J. (later on the first latin bishop of the Thomas Christians) in 1585 or 1586 prepared a study *on the errors* of the Thomas Christians as found in their Syriac Books (4). Therein at the very outset he says about them (whom he calls Nestorians -important): "Although they profess the Roman Catholic faith, still, their books abound in the errors of Nestorius, Theodore of Mopsuestia and Diadore of Tarsus." As a probable exception, he mentions their East Syriac bishop of the time. He says that they publically preached that the Blessed Virgin Mary is the 'Mother of God' (although there are books in Malabar which admit it not), and that they left out the names of Nestorius and others when they recited the Divine Office. In other words, they professed the Roman Catholic faith and when they were told by the Portuguese missionaries that they should invoke Blessed Virgin Mary the 'Mother of God' (God without qualification) and that they should not venerate Nestorius and others: they readily consented to that. A metal bell cast in 1584 for the Church at Kuravilangad, which is still used, has an embossed East Syriac inscription, cast together with the bell, in which there occurs the expression, *aemeh dalaha*, 'Mother of God'-God, without qualification.

Again on December 7, 1601, the same Roz S. J. as the latin bishop of the Thomas Christians gave testimony to their constancy of faith throughout the past in the following words; "These christians, the oldest in the East.... converted to our most holy faith from idolatry by the Apostle St. Thomas, although they have been living among heathens, Jews and Mohammadens, still... have always to this time most firmly persisted in faith." He continues to say that they were under Chaldean Prelates who were infected with the Nestorian heresy (5). This is very important in this context, especially when this is considered along with his own words cited above about the faith of the Thomas Christians and their East Syriac Prelates.

During the first contacts with the Portuguese, the Thomas Christians were under Persian bishops who were not directly or explicitly recognised by the Popes. Even then they accepted each other as brethren in faith and had mutual "*communicatio in sacris*" (6). Besides Fr. Roz S.J., there were also missionaries who had confessed that the Thomas Christians were orthodox in faith. Fr. Carneiro S.J., one of the first missionaries, writes: "Both you and we hold to the same faith; the differences in customs matter little" (7). Even men of eminent learning and sanctity, like St. Francis Xavier, failed to detect any heresy in the Mesopotamian bishops or among the Thomas Christians (8).

But in the second half of the 16th century, although the Malabar Church was exclusively under Patriarchs and Prelates directly and explicitly recognised by the Holy See, we see a sudden change in the attitude of the Portuguese towards the Thomas Christians. According to the veteran historian of the Malabar Church, Fr. Bernard T.O.C.D. (CMI), "it is very difficult to find out any religious motive behind this change. In the first half-the Portuguese were busy in establishing their temporal supremacy in the East. In the second half, they turned their attention also to ecclesiastical supremacy" (9). The Portuguese missionaries had already converted so many in Malabar, especially from among the fishermen, and established the latin diocese of Cochin in 1558. The already existing diocese of Goa was raised to an archiepiscopal See. The Church of Thomas Christians in Malabar, having the Metropolitan and Archdeacon of All-India, seemed to them to defy the authority of Goa. Its different style of Christian life and its allegiance to the patriarch of Babylon were the greatest obstacles to the Portuguese ecclesiastical supremacy. Latinisation of this special

style of christian life and the removal of Patriarch's jurisdiction seemed the only solution to overcome these obstacles.

The very same liturgical practices, in which the Portuguese also communicated in the beginning, turned out to be heretical at this juncture. Even in the middle of the 16th century, St. Francis Xavier attests clearly to the orthodoxy of faith of the then Metropolitan of the Thomas Christians. He writes to the King of Portugal, John II, on Jan. 26, 1549: "It is now five and forty years that a certain Armenian Bishop, by name Abuna Jacob, has served God and Your Highness in this country. He is a man who is very dear to God on account of his virtue and holiness.... Your Highness is very greatly in want of the good will and intercession of a man very acceptable to God as he is...." (10)

Mar Joseph, the successor of Mar Jacob, was sent to the Thomas Christians by Patriarch Ebedjesus, who received the pallium from the Pope, and who took part in the Council of Trent. While he was in Europe, protesting against the Portuguese colonial policy, he asked the Pope to appoint non-Portuguese Apostolic Visitors to India and Mesopotamia to study the real situation. The Apostolic Visitors were all against the Portuguese policy. Hence they asked Rome to send Papal Orders forbidding the Portuguese to call the catholic Syrians in Mesopotamia and in Malabar, 'Nestorians'. But the local Portuguese authorities thought themselves better judges of heresy and of Oriental Rites than Rome! Notwithstanding several Papal directives and orders, the Portuguese continued to persecute, imprison and deport Syrian Prelates who fell into their hands. Mar Joseph and Mar Abraham who followed him, were really put to such persecutions. The letters of Pope Pius IV to Patriarch Ebedjesus, on Feb. 23, 1565, and to the Archbishop of Goa and to the Bishop of Cochin on Feb. 28, 1565, are worth mentioning in this context. We may quote only a few lines from the first letter: "... since he is a strong genius and a good promoter of sacred letters and catholic dogma according to the informations we have of him, and is endowed with such honesty of life and manners, as is worthy of a religious man, we are grieved at the inconveniences he suffered in India. But we believe that the Lord permitted it that his faith might be tested and that it must so happen with a trial of success" (11). These documents speak for themselves and they prove whether the Thomas Christians were Nestorians or not (12).

Latinization and Westernization

Together with heretical allegation, the missionaries launched an intense programme of Latinization and Westernization of the Rite and Liturgy of the Thomas Christians. The positive

move began by establishing a seminary at Cranganore in 1541/2. More than a hundred native students were recruited for training there (13). The ordination of these students in the Latin Rite gave the first shock to the Thomas Christians. They protested against it, and their own parents were against allowing them to celebrate in Latin, in their own churches. At the same time, the latin missionaries were always welcome to their churches and they could even celebrate in latin. This can further be substantiated by the words of Bishop Roz himself. In 1604 he wrote: "that they (many of the Thomas Christians) left Cranganore on account of the many molestations of some, also religious (Portuguese missionaries), who did not understand anything at all that was not of the Latin Rite, and declared everything else at once as heresy and superstition, forcing them to eat fish and drink wine in Lent against their Rite, though this fasting is more in conformity with the holy canons and the fasting of the original Church" (14).

In the second half of the 16th century, we see a policy of forced latinization. With the backing of military force, the Portuguese could succeed to a large extent. Mar Joseph (+1565-69) yielded to some extent to the Portuguese pressure. Thus he substituted latin vestments and unleavened bread in the Eucharistic celebration. But he stoutly protested against the subjection of the Church to Portuguese jurisdiction. The result was persecution, imprisonment and transportation to Rome for inquisition.

In 1585, the Goan provincial council, which had no authority over the Thomas Christians, decided that the Roman Sacramentary is to be translated into Syriac for the use of the Thomas Christians; and this decision was carried out gradually. This forced process of Latinization reached its climax by the so-called Synod of Diamper in 1599. At this Synod the Malabar Church was brought under the Portuguese jurisdiction.

Cardinal Beltrami explains in detail the tricks played by the Portuguese to bring the Malabar Church under their jurisdiction and to change the style of their Christian life. Under the same background he quotes from the Brief of Pope Clement VIII (15), and concludes his discussion with a profound exclamation: "what a painful surprise to a Malabarian soul!!!" (16). He goes on to say, "thus the synod accomplished the desired target of the political Portuguese: to detach the Malabarians from the Chaldean Patriarch and to extend to these regions the influence of Your Catholic

Majesty!' (17). Thus the unification of the Thomas Christians was a fiction, fabricated by the Portuguese to conceal their secret plan, i.e., to bring the Thomas Christians under the Padroado jurisdiction separating them from the Babylonian Patriarch.

In fact, the Rite and Liturgy the Thomas Christians had, was of Judeo-Christian origin and well adapted to the life-situation of the people. In this chapter we may not go to its details. Their most ancient Eucharistic prayer, the Anaphora of Mar Addai and Mar Mari, takes its origin from the Apostolic times and is the only one developed outside the 'limes Romanus'

It has its origin and development fully in the semitic cultural background. The other Anaphoras, namely, that of Theodore of Mopsuestia and of Nestorius, though Greek in origin, have been modelled on the pattern of the earliest one. The other liturgical prayers such as the *liturgy of the hours* with an ecclesiastical calendar whose temporal is a masterpiece are all composed in the style and diction of the Bible, not to say that they are all suffused with Biblical ideas and allusions. The East Syriac liturgy goes directly to the Aramaic roots of New Testament revelation. Great therefore is the treasure, the Thomas Christians possess in this liturgy, which has also inestimable apologetic values as it expresses the faith of the original Church in a simple style and language. Our forefathers were fully aware of this inestimable treasure.

Its apologetic values are enhanced by the fact that it still preserves distinctly its archaic aspect unlike some other liturgies which, though ancient, have been obscured not a little in this aspect as a result of Greco-Roman influence. Thus it has in it the original Christ-experience as our Apostle had shared it with us. Those who seek modernity and novelty in everything with no sense for the original apostolic Christ-experience, may even deride at the typically archaic aspect of this liturgy. Here we may point out that the marvellous morality of some primitive tribes is a lesson in apologetics for many a devotee of modernism. This does not mean that these tribes should be kept in their primitive state. They ought to make progress, not by giving up, but by jealously keeping alive their sense of morality which can never be set aside or derided at as primitive and out-moded. Thus the East Syriac Liturgy should grow, of course, from within, keeping its treasures and archaic aspects, assimilating things from outside. In fact, it has grown thus, and it must continue to grow. But no real growth takes place all on a sudden, or by the borrowing and the putting together of foreign elements.

Those who help its growth must be the chosen ones of the community who know and live the Spirit it embodies, its Genius and its Tradition.

Attempt at Restoration

As a result of the extreme latinization of their Rite and Liturgy in and after the Synod of Diamper, the Thomas Christians were always trying to get a bishop of their own Rite from Seleucia. In the meanwhile the friction between the Jesuit Prelates and the Thomas Christians reached its zenith. Then came a bishop from Persia to the sea-port of Cochin. The Thomas Christians were denied even the privilege of examining his credentials. In revolt against such crude behaviour of the Jesuit pralate, they tied a rope on the Cross at Mattancherry, near Cochin, and touching on it, swore that they would never be under the Jesuit Prelates. This event of 1653 is known in history as the "Coonan Cross Oath". This was actually a protest against the octopianism of the Latin Prelates, especially of the Jesuits, and was not a revolt against Papacy. It however, gave rise to a split in the age-old apostolic community of the Thomas Christians. The party, which seperated themselves, later formed the Jacobite Orthodox Church of India. In course of time, it was divided into many denominations.

The party that stood faithful, had to undergo a thorough Latinization and Westernization under the latin paralates for more than three centuries. Gradually, the missionaries took over the whole formation of the clergy. "Their system (of education) has been to give to the indogenous clergy a very slendour instruction (*tenuissimo insegnamento*) in Theology, and this, on the principle that it is better, that the said priests, be in all things and entirely (*in tutto e per tutto*) inferior to the European missionaries; thus, they were teaching a miserable manual of moral theology, while the dogmatic theology was negligible, or at the most a catechism" (18). Owing to this sort of formation, the whole mentality, especially that of the clergy, was totally transformed. For the majority whatever comes from the West, and whatever is done by the Latins, is the norm today. Even some of the native prelates subscribe to this mentality! Hence any attempt at a real research into the original and authentic form, and its organic growth is defeated by such people. Their pride it seems, is in the present hybrid existence of this Church. If it is to be continued, the result will be the loss of an Apostolic style of Christian life to the Church of God in Christ.

Now, we have to come to the attempts at restoration. After long period of latin rule, the Thomas Christians were given their own bishops at the end of the 19th century. When they got bishops of their own Rite and soil, they thought that everything was safe in their hands. But sorry to say, the latinization process of liturgy continued even under their own bishops. Its culmination was the Syriac translation of the Roman Pontifical submitted for approbation to the Sacred Congregation for Oriental Churches in 1929. After serious discussion, it was referred to His Holiness Pope Pius XI on Dec, 1, 1934. His Holiness stoutly refused approbation in the following words: 'Latinism ought not to be encouraged among the Orientals; the Holy See does not wish to latinise, but to catholicise. Half measures are neither fruitful nor generous. Let a commission be nominated with the task of revising the most ancient Pontifical (of the Church), which could be printed part by part' (19).

His Holiness himself had set up on Dec. 5, 1931, a permanent liturgical commission to restore all deformed Oriental liturgies. A special commission was soon nominated for the restoration of the Syro-Malabar Pontificals. Mgr. Tisserant and Fr. J. Vosté O. P., were successively the presidents of this commission. Fr. Vosté O. P. became president when Mgr. Tisserant was nominated Cardinal. One part of the text fixed by this commission was approved by Pope Pius XI, and the other part by Pope Pius XII. The Sacred Congregation printed the whole thing in 1957 and in 1958 it was sent to the Syro-Malabar bishops together with a booklet containing rubrics and directions regarding its use (20). The use of the Malayalam language was highly recommended. In the base of the Pontificals, therefore, the Sacred Congregation could only execute what the Pope had already decided upon. Hence, it did not approach the bishops for their suggestions regarding the text or rubrics.

The Congregation did not stop with the Pontificals. While Cardinal Tisserant was the Secretary (Prefect being the Pope himself) of it, visited Malabar in 1953; and then he spoke to all bishops personally, of the need of restoring the liturgy and of his intention to do it. On March 10, 1954 the Sacred Congregation nominated a committee to do the work of restoration. The president of the committee was Fr. A. Raes S. J., and the members were Fr. Cyril Keroloveskiji and Fr. Placid J. Podipara C. M. I. They were also consultants of the permanent liturgical committee of the Sacred Congregation. An assistant was given to this

committee in the person of a Chaldean priest, Fr. Emmanuel Dhelhy, the present auxiliary to the Chaldean Patriarch. The Sacred Congregation informed all Syro-Malabar bishops on May 6, 1954, about the nomination of this committee, calling their attention to the need and reasons for restoring their liturgy, and inviting them to co-operate with the Holy See in this most important matter. A request was added to educate well the clergy and laity to accept the restored liturgy. But the bishops did not take any pain to execute the instruction of the Sacred Congregation.

The committee finished its work on the text of Qurbana and its accessories, and submitted it to the Sacred Congregation. The S. Congregation, after having studied the matter, printed it as Fascicle I of *Liturgia Syro - Malabarese*, Revisione e Ristampe del Missale Syro-Malabarese (21). It includes:

1. The text of the restored Qurbana
2. Ordo Celebrationis or the rubrics and directions of celebrations
3. Notes regarding the interior of the church, vestments etc.
4. The scheme and substance of the *propria* or changing prayers of the Sundays and feast days.

The Sacred Congregation sent the whole thing to Syro-Malabar bishops for suggestion. They sent their suggestions. Again in 1956 the Sacred Congregation asked further suggestions from the Syro-Malabar bishops personally through Fr. Placid J. Podipara CMI. All of them sent their suggestions again. The S. Congregation, meanwhile, also sought further suggestions from other experts in this field. All these suggestions were printed as Fascicle II.

Both these Fascicles were distributed to the Cardinals, who compose the Plenary of the sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches. After having studied the matter, they met together, discussed the whole thing and submitted it together with their own suggestions to the Holy Father. His Holiness Pope Pius XII considered it again and approved it on June 26, 1957; Thus, with the Papal approbation the following liturgical books of the Syro-Malabar Church were duly printed:

1. Thaksa d-Qudasse, or the text of the Qurbana printed at Alwaye in 1960.

2. Ordo Celebrationis... or the rubrics and directions of celebrations together with the notes regarding the interior of the church, the vestments etc. printed in Rome in 1959.
3. Supplementum... or changing prayers and readings of Sundays and Feast days in the liturgical year, printed in Rome in 1960.

When everything was ready, and the Malayalam translation of the text of the Qurbana was printed (Alwaye 1962), the Sacred Congregation through an instruction (Rome, Jan. 20, 1962) invited the Syro-Malabar bishops to inaugurate the restored Qurbana in Malabar. The bishops chose July 3, 1962 as the day of inauguration and thus we were fortunate to celebrate once again our own liturgy.

For the sake of information, may I quote some of the norms given in the Instruction of the Sacred Congregation:-

1. 'The use of the Malayalam language is permitted; but the Anaphora must be printed both in Syriac and in Malayalam, that there may be provision to celebrate in both'.
2. 'According to the prescription of the Rite fermented bread is to be used; but azyme also is allowed'.
3. 'When there is no vestment according to the prescriptions of the Rite, vestments according to other Rites are allowed'.
4. 'Communion of the faithful also must be, as far as possible, in both species'.
5. 'The use of the sanctuary veil during the most solemn and solemn celebrations is highly recommended'.

Note:

The norms are taken at random from the Instruction of the Sacred Congregation, just to understand the mind of the Church and the Holy See. We must understand that this Instruction was given before the Vatican Council. Then only we can grasp the mentality of Oriental Churches with regard to Eucharistic celebration. In Oriental Churches, normally the celebrations are in the mother tongue. If they have kept up some specific language in the celebrations, it is because of the reverence they attributed to that language.

So also is the case with the fermented bread, i. e., the normal bread, but specially baked for this purpose, and of the communion in double species. Such things are not novelties of Vatican II or of modern thinking for the Orientals.

This is in short, the history of the restoration of the Syro-Malabar Liturgy. The pioneer in this attempt was Pope Pius XI, the same Pope who had erected the Hierarchy of the Syro-Malabar Church on Dec. 21, 1923. Together with the Qurbana, almost all other items of the Syro-Malabar Liturgy were restored. The liturgy of the hours was already published in 1938. It is enough to shorten it and put it into Malayalam. Similarly, the rites of administering the Sacraments are also restored and sent to the bishops by the Sacred Congregation, but never published in Malayalam.

One thing is very clear from my objective study, that some of the Syro-Malabar bishops were not often sincere to the instructions of the Holy See and the Sacred Congregation in matters liturgical. I can quote many more examples even to the present day. I do not know whether they have some reservations. But liturgy being the action of the Church, they are obliged to reveal them to community.

After Vatican II, the Syro-Malabar Church has launched a movement of renewal and adaptation. But actually, what has been done till today is only re-latinization and westernization. Of course, the text fixed after serious study and Papal approbation, can be modified and made better. For that, first of all, we have to list the defects and demerits; consider it in the light of Vatican II, that of our Apostolic heritage and of our cultural background, and then make it better. As far as I know, there are only very few people who have gone deep into the Spirit and Apostolic heritage of this Church. Sorry to say, most of them are not associated with the present movements. The Church needs today an organic growth and it is always based on the original Spirit of the Church. Let us hope an immediate change in the Syro-Malabar Church, in its approach to its own Liturgy and Traditions.

Notes

1. S. GIAMIL, Genuinae Relationes inter Sedem Apostolicam et Assyriorum Orientalium seu Chaldeorum Ecclesiam, Romae 1902, Appendix I, Documentum III.
2. MARSHALL, Guide to Taxilla, Delhi 1936, pp. 78-79 and XXIII (a).

3. Thomas PUTHIAKUNNEL, Jewish Colonies in India paved the Way for St. Thomas, OCA 186, Romae 1970, pp. 187ff.
4. ROZ S.J., De Erroribus Nestorianorum qui in hac India Orientali Versantur, OC 40.
5. Jesuit Archives, Rome, Goa 15, f, 52.
6. Fr. P.J. PODIPARA, The Thomas Christians, Bombay 1970, p. 122.
7. J. WICKI, Documenta Indica, Vol. III, Romae 1954, pp. 806-810.
8. H. J. COLERIDGE, Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier, Vol. II, pp. 29, 73, 74, 82-83.
9. Fr. BERNARD T.O.C.D., A Brief Sketch of the History of the St. Thomas Christians, Trichinopoly 1924, p. 15.
10. H. J. COLERIDGE, op. cit., pp. 82-83.
11. His Holiness is speaking here of Mar Abraham, who was twice imprisoned by the Portuguese authorities of Goa in spite of the Papal credentials he had with him.
12. Documents quoted in Fr. Bernard T. O. C. D., op. cit., p. 23
13. H. J. COLERIDGE, op. cit., pp. 73-74.
14. G. SCHURHAMMER, The Malabar Church and Rome Trichinopoly 1934, p. 22
15. Papal Brief of May 19, 1601
16. "Quale dolorosa sorpresa per l'anima malabarica!" - Mgr. G. BELTRAMI, La Chiesa Caldea nel Secolo dell'Unione, OC. Vol. 29, Num. 83, Roma 1933, p. 126
17. Ibid., "Your Catholic Majesty" = the Portuguese Crown
18. Archives of the S. Congregation for the Oriental Churches, Scritture riferite, Vol. 2, f. 663, Lettere dei Delegati Apostolici.
19. Report of the Plenary, Dec. 1, 1934.
20. Ordo Persolvendi Ritus Pontificales juxta usum Ecclesiae Syro-Malabarensis, Romae 1958.
21. S. Congr. per le chiese Orientali, Prot. No. 947/48, Roma 1955.

APPENDIX

Oriental and Occidental Churches

Here, I would like to quote only the opinions of two latin authors; first of all of Prof. Tommaso Federici, who is the professor of S. Scripture and Oriental Liturgies in the universities of St. Anselm and of Propaganda Fide of Rome. He says:

In fact there exists an unsatisfactory reciprocal attitude between the Orientals and the Occidentals; there exists an open state of schism between them; actually there exists a latent polemic which often explodes.

In reality, the latins in the past, especially after the crusades, had been considering the Orient in general, as colonies, and the christian faith there as schismatic. They were all fields of mission and of Proselytism. The so called process of unification was not induced by true spirit of unity of all christians, but rather by political pride. Never did they try to understand and maintain the proper characteristics of each Rite; on the contrary, they tried to subdue them, imposing even by force the latin norms and regulations on them in all fields—dogmatical, canonical, hierarchial, liturgical and spiritual fields.

Let us treat, says he, the Oriental liturgies patiently and with respect. It is not only for the liturgy's sake, but also for its theology, for its spirituality, for its discipline, and for its tradition. For the rest as sanctioned by Vatican II (OE. 2-6) to maintain the Oriental and universal Patrimony in its integrity. This respect always demand co-existence; demands to avoid all kinds of reciprocal contempt, which was prevalent in the past centuries. Each Rite ought to follow its own way, organically growing from its apostolic tradition.

Let us remember here some principles, which may also help Ecumenism:

1. pluralism is legitimate and is an enrichment of the unity of the Church;
2. each Rite can rediscover its unity of faith with others in one Baptism and in the adoration of the one Lord;
3. no ecclesiastical custom must be imposed on others;
4. no custom or use of other Rites must be plucked out of context for criticism or adaptation;

5 the diversities must be studied, criticised, and verified without polemics and with an historical mind together with the conviction that more liturgies, more theologies, more spiritualities and more disciplines show the salutary growth of the one holy and catholic Church.

Now, a few lines from the doctoral thesis of Attila Mikloshazy S. J. He writes: "In the Oriental Church the greatest source of the christian faith, besides S. Scripture is the Liturgy. This is true also for the Western Church, but it is more vital and living in the East. Their liturgy is much more the expression of their life than ours is. And besides that, their liturgy, due to its greater variety, contains much more of their theology than ours does. The Oriental liturgy is a gold-mine for us...." Again he says in another context: "The Oriental Christianity is much more a life-experience than a doctrinal system. We may perhaps miss a logical systematization in their theology (although there is a system in it), but we stand in wonder before the richness of their prayerful, reverential, often deeply penetrating insights that our more rationalistic mind is not able to discover" (East Syrian Eucharistic Pneumatology, Roma 1968, pp. 8-9).

CHAPTER V

THE PRINCIPAL THEMES OF ORIENTAL LITURGIES

A close analysis of the formation and development of the Sacred Liturgy brings to light the two different approaches, both of them being salvific and valid, to the same reality. Although there are many Churches with different liturgies in the East, We can clearly point out a general pattern of development there; and they stand as a block, distinguishing themselves from the West. In the East, we have a filial approach of man to the loving Father, versus the servant's approach to the Master in the West; a loving and generous approach to realities against the hair-splitting, legalistic and obligatory approach of the Western Church. The Easterners with all their differences, have certain basic themes—biblical liturgical theological and spiritual themes — on which their liturgical worship is being built up. They are the principal moments of salvation history: the Epiphany, the Resurrection, the Pentecost, the Transfiguration, the Exultation of the Cross and the Parousia or the Eschatology. The development of these themes varies according to the Apostolic Christ-experience and the life-situation of each church. Still, they clearly reveal the originality, the perfection, the richness and the substance of Oriental liturgies; of course, when they are understood in themselves and in relation to each other. In this chapter we may analyse, but not exhaustively, each of these themes.

1. Epiphany: The theme of this celebration is fully clear from the name of the feast itself. The Greek texts call it as the holy *Theophania* of our Lord Jesus Christ. They call it also the *feast of the light*, because Jesus the Lord appeared as the light of the world. In this connection, let us not forget the relevance of the *Pindikuthipperunnal* in Trichur sides of Kerala.

In fact, the theophany or epiphany in the old Testament as well as in the New Testament, indicates the benevolent, irresistible, loving and efficacious manifestation of the Lord to his people and to the world on the plan of universal salvation. This vision is very clear in the readings of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana. The Syro-Malabarians have four readings in the Divine Liturgy, two from the Old Testament and two from the New Testament. The four readings are so distributed that they may be selected from the Law, the

Prophets, the Apostle and from the Gospels and thus symbolically to celebrate the whole of the Scriptures in every Eucharistic celebration (2). The readings for the feast of Epiphany reminds us of the manifestations of the Lord to mankind at different stages of Divine Revelation. The readings are as follows:

1. Num. 24, 2-9. 15-25
2. Is. 4, 2-5; 11, 1-5; 12, 4-6
3. Tit. 2, 11-3,7
4. Mt. 3, 1-17

All Eastern Churches celebrate the Baptism of our Lord in Jordan on the feast of Epiphany and not the visit of the Magi as it is in the Latin Church (3). In the context, we have to remember the significance also of the *Rakkulipperunnal* (4) of South Kerala.

The Eastern theology of this feast is evolved out of the contemplation on the biblical theme of the Baptism of our Lord. This could be very well understood from the *Onitha d-Raze* the Anthem of the Mystery, of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana: "The creature is renewed through its Lord and recognised its Saviour, because through His Baptism in Jordan, He revealed the doctrine of the Trinity..." (5). Thus Epiphany is the manifestation of the Divine Trinity on the humanity of Jesus Christ the voice of the Father, the descent and the resting of the Holy Spirit over the Son, and obedient acceptance of the Son. This manifestation fully reveals the love of the Father for his Son. Let us read attentively the Gospel of the day, Mt 3, 1,17, especially the vv. 16-17, and note the principal themes, such as the, water, the heavens, the Spirit in the form of a dove and its resting on Jesus, and the voice of the Father which attributes to the Son the special epithets,, beloved (agapetos) and well pleased (eudokesa).

The *waters* lead us to the primitive water of creation over which the Spirit brooded and out of which everything emerged. The *heavens* are a metaphor to indicate God himself. The Byzantine liturgical texts say that Christ opened the heavens shut by the sin of Adam; Christ through his Resurrection brought heavens to men and men to heavens. The *Spirit* in the form of dove is a symbol of peace after the flood, and thus the symbol of the universal and cosmic covenant that God will not destroy mankind completely. Here unfolds or begins a new era or a decisive action in the Spirit; and it is indicated by the voice of the Father.

The *voice* of the Father is a sensible manifestation of God on Jesus the *God-man*, and hence it is also a divine manifestation to all men through Jesus implying a double birth i. e., eternal and temporal. The term *my son* resumes the theme of Pss 2, 7 and 110. Here we have the *beloved Son* (*agapetos*), the elected one of God, the unique Son of God. It indicates also the sacrifice of Isaac in Gen. 22, 1 ff., and the new and ultimate gift of the Father to men. He is the greatest gift and most dear reality whom the Father lets to die in order to save mankind and reconcile it to Himself. The term *agapetos* thus indicates the Cross, the Resurrection and the victorious everlasting life.

The word *eudokesa* directly points to Is. 42, 1 ff., the suffering servant of God, on whom he sends his spirit permanently. Thus the servant can now begin his mission, i.e. the preaching, suffering, death and salvation (Is 52, 13-53, 12). At Jordan, the Father manifests his son, filled with the Holy Spirit, at the beginning of his mission of pain, death and glorification. It is the fulness of divine manifestation to men in the shade of the Cross.

The liturgical texts portrays also the results or consequences of this theophany or epiphany. First of all, the heavens were opened to all men as it was opened to Jesus Christ. Secondly, it symbolizes the definitive victory over water, which was till then the symbol of destruction and slavery. Moses and Joshue won over it, but only for the time being. Here it has become definitive in the person of Jesus, full of the Spirit of life, of prophecy and of resurrection. In short, the whole human race is relieved from the dominion of sin, and with Baptism everybody is saved; and this salvation is final and irreversible, in imitation of Christ, through his death and resurrection. Similarly, each one is filled with the Holy Spirit, united to Christ and brought back to the Father. At Jordan, God manifests to men that his love has already begun the final work of salvation.

The gesture of the Son during this manifestation of the Holy Trinity illumines the poverty of humanity, which is in darkness and in a state of total desolation. Man, in his fallen state was helpless to save himself. The concrete historical man could be saved only by the *Truth*, which the full manifestation of God rekindles in his heart. This truth is the same light of the Pasch, of the Pentecost, of the transfiguration and of the second coming of the Lord.

2. **Resurrection:** This is the central mystery of our salvation and as St. Paul puts it, it is the basis of Christian

faith. The Church is the assembly of those who are gathered around the risen Lord. This celebration is very closely related to the Pasch of the Jews. Instead of the passage from the land of Egypt to Palestine, here the Christians celebrate the Lord's passage from his existence of corruption to incorruptible life; when it was a passage from slavery to liberty for Israel, here it is a transition from the bondage of sin to the freedom of the sons of God. In the present context, we do not intend to go into the biblical or historical details of the origin and development of either the Jewish Pasch or of the Christian Pasch. Here we may give only an introduction of the liturgical theme of this feast.

Our Lord Jesus, in the history of salvation, is a terminus *ad quem* and a terminus *a quo*. The long journey of the people of Israel terminated in him. The presence of the Lord in the history of Israel was something veiled or concealed. Here in Jesus the Lord's presence is made incarnate. There he nourished his people through manna, and here through his own body and blood, which, of course, is something fully transformed by the power of the Spirit. The Paschal lamb here is immolated on the cross and through resurrection he crossed over to the promised land. This idea was clearly expressed in the first reunions of the apostolic communities. They chose a fitting day, the day after the Sabbath, for their reunions, to emphasise the resurrectional aspect of their gatherings.

Although we are not well informed of the details of the first celebrations, it was definitely a reunion on the day of Resurrection, the day of the Lord. It was a day of the liturgical assembly and there they emphasised the close collaboration between the earthly liturgy and that of heaven. Besides the weekly celebrations on Sundays, they observed also the annual remembrance of the death and resurrection of the Lord. The Syrians, because of their close relation to the Jewish practices, used to celebrate it exactly on the fourteenth of Nisan, whatever be the day on which it falls. But the Churches in Palestine, Egypt, Greece, Pontus and Rome were celebrating it on the Sunday that followed the fourteenth of Nisan. In 155 A.D., when Pope Anicetus and Bishop Polycarp of Smyrna met together, they spent long hours to solve this problem. Finally both practices were tolerated. Again at the time of Pope Victor, the problem was raised, but without any solution. It was in the Ecumenical Council at Nicea in 325 A.D., that the Roman practice was finally imposed on all other Churches. Now, we celebrate the Easter on the Sunday that follows the full-moon after the twentyfirst of March,

In the practice of the Church, this celebration was always linked with Baptism, which is a participation in the death and resurrection of the Lord. The whole liturgy of the Church, and the liturgical cycle itself, is developed around this most important celebration. Hence, the Orientals consider it as the centre, source and culmination of every liturgical celebration and also of the whole liturgical year. It is the full manifestation of the ultimate and irresistible salvific power of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; it is the final effusion of the Spirit of prophecy; it is the beginning of the life of the church; it is the full recreation of the concrete man; it is the total liberation from the actual, present and past sins; it is the beginning of the paschalisation of all created reality. Hence, we may repeat with St. Paul: "if anybody is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Cor. 5,17); and with Isaiah: "behold, I create a new reality" (43,19); and finally with St. John: "behold, I make everything new" (Rev. 21,5). What we celebrate on the feast of Easter, is the personal victory of Christ over death, crowned through his Resurrection. The liturgical texts are very rich in explaining all these themes.

3. **Pentecost:** Pentecost is an old Testament feast, just as the feast of the Passover or the Paschal celebration. It had so many phases of transformation in the course of salvation history. From an ordinary thanksgiving agricultural feast, it grew up into the remembrance of covenant ratification on Mount Sinai. As it crossed over to the Christian era, it acquired new significances. Originally it celebrated, perhaps, the culmination of paschal mystery including both the feasts of Christ's Ascension and Holy Spirit's descent. Judaism celebrated Pentecost as a feast of the Sinai covenant and the formation of the chosen people; the early Christians saw there, the new Law and the formation of the New People of God as the gift of the Spirit (6).

On this day, the Oriental Churches, together with the descent of the Holy Spirit (Acts. 2,1-11), celebrate also the pneumatic manifestation of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The accent is on the ultimate realistic and consummative salvific action, which initiates the life of faith in the Church. From the Liturgy of the Hours, which is practically inexhaustible, we can trace out all important pentecostal themes, which forms the magnificent *pneumatology* of the Eastern Churches. We will have to explain it later on. In the West, the pneumatology is rather a new science and not very much developed. There are certain themes which stand out in the Eastern pentecostal celebration. They are, the supreme freedom

of the trinitarian action, the accentuation on the action of the Apostles, who through the Spirit, received the Divine Word and the universal mission, the Church which receives its existence as a *new creation* in imitation of the Resurrection of Christ, and a new *anthropology*, as far as the concrete man is presented as totally renewed and finally participating in the divine nature. The Pentecost is also interrelated to all other moments of the liturgical year. It has its own eschatological depth; it is the trinitarian manifestation; it transfigures every reality; it is derived from the Cross and it springs out from Resurrection.

4. The Transfiguration: On August 6, all Oriental Churches celebrate the Transfiguration of our Lord on Mount Thabor. The mystery of this feast is very clear from the *Onitha d-Raze*, the Anthem of the Mystery, of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana: "O Christ, by your glorious revelation, you have prepared us the source of all good and the harbour of all peace;... And you have given us the perfect knowledge of the glorious persons of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in the divine nature. Let us all, therefore, praise you, the only good, with Psalms and songs" (7).

In the readings of the day one enters into the real spirit of the feast:

1. Ex. 19, 1-9 + 20, 18-21
2. Acts. 1, 15-26
3. Heb. 12, 18-29
4. Mt. 17, 1-9

The principal themes of the Gospel are the mount of theophany, the transfiguration, the light Moses and Elias, the cloud, and the voice of the Father in words similar to that at Jordan—beloved Son (agapetos.) well-pleased (eudokeo)—but with an addition, 'listen to him' (akouo).

As it is in Jordan, here too there is the full manifestation of the Trinity: The Father sends on his Son the Holy Spirit (the glory, the cloud); the Spirit works on the humanity of Christ in a momentary manner, but efficaciously. The Son accepts the will of the Father and begins his ultimate mission: the suffering and death for Resurrection.

The mountain as the sign of theophany is clear from the readings themselves. The light is the incomprehensible power of the Divine Word, invested fully on the humanity assumed by the Son. In Moses and Elias, we have the Christological witnesses of the Old Testament and in the disciples those of the New Testament. But the principal testimony is that of

the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, addressed to the humanity of Christ.

In fact, due to the nearness of his Passion, both Jesus and the disciples were in need of this testimony: the disciples, because they can easily remember it as a symbol of their master's glory in front of his suffering and death; and Jesus, because he was to face in his humanity an unimaginable temptation up to his death. We have here the picture of the suffering servant too as it was in Jordan (eudokéo). Jesus receives here a foretaste of his Paschal glorification, the surety of his Resurrection; he receives a new unction of the Spirit, the supreme comfort, in view of his approaching Passion and death. The death and resurrection are clearly related in versicle nine.

Finally, the disciples in front of the divine glory were frightened, but at the same time comforted and were called to hear, i.e., to obey their master, who is the prophet and mediator of salvation. They saw in person and in reality what awaits their master and what waits for them, the disciples, who obey him. The liturgical texts try to picture the divinisation of humanity through the infusion of the Holy Spirit. In fact, man can take part of such glory, and once the power of the Spirit breaks into the humanity, it is infallibly saved. The divine fire ought to burn the human nature in its sinful part in such a way that the light and the glory can occupy man without any impediment or diaphragms. It is the classical expression of Pauline theology: the necessary mediator is man; he has deprived the creation of its significance through his sin; now, with his own redemption and with his own activity through the divine grace he has to transfigure himself and the whole creation. Thus the whole cosmos will be invested with glory (Rom. 8,19-25).

5. The Exultation of the Cross: The feast of the Cross on September fourteenth, is said to have come from Jerusalem. Emperor Constantine might have begun this celebration of the exultation of the Cross. In the Byzantine Rite, they celebrate at least three important feasts of the Cross: On September fourteenth, the exultation of the glorious and victorious Cross, on the third Sunday of the Lent, the adoration of the Cross, recalling the imminent painful mystery of the salvific death; and on Good Friday, they contemplate on the painful mystery of love, seen on the actual Cross. The Syro-Malabarians have at least the two on September fourteenth or better thirteenth and on Good Friday,

To celebrate the feast of the Cross worthily almost all the Oriental liturgies recall all the Old Testament figures of the Cross: the *Tree of Eden*, which destroyed us, while the tree of the Cross saved us; the *Arch of Noah* that saved only one family, while the Cross saved all; *Jacob* who crossed his hands to bless the sons of Joseph (Gen. 48,8-20); *Moses* who extends his hands to open and close the Red Sea (Ex. 14,21-29); *Moses* who threw the piece of wood on the waters of *Mara* to make it sweet (Ex. 15,22-26); *Moses* who broke the rock to bring out water (Ex. 17,1-7); *Moses* who prayed with extended hands to assure the defeat of Amaleq (Ex. 17, 8-13); the stick of *Aron* (Num. 17,16-26); the bronze serpent (Num. 21,6-9) the *Israelites* who were divided into four groups and made to stand in the form of a Cross inside the tabernacle of the covenant (Num. ch.2), and so on.

The Cross is celebrated as the instrument of Passion, the stool on which the Saviour fixed his immaculate feet, the dazzling trophy of his victory, the defeat of the devils, the rampart of the Church, the medicine of illness, the honour of Christians and as the glorious safeguard of the Christian empire. The Church recalls the apparition of the Cross to Constantine, as the pledge of victory against the idols.

In the beginning of the Byzantine liturgical year, comes the most solemn feast of the Cross, of course accompanied by the feast of our Lady (on the 8th of September) as something complimentary. The communion song on the feast of the Cross resumes the whole significance of the feast: "It is placed as a sign above us, the light of your vault, O Lord". The Cross is seen as the epiphanic manifestation of the light of the divine vault. The manifestation of the Cross is the revelation of the love of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit for all men; a love evident in the election of the Son in view of the salvation of many and hence necessarily filled with the personal Spirit of God (8). Such manifestation of the divine love is already true and active in the case of Mary, *Theotokos*, the *Pneumatophora*, the Spouse of the Holy Spirit.

Every episode of this manifestation of the love of the Father for men through the Son is, however, necessarily countersigned by the gift of the Holy Spirit, so that the same Spirit may be communicated to men from the Son. And the Spirit fills the humanity of Christ completely and leads it to its necessary end, the Cross. Thus for the Son, who is filled with the Spirit, the Cross is the supreme and final sign of the perfect

and loving acceptance of the will of the Father; and acceptance which alone can reconcile all men to the Father; for 'it dispose to them the gift of the Holy Spirit. Thus and only thus, having accomplished everything (Jn. 19,30), Jesus can at the end render to the Father the Spirit, the same Spirit in whom he has offered himself in perfect obedience to the Father (Heb. 9,14). It is from his pierced side, when he was on the Cross, that the other sign of salvation sprang out: the blood and the water intermingled—a double symbol of Baptism and Eucharist. The Greeks call these Sacraments, the mysteries which confer the great gift of the Holy Spirit.

On the Cross there converge so many theological and biblical epithets, because it is the primordial 'sign' of universal salvation. As the Father has manifested his will through this Cross, it is to be accepted as such by all men; and it is an essential condition for receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, i.e., to accept the salvific splendour of the divine vault: "Lift up the light of thy countenance upon us, O Lord" (Ps. 4,6):

We may add a word on the reading from St. Paul, 1 Cor. 1,18-24 (actual reading, vv. 18-31). St. Paul distinguishes here between the folly of the Cross and the Cross as the dynamism of God: to those who deny the gift of faith and those who are in the shades of predition, it is folly; but to those who accept the gift of faith and are saved, it is the sign of salvation. In fact, the divine plan of salvation which has as its dynamic centre the Cross and the Resurrection together with the gift of the Holy Spirit, is really folly: the Father hands over to death his only Son, whom he calls *Agapetos*! But God upsets the human wisdom by refuting it through his folly—he saves the whole world and everything in it, not through the mighty and forceful realities, not through revolutionary ideologies and movements, but through the folly of his proclamation from the Cross. The cross is a scandal and folly to many (to the Hebrews and the Greeks), but at the same time it is the power and wisdom of God to the faithful—it is the Resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Now we come to the practical side of this celebration of the Cross: all men carry a Cross each—their Cross yesterday today, tomorrow and always. It is their personal and social history it is their mortal, human, weak and painful condition of corruption. The Christian who celebrates the Cross of his Lord is distinguished from others, not because he has not got his own crosses, nor that God is there to lighten them, or positively to subtract them, but because, the Christian ought to deny

himself, ought to be converted at every moment, ought to have faith as the only and unique condition of existence, ought to accept the cross of every day life (Lk. 9,23) and follow Christ towards death across desert of his own long and painful life in his exodus to the Father. As St. Paul says, our crosses are only a participation in the unique Cross of the Lord; it is our participation in the life of Baptism and of the Eucharist.

In reality, we have all received the Holy Spirit in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation as our Lord himself in Jordan and Thabor. As our Lord himself, we are also to give testimony to his Cross in the Holy Spirit to the world. According to St. Paul, the primordial place of this witnessing is the Eucharistic celebration, i. e., the proclamation of the death and resurrection of the Lord, until he comes (1 Cor. 11,26) And precisely. it is in this proclamation, that the Christians accept actively the manifestation of universal charity of the Father in the Son against the continuous operation of the Holy Spirit; they accept the wisdom and the power of God, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus they help the world to carry its cross, the cross which the world refuses to carry condemns and hates in rebellion and blasphemy.

6. The Parousia: Although it comes as the last one, it is not the least in importance. The parousia or eschatology or the final fulfillment is a moment which naturally flows out of the Oriental liturgical dynamism and contemplative mentality. As a reaction to the Christological controversies, in and after the Nicean Council, Jesus became the centre of theology, cult and piety. Jesus is often contemplated as *Pantokrator*, the creator of all, the omnipotent King, the high Priest and the eschatological Judge. These were all titles and functions of Jesus, already expressed in the New Testament. There was also an attempt to correlate the functional and ontological visions of Old and New Testaments to give rise to a Christology, emphasising rather the functional aspect. Most of the Oriental liturgical texts which contemplate, proclaim and pray Jesus Christ as the "King of kings" and the "Lord of lords" (Rev. 17,14; 19,16) may be the result of such a synthesis.

The title of the King is decisive for the liturgy; presuppose the kingly court of heaven, the heavenly festal procession, where the Lord with his sacred actions is present and where the heavenly choir assist at it with all solemnity. The celebration on earth which, as its essence postulates its dynamic and real consummation in the heavenly liturgy, has

an irresistible tension towards the time of its accomplishment or towards its eschatological fulfilment. There is also a tension towards the 'return' of the Lord which inaugurates this eschatological time.

In the East, towards the middle of the fourth century, the Syriac families completed the structure of the *anamnesis*, giving importance to the Passion-Death, Resurrection and Ascension, and also to the awful 'Second Coming' of the Lord. In its typical salvific character, it presents the past and the present realities in the back-ground of the last Judgement, which inaugurates the ultimate reality, the new heavens and the new earth, with the new people of God in its eternal and cosmic liturgy of praise and love. This eschatological theology, which presents itself as the interior dynamics of the Eucharistic assembly, is purely biblical: St. Paul speaks to his beloved community in Corinth (1Cor. 11,26), that the Eucharistic celebration tends to the second coming of the Lord (9).

We know from history that the anaphoras of the Alexandrian and Roman type had not given special emphasis on the eschatological aspect in the *anamnesis*. Similarly, historical and patristical researches show that towards the beginning of the fourth century, the biblical theme of parousia was elaborately discussed and treated in the Syriac Churches, especially, in their preaching, catechesis and theology. So naturally it had its place also in the liturgy. It was one of the favourite themes of St. Ephrem (ca. 305-373), who developed almost all biblical themes in his Sermons. It is because of his influence that the Syriac liturgies give greater emphasis to the theme of parousia.

In the Byzantine Liturgy of the Hours, on the Sunday of abstinence (10), they celebrate very solemnly the eschatological themes centered on the person of Christ: his second coming, the Judgement, the convocation of all human souls, and the granting of eternal reward or punishment. Besides the Eucharistic Anaphoras, the Syro-Malabar liturgical cycle has one period, that of the Dedication of the Church, to celebrate the eschatological realities. There are also two other periods, those of Elias-Cross and Moses, as a preparation to the above mentioned period.

Notes:

1. On the eve of Epiphany, the Thomas Christians used to light torches and attach them to the kernal of matured plantain trees, known as *Pindi* in the local Malayalam language,

erected in front of houses, and children used to go around them singing certain songs, whose meaning is unknown to them. Actually, they are singing Syriac songs whose substance comes to mean, "El payya", God is light. It is from this practice of the Thomas Christians that the name Pindikuthipperunnal comes.

2. In common terminology, the Law and the Prophets mean the whole of the Old Testament, and the Apostle and the Gospels mean the whole of New Testament.
3. The Latin Church celebrates the Baptism of the Lord in Jordan on the following Sunday.
4. On the night (or Ravu in Malayalam) of Epiphany, i. e., the night in between the 5th and 6th of January, the Thomas Christians used to go to the nearest river or lake and have a solemn bath (or Kuli in Malayalam) there in remembrance of the Lord's Baptism in Jordan. It is from this local custom of the Thomas Christians the name Rakkulipperunnal for Epiphany comes.
5. Supplementum Myteriorum..., or Propria, or changing prayers of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana, Romae 1960, p. 18.
6. The New Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. XI, p. 109
7. Supplementum Myteriorum..., p. 233
8. cfr. our treatises on Baptism in Jordan and the Transfiguration.
9. The reference in St. Paul are very often on imminent parousia. cfr. also, 1Cor. 16, 22; Rev. 22,20 Didache 10,6.
10. The Sunday of Abstinence, is the last and the third Sunday of three weeks of preparation for the Great Fast.

CHAPTER VI

THE THEOLOGICAL IMPORT OF ORIENTAL LITURGIES

As we have already seen, the ancient liturgical texts of the East as well as of the West are all sublime syntheses of living theological reflections. So, they are really the sources for any authentic theological study. In this chapter, our principal aim is, just an introduction to the various theological themes, basing the study mainly on Eastern liturgical texts. It may help the readers to enter into the rich Oriental resources and induce them to go in depth to each of these themes by further research study. In the course of our discussion, we may point out certain peculiarities of Oriental liturgies across the concrete history and also certain specialities which distinguish them from the Western mentality and theological reflections. The documents are rather meagre for the first three centuries; but from the fourth century, we have got plenty of them. The study leads us obviously to the conclusion that, in the East, the theological speculation generally determines radical process of formation in the liturgies as well.

1. The Theological Sensitivity

a) The Influence of Theology and of Theologies

Any casual reader of the history of Oriental liturgies, can easily note that they were very attentive and sensitive to the great theological movements. They have more initiative in the theological field and they have faced many risks and dangers. Still, they are at the same time, richer in reflection, in objectivity and in adaptation. Ask only one question—when the Orientals have formed hundreds of Eucharistic prayers or Anaphoras, why did the West remained satisfied with the one? Only one answer—the West was afraid to move with the living faith or theological speculations; and that too in the very formation period of the patristic age. At the same time, the theological speculation, without any contact to the living faith, i. e., the liturg, grew up to its full stature. It created naturally a big gap between the living faith and the speculative theology. How to bridge this gap, is the greatest problem today to the Western Church. Of course, they have done much in the last few years; but those attempts have their own draw-backs and failures, especially because they had no past guidelines nor directives in this field. On the other hand, the Orientals had already adapted themselves to their own social, cultural and national situations, and had

formed their own liturgies according to the patristic theological developments of their Church. Moreover, they could, by trial and error, fix up the guidelines of adaptation for their future generations. But most of these liturgies and guidelines were painfully mutilated and deformed during and after the 16th century missionary invasions (1). The risk for Easterners today, lies in the ignorance of their own heritage and of the guidelines of adaptation fixed up by their own forefathers according to their own cultural milieu. They are very often fascinated by the western methods which are mostly foreign to their own cultural standards.

In the East, the theology is expressed in the liturgy; that means, the liturgical texts are real sources of theological synthesis. Theology for them, is not a speculative science, shelved in volumes, but the living norm of the practical life of the Church, expressed in its liturgy. Eventhough, they were often isolated from other Churches, they had always tried and succeeded in putting into practice the deep theological speculations in their liturgy, catechesis and apologetics. The liturgical documents of the fourth century and onwards substantiate all that we have hitherto explained.

b. The Negative Theology

We do not intend to go into the historical and literary details of negative theology. Still, as an introduction to that, we have to remember certain open facts. First of all, the negative theology is an attempt to affirm the supreme, absolute and infinite transcendence of God before all created realities and that too against all rationalism, nihilism and anthropomorphism. Such transcendence is profusely seen in some Old Testament authors, who were preoccupied with the eradication of all excessive self-confidence of man in front of the divine essence and operation. Thus in Elohist tradition, the Lord, to whom Moses asked to show his person, replies: "You cannot see my face: for, man shall not see me and live" (Ex. 33, 20). The same tendency is seen also in some of the prophets (Is. 45, 4.5.15). The Sapiential Books are another example for this. Such transcendence is stongly reaffirmed in New Testament, especially. in Jn. 1, 18; Rom. 11,33; 2Cor. 9,15; 12,4; Eph. 3,8; Col. 1 15; 1 Tim. 6, 16; 1 Pet 1,8 and in the Book of Revelation. The only source and basis for the great composers of liturgical texts, the Fathers, was the biblical narrations. So, it is natural that this biblical tendency is expressed also in their liturgical compositions. Finally, the negative theology is a close relative of the affirmative or analogous or eminential theology. The affirmations

start from the visible works; the eminential predicates of God are the supreme grades of visible perfections; but the ultimate phase must necessarily be that of negation. Nothing as it exists in this world, can be predicated to God, who stands above all categories and human predications. In this context, we can very well understand the Indian philosophers who explained the Absolute as 'neti, neti' i.e., it is not this nor that. God is ineffable, invisible, indescribable, unseizable, incomprehensible, impenetrable and so on.

The Jewish history and culture had great influence in the formation of such thinking in early Christian communities. The important centres where this negative theology developed, are Antioch and Alexandria. The Capadocean Fathers also had helped its growth considerably.

As an example we may compare one of the most ancient Anaphora, i.e., of Hippolitus of Rome (+232) with the liturgical documents of the fourth century. Both these texts are filled with negative epithets referring to God, to show his all sublime, unarrivable and transcendental dignity. An exception to this rule, among the most ancient Anaphoras, perhaps, is that of Mar Addai and Mar Mari. Its formation is attributed to the third century. Still, it celebrates although the great works of God (Magnalia Dei), another specific trait of the Old Testament writings (2). The epithets used to explain the great works of God, are all in the Old Testament style, and hence the scholars argue that it is Judeo-Christian in its origin. The seventh Book of Apostolic Constitution is also another example to this. The Anaphora of Serapion of Thmuis (ca. 350) also uses a lot of negative epithets as uncreated, ineffable, incomprehensible, invisible and so on.

The negative theology in humble formulas explains the absolute transcendence of God and thus the divine *sygatabasis*, the divine condescendence to men, his continuous manifestation in the mysteries of creation, redemption, and his ever-renewed and efficacious operation in them.

c. The Theology of *Mysterium Tremendum*

In almost all Eastern liturgies, there is the announcement of the Deacon at the beginning of the Anaphora, to stand with fear and trembling to offer in peace the *Holy Qurbana*. The Fathers such as Theodore of Mopsuestia and others, exhort the assembly to stand in *absolute silence* when the celebrant offers the divine sacrifice (3). The same is seen at the beginning of the Anaphora in the Syro-Malabar Liturgy

(4). Gabriel Qatraya in his commentary on the Qurbana gives the same instruction (5).

The sacrifice, in fact, is a tremendous and fearful mystery, because then, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the High Priest, the only Begotten of the Father, the universal Judge, re-enacts the whole mystery of salvation in types and symbols, offering himself to the Father in the Holy Spirit, in the presence of the heavenly and earthly choirs. The altar of the sacrifice is the special place of God's fearful presence, the place of encounter between God and man. In fact, man ought to be fearful to face such God, who has already worked out his salvation objectively, and who through his infinite power will accomplish his subjective salvation through this liturgical celebration. Of course, this is a reverential fear, which attaches him more and more to the person of the Lord. This fear is the outcome of deep faith, which is historical, present and eschatological. It presupposes the *metanoia*, the real conversion of heart. This total conversion is signified by the *absolute silence* during the Anaphora. And this is the primary effect of the act of Redemption: the Reconciliation of man with God.

It is such a fear and sacred reverence that induced the Fathers to separate the sanctuary from the nave, the celebrant from the faithful and to shut the door of the sanctuary or cover it with a veil during the Eucharistic prayer. And it is precisely one of the typical expressions of Oriental spirituality that collide with the Occidentals (6). But to one who has entered into the spirit of Oriental Liturgies, it is not something strange, but even fruitful.

It was also sometimes prescribed in the West. The Baptismal Catechesis of St. Ambrose demands *silence* on the moment of divine nuptial intimacy, when God presents himself and unites himself totally to the redeemed man. The history of the middle ages tells us that the Western Church too was taken up by the theology of *Mysterium Tremendum*; but it was pushed to the other extreme and its understanding was quite different. Actually the sense of mystery evoked in them a detachment and servile attitude. This separated the community more and more from the Sacred Mysteries. Gradually, the Eucharistic celebration began to be considered primarily an action of the priest and the people became mere spectators; the communion, which is an essential part of the celebration, became a rare privilege of the faithful. As it happens always, this drift in the mentality affected also the construction of the churches. Still there are many such examples in the West (7).

2. The Christology

During the fourth and fifth centuries, there were so many Christological controversies in the Church. There were also political reasons behind such controversies. The first seven Ecumenical Councils (8), one against the other had great influence on the liturgy as well. They did not compose new liturgies, nor did they change the already existing ones; but due to the introduction of elements, although scanty, they could drift the interpretation of the prayers and thus also the mode of liturgical piety. These controversies also resulted in the formation of so many schismatical Churches.

All these controversies were stressing one or the other aspect of the mystery of Christ. Against arianism, the Council of Nicea I (325 A.D.) defined that Jesus Christ is Lord and God, consubstantial with the Father and hence not subordinate to Him in the order of essence. Following this definition, the Fathers began to give an important place to Christ in liturgical prayers. Thus we have so many prayers addressed directly to Jesus Christ. A good example to Christological prayers, perhaps, is the offertory prayer (9) of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana. It is extolled today as a masterpiece of Christology by the scholars. There are also other such prayers in the Syro-Malabar Qurbana (10). But there was some exaggeration going to the other extreme, forgetting completely the work of the Father and of the Holy Spirit in human salvation. This was the case both in the East and in the West.

The Council of Ephesus (431 AD.) had great influence on the Liturgy. We may mention here only the four important introductions in the Liturgy after this Council:

- a. **Mary as Theotokos:** Mary has an eminent place in all Oriental liturgies. After Ephesus, as a reaction to Nestorianism, Peter Fullon, the Patriarch of Antioch (+ 488) decided to add the Marian title *Theotokos* to all prayers. Then it gradually spread to many other Churches and their liturgies. Eventhough the Nestorians could not accept this title, they give, perhaps, the greatest honour and veneration to our Lady in the liturgical prayers. Many examples we have in the Eucharistic celebration, and in the 'Liturgy of the Hours' of the East-Syriac Churches (11).
- b. **The Nicene Creed:** It was also introduced by Peter Fullon into every Eucharistic celebration; till then they used to recite it only once a year. All the Eastern Churches adopted this custom to show their

adherence to the antique faith. The Roman Church began to recite the symbol of faith only in the twelfth century, and that too only on Sundays and Feast days.

- c. **The Song of the only Begotten:** According to historical evidences, it seems that it was composed by the Emperor Justinian (529-565). It was sung first at Antioch and Constantinople, and then gradually spread among the West Syrians and the Coptic Monophysites.
- d. **The Trisagion:** It was often interpreted as a Trinitarian hymn. Historically it is a West-Syriac hymn. It was first sung in 451 A. D. at Calcedon by the bishops of the Antiochean Region to honour Flavian, the Archbishop of Constantinople, and to condemn Dioscorus of Alexandria. Later on the whole Orient accepted this hymn. The followers of Cyril added a final close: "He who is crucified for us. You are Holy". Peter Fullon is said to be the author of this final close. The Syrian, Coptic and Armenian Monophysites are retaining it still. It was considered in general as a monophysite formula. But recent studies revealed that, at least for the Churches of the Antiochean Family, it is a Christological formula. They also change this final close according to the different feasts of our Lord and the important seasons of the year. That is why the Syro-Malankara Church, at their re-union (1930 AD.) was allowed for the first time to retain this final close in their Liturgy.

Christology as lived in the Liturgy

Christology occupies the central and pre-eminent position in Oriental liturgies, when compared with other aspects of Christian faith. It reassumes all the divine mysteries and live it in a synthetic and profound way. In the Orient, all Christological mysteries are understood as centred on Christ's Resurrection. It is, perhaps, the most typical aspect of all Eastern liturgies without exception. It confers to them, among so many miseries and quarrels, oppressions and suffocations, denials and discriminations, a splendid *paschal light*. The vehicle of such paschalization of the liturgy is the Sunday, and its origin seems to be at Jerusalem, with its particular liturgy in the Holy places.

The Sunday was the commemoration of the Resurrection in ancient Church. St. Justin in his *Apologia* 67, says that, on Sunday the Christians gathered together to celebrate the

creation and the Resurrection of the Lord, which is the new-creation. The East fostered this mother idea of Sunday celebration all through the ages. In the West, however, due to the loss of real contact with the original biblical sources, and with the Oriental patristic traditions and their liturgies this paschal importance given of the Sundays faded gradually. The exaggerated importance to the *incarnation* as the sufficient moment of salvation, and that to *Passion and Death*, as the only moment of Redemption, in theology, caused greatly the weakening of this paschal liturgical sense in the West. It had also its harmful consequences in piety and faith. In connection it would be better to quote a few lines from an author who has done research studies into this problem very recently. He writes:

“Western Christianity, however, has manifested a long-standing preoccupation with Good Friday at the expense of Easter Sunday. A complex set of causes appear to have been at work in effecting this bias in the whole tradition of the Western Church. The soul, its immortality, and man’s ‘inner’ life came to bulk larger in the religious imagination than the resurrection of the body. A Manichean irreverence towards man’s physical being also played its part here. Inevitably, a weakened interest in our resurrection implied less concern for Christ’s resurrection. A neglect of the Holy Spirit went hand in hand with a deficient regard for the resurrection. In their different ways Luke, John and Paul all interpreted the Spirit in the light of the risen Christ and vice versa. The subsequent decline of pneumatology in Western Christianity inevitably entailed a weakened theology of resurrection. . . . So long as full credit for our redemption is ascribed to Christ’s death, his resurrection becomes at best a highly useful (if not strictly necessary) proof of Christian claims. Looking back on much Western theology we might parody Paul and cry out: ‘Resurrection is swallowed up in crucifixion. O Resurrection, where is thy victory? O Resurrection where, is thy sting?’ (12).

In all Eastern Churches the liturgical year is centred on the mystery of Resurrection. In the Byzantine Rite, after *gloria* which begins the Liturgy, they sing a hymn of Resurrection on all Sundays of the year. Thus they celebrate the Resurrection without interruption throughout year. In the Indo-Chaldean *Qurbana*, the hymn of Resurrection, “. . . Jesus Christ, we glorify you, for you are the Resuscitator of our bodies and . . .” is sung or recited on everyday of the year. Moreover the East Syriac *Qurbana* is understood to be a masterpiece

of St. Paul's Resurrection theology. This paschal spirit can also be seen all through 'the Liturgy of the Hours', especially that of Saturdays and Sundays. Such liturgical hymns are also literary pieces of Oriental theology, the living instrument of a living theology and a living spirituality.

a. The Theanthropy: Many of the Christological controversies were directed towards the *Theanthropy* of Jesus Christ, the Word incarnate, the Son of God, the son of man, i.e., towards his functional titles, which indicate the divine penetration into the world, retaining his divinity immutable and not confused with the non-divine essence. He acts the divine person, but through the living human instrument, both intelligent and sensible, i.e., the humanity assumed. It is against this *Theanthropic* operation that the man is saved, because he himself is assumed to become somehow divine.

Nevertheless, the modes of this *Theanthropy* are discussed gradually, and always according to the New Testament axiom, which summarises the whole of divine economy: "for us men and for our salvation." Thus the Arianism, the monophysitism, the monothelitism, the nestorianism, the iconoclasm, all these were discussing either of the possibility of *Theanthropy* or its modes, or of its predicability. The liturgical texts were very sensible to represent faithfully and to celebrate solemnly the divine mysteries against which Jesus has saved men. Thus, we have in them, even the minute developments of the mysteries of faith, expressed. They all converge to the other great axiom: "the humanity is saved only as far as it is assume by the divinity".

b. The Divine Philanthropy: It is an expression, we meet often in Old Testament (Deut., I and 2 Mac) and in New Testament (Acts. 27,3; 28,2; Tit. 3,4); and it indicates the benevolence of God towards man. When it is considered from the part of man, it assumes the form of sympathy or of humanity; but from the part of God, it assumes the value of salvific Epiphany, the divine intervention to save man, or the divine love for man in its full expression. The incarnation, therefore, is the immediate consequence of the divine philanthropy; the Cross is its supreme sign; the Resurrection is the victory of it over death, corruption and sin; the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost is the first extension of this philanthropy to men; and the 'resurrection of the flesh' is the universal and definitive extension of the same. Above all, through the celebration of the Cross and Resurrection,

the *Holy Qurbana*, the tremendous mystery of the divine philanthropy is prolonged and actualized in the Church. The same mystery is extended also to the other Sacraments and liturgical prayers. But in Eucharist, it reaches a climax in the intimate union between the Lord and the faithful, and that too by the special effusion of the Holy Spirit.

The Prayer to Jesus

According to Apostolic tradition, it seems that the Church was addressing her liturgical prayers to the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. But the Christological controversies caused to give an accent on the figure and central function of Christ in the Kingdom of the *New Economy* of salvation. Thus in liturgical prayers, there came a shift of emphasis from the Father to the son. In this context anybody can ask a question. If the Christological formulas are of later origin, replacing the formulas of the Apostolic Church, why can't they be changed at present? Actually the Latins have done it; but the Orientals have not—Why?

The answer is not so easy. We have to take into account a very important and inherent reason here. In the East, such formulas have moulded the very spirituality of the Church. We saw that the liturgy in the East, is the basis for their spirituality. Moreover, such prayers bring to mind the whole ancient history connected with them. Thus the faithful is encouraged and nourished everyday to face all such challenges in his own life. This is an important function of the Liturgy: 'to preserve and nourish the authentic faith'. That is why those who have studied of the great treasure and power of such liturgical formulas, oppose any radical change in them. This idea may be made more clear with an illustration. Let us take for example the Indian National Anthem. What does it mean? What is the content of it? It contains nothing but the names of certain regions, rivers and mountains. To a foreigner it may be meaningless. But to an Indian, who knows the context of its composition, the feelings and message it conveyed then, the history of Indian freedom struggle, and the difficulties his country-men encountered during the long colonial rule, it is something enchanting! His heart will throb with his love for the Motherland! Years can only heighten such feelings! The same is to be said about each ancient liturgical composition. As they are nearer to the time of our Lord, they are more expressive of the experience of Christ-Event and the history of salvation.

In the case of Jewish Christianity, the prayers to Jesus may not necessarily be the result of Christological controversies. They had from the very beginning another great task ahead. It was very difficult for them to convince the Jews of the divinity of Jesus Christ. They were a people trained and lived in the monotheistic pattern. A second person in Godhead was an open heresy to them. So it was a herculean task to bring them to the idea of the Holy Trinity. Liturgy was the only means for the primitive community for a gradual instruction of the neophytes on the divine Trinity and on the equality of the three persons in one God. That seems to be another reason why the Oriental liturgies, almost all of them, keep an equilibrium with regard to theology, christology and pneumatology. The Christological prayers in the East Syriac Churches and hence also in the Syro-Malabar *Qurbana*, might be attributed to this Jewish-Christian influence.

3. Pneumatology

It would be unjust simply to accuse the Western Church of not having a pneumatology, i. e., a doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Numerous theological writings, beginning with St. Augustine up to the recent discussion about the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, prove sufficiently that the great minds of Western theology were and are continuously searching for a reflective understanding of one of the greatest mysteries of our faith: the presence and operation of the Holy Spirit in us. At the same time, it is an undeniable fact that there did not exist a treatise in the Western theological system on the Holy Spirit as such. Of course, He was part of the Trinitarian treatise, concerning His procession from the Father and the Son, and His mission; but nothing is said about His proper function. He hardly appeared in Christology, Soteriology and in Ecclesiology. He rarely received adequate treatment as the Soul of the Church, who is ever present and active in her, especially, in her vital functions—the Sacraments. The treatise on Grace usually handles the Holy Spirit with a simple statement on inhabitation, and on His gifts. Anthropology, Eschatology and most of all, Moral theology had neglected completely His function in Christian life.

It was in view of this short-comings that, during the second Vatican Council, the Fathers and observers of the Oriental Churches complained about the lack of pneumatology in the Western Church. They accused it of having neglected the Holy Spirit in favour of a one-sided Christocentrism. They claimed that this one-sidedness led to an

exaggerated emphasis on the incarnational, and consequently, on the institutional aspect of the Church, which drew to the danger of forgetting the pneumatic character of the whole Christian religion. The Council did what it could do. But the task of developing the doctrine is left to the work of the theologians.

Almost all the theologians have several times affirmed the pneumatological richness of the Eastern tradition. We saw that the Oriental Christianity is much more a life-experience than a doctrinal system (13). Hence well-known modern theologians of the West think that an encounter with Oriental theology, in all its aspects and systems, is a must for revitalising the Western Church.

Just as in the case of Christology, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit also develops as a reaction to pneumatological controversies, the first among them being that of arianism. First of all, they tried to establish the Scriptural foundation of this mystery. Then their attempt was to find out the datas of the Apostolic Fathers on the person, function and relation of the Spirit with the Father and the Son. They strongly affirmed the consubstantiality of the Son and the Spirit with the Father. Still, the Council of Nicea did not specifically emphasise on the divinity of the Spirit. The Fathers then, perhaps, cared more for peace in the Church than clear dogmatic distinctions. In fact, they understood the Spirit as God and adored him as consubstantial with the Father and the Son. We do not find, however, an explicit dogmatic formula, mentioning him as *God-Theos*.

In spite of all these, let us not forget that the faith of the Fathers, and of the faithful of all Eastern Churches, is not to be searched in dogmatic treatises, but in their real liturgical life. There we meet the Holy Spirit everywhere. He is the operating power in all the Sacraments. Not only that the Holy Spirit has his place in the doxologies, but that the Orientals have the typical formula of pneumatic invocation, the *Epiclesis*. Every Sacrament has its epiclesis, and it is a prayer to the Father or even to the Son to send the Spirit on the community that celebrates the Sacrament and to perfect the sacramental action. Sometimes, the prayer is directly addressed to the Holy Spirit. His function is almost the same in all the Sacraments.

A typical formula we have in the third *Mystagogical Catechesis* of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, which is a commentary on *1 Jn. 2, 20-28*:

“Don’t think that you have there the simple *crism* (perfumed crism). As the bread of the Eucharist is no more simple bread after *Epiclesis*, but the body of Christ, so also this *holy crism* is no more simple crism after the *Epiclesis*; but it is the unction of Christ, and has become efficacious to divinise the object of unction through the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is with this crism that your forehead and other senses are sacramentally anointed. With this visible *myron* your body is anointed, but with the Holy Spirit your soul is sanctified”.

Here we have a wonderful functional assimilation of the work of the Spirit on the Eucharistic elements and on the crismal unction. Other Fathers such as, Theophilus of Alexandria, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Gregory of Nyssa, Seraphion of Thmuis and many others, while treating on the *epiclesis* either in Eucharist, or in Baptism, or in *Sumtaya* affirm this great work of the Spirit in the Sacraments (14). Hence the function of the Holy Spirit in the Liturgy was considered something essential at least from the third or fourth century.

4. Ecclesiology

In Chapter four, we have already dealt with the theology of an Individual Church. This fundamental vision influenced almost all the documents of Vatican II (15). Here our concern is an introduction into the liturgical and Sacramental ecclesiology. Still, we may speak something about the theology of Church-administration too.

SC. 41 is clear enough to present this theme. According to this article of the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, the liturgical life of a particular Church has the supreme importance above all other forms of ecclesiastical life. The Bishop (in the Eastern context, it is to be understood as the Bishops Synod of each Individual Church) is to be understood as the true head of the Church, established in a particular circumstance by the providence of God. He is the High Priest (*Summus Pontifex*), the true Liturgist, i. e., the real figure of Jesus Christ, the High Priest. The Church manifests itself primarily in its liturgical celebration, presided over by the Bishop and the clergy. Of course, this is the ideal celebration and manifestation of the Church. But in the present circumstances it is practically impossible. Still, the unity of altar and that of the prayer is achieved, when the different communities in an Individual Church accomplish the liturgical celebrations according to the common understanding and by using the liturgical texts approved by the authority of that Individual Church.

Now, turning to the purely Oriental Churches, without any exaggeration we can say that the liturgical celebration is their fundamental axiom; and thus they keep up the basic conception of the *Urkirche*, the Early Church, namely, the idea of the Eucharistic community. The local ecclesiastical community, for them, is first of all liturgical and sacramental by its structure and by its function. There is no distinction between the Church and its Liturgy; and its life is always influenced by the cultural and historical situation. Hence naturally, the Oriental Churches (the Oriental Churches in India being exceptions) prefer smaller units, each being presided over by a Bishop. Only then can the Bishop be the true Liturgist, the true Pastor, the true Father, the true Judge, and the true Consoler. A Bishop's most important pastoral duty is to preside over the Liturgy of the community, especially the Eucharist (16).

In the West, because of extreme legalism and hair-splitting legal analysis, one is often induced to be satisfied with things absolutely necessary (17). Hence it is quite natural that one may look for the shortest and less-frequented celebrations to fulfill the precept. And very often he is indifferent during such celebrations. In the East, on the contrary, Liturgy is understood, as the centre of the living local community and hence always solemn and frequented by large numbers of faithful. The celebration itself may be less frequent, but always in community (18). The liturgical texts themselves prove this fact (19).

Another important factor that comes to our mind is the theology of ecclesiastical administration. The Oriental liturgical texts, their commentaries and the living practice there, were constant inspiration to the Council Fathers to think about the more democratic Synodal regime. It resulted in so many innovations, such as the Bishop's Synod, the Diocesan Council, the Priests Council, the Parish Council and so on, even in the Roman Church.

The system of *Autocephalia* is also something quite strange to the Western Church. Autocephalus Churches are independent Church units within the same individual Church or Rite. They are united among themselves or with the Mother Church with the chains of faith and common tradition. Here again Liturgy is the sign, if not the means of communion. This is quite understandable. The essence, genius and diction of the Liturgy, because they pertain to the very Apostolic Christ-Experience, can never be changed. But the externals and cultural elements must be modified and adapted according to the local situations. This may be a revelation to the Syro-Zalabar Missions. They are the extensions of the Syro-

Malabar Church. They are to be faithful to the Mother Church in Faith, Tradition and in Liturgy. In all other respects, they are to be the Church of the place (20).

The *Koinonia* of the *Autocephalus* Churches to the Patriarchal Church is something unique in Eastern Tradition. They never demand or even thought of a uniformity; but they were united among themselves with the chains of faith, common tradition and liturgy. Similarly, the different Individual Churches in the East, tried to foster intercommunion among themselves as circumstances allowed them. In such cases, they never demanded a communion in the Liturgy; but only in the faith of the Lord and in the same Sacraments. They respected the identity of each other. The same was their idea of relation to the Church of Rome.

The Eastern sense of catholicity can never be reduced to uniformity or to the absorption of all other Churches into one. It consists in keeping one's own identity in its growth and at the same time allowing and even helping others to grow in their own identity. Even today, after Vatican II and so many discussions on the nature and identity of each Individual Church, some of the Bishops and clergy in the Latin Church are afraid of Orientals! They are at a loss to recognise and respect other "styles of Christian life" than that of the Latin Church!

5. The Supernatural Anthropology

The divinisation of man is the immediate consequence of the divine philanthropy and of the power of salvation as explained by the divine economy. We cannot but mention this, when we speak of anthropology as a necessary trait of Eastern Liturgies. As a reaction to *Arianism*, they also speculated on the effect of divine salvation on man, and began to express such ideas in liturgical prayers. The elements for such a speculation were already there in the New Testament. It speaks clearly of man becoming 'Son of God' and thus participating in the life of Christ, not only in his death, but also in his resurrection: "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature" (2Pet. 1,3-4).

The call to participate in the divine nature by becoming one with Christ, is something mysterious, but real. It is possible only by the action of the Holy Spirit. The Liturgy turns out to be the greatest instrument of this divinisation, especially because it re-enacts the salvific Christ-events. The Liturgy of the sacrifice itself fully re-enacts the redemptive mysteries in summary and the liturgical year in detail (21). A particular aspect of this divinisation is manifested and lived in the feast of Transfiguration (Aug. 6), which is also one of the principal moments of Oriental Liturgies. By contemplating and living such mysteries, the faithful become capable of transforming themselves with the continuous help of the Holy Spirit. In this slow process, the human faculties are purified and sanctified to see the divine light.

This process of divinisation goes even beyond man. In fact, the divine light shed on man helps to transform the whole nature. The Word Incarnate, the source of all graces, while manifesting himself to those who were purified by the divine grace, tries to bring together all created things. In the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul writes about "the creation, (which) was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the Children of God" (Rom. 8,20-21).

As we have already mentioned, the divinisation happens through the participation in the Sacraments. The Oriental liturgies have preserved one of the most important and antique practice of the Church—the ceremonies of Christian Initiation. Even today in most of these Churches, the three Sacraments of Baptism, Sumlaya and Eucharist, are administered together. The Fathers of old considered these sacraments as complement to each other.

In general, the Christian Initiation appears to be the great introduction to the life of faith, in various stages: the actual commitment of faith follows the real conversion of heart, for which a long catechumenate was advised; then follows the Baptism, through which the Spirit incorporates the faithful to Christ, confirming his faith and restoring the possibility of approach to the Father; the Sumlaya is for the total Sacerdotal assimilation to Christ and the Eucharist is to vivify and nourish the life of faith. Hence the Eucharist, for them, is the supreme and continuous profession of faith according to the divine command (1 Cor. II, 23-26).

6. Mariology

The Eastern Liturgical texts give a well balanced and deep dogmatic insight into Mariology as well. Here again we want to give only certain hints to a deeper research study. Most of the liturgical texts of Mariology developed under the influence of Christological controversies. That again is the key to Eastern Mariology, for, the importance of Mary is intimately linked with that of Christ. Hence there are no Marian icon in the East without the Son in her hand.

Cardinal Bea, writing an introduction to the last volume of a series of Mariological studies in French, edited by Fr. Hubert du Manoir SJ, recalls that most of the documentation in the encyclicals concerning the dogma of the Immaculate conception (in 1854) and that of Assumption (in 1950), emanate from the Fathers and authors of the Christian East. It was the Eastern tradition which gave the most solid support to the definition of these dogmas. For instance, the Latin Divine Office for 8th December is almost exclusively taken from the texts written by the Greek and Syriac Fathers.

Just to have an experience of Eastern Mariological piety, may I quote the first strophe of the hymn accompanying the vesperpsalm in Byzantine Church for the feast of Annunciation on March 25th: "Gabriel came to you, O Spotless Bride, in order to make known to you the decision which was made in eternity. And he greeted you, saying, 'Joy be to you, O unseeded field! Joy be to you, O unburnable thorn-bush! Joy be to you, O unfathomable depth! Joy be to you, O bridge, leading to heaven, lofty ladder seen by Jacob! Joy be to you, O holy basin of Manna! Joy be to you, O deleverer from damnation! Joy be to you, O reconciler of Adam! The Lord is with you, Hail!'"

The importance given to our Lady in the Christian life of the Byzantine Church is evident from the very structure of their churches. The icon of the Annunciation is depicted on the door of each *Iconostas*, the screen that separates the sanctuary from the nave. The Annunciation is the beginning of human salvation and therefore must be the beginning of every liturgy according to the Orientals (22). Just as the door of the Sanctuary opens to the altar, so too, by virtue of the motherhood to the God-Man, Mary herself is the entrance to the sanctuary. The historic redemptive mysteries are re-enacted in the sanctuary, and this was realised, only through the consent of Mary during the Annunciation. In their liturgy, the opening of this Royal Gates at solemn moments is always followed by a hymn to her, who is called 'the door to Paradise'.

In the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great, the Archbishop of Caesarea in Capadocia, we have a beautiful Marian hymn: "Every creature, choirs of angels and men, are happy because of you. You are the holy temple, the spiritual paradise, the glory of virgins. In you God took flesh, in you there was a little child, who is the Lord God for all eternity. He made your womb a throne more spacious than the skies. Every creature rejoices because of you. Hail, full of grace, all honour be to you!"

Similarly in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, immediately after the *Epiclesis*, the celebrant sings in a loud voice: "Especially for our all-holy, all-pure, all-laudable Sovereign Lady, Mother of God and ever Virgin Mary"; to which the choir and the faithful together respond: "Indeed it is right to praise you, Mother of God, holy and immaculate Mother of our Lord! You who are more venerable than the Cherubim and incomparably more glorious than the Seraphim, who being immaculate didst give birth to the Word of God, being true Mother of God, we praise you".

After the Council of Ephesus, Mariology developed under the basic title of Mary, *Theotokos*, the Mother of God. The East Syriac Churches could not accept this title without qualification; since for them the equivalent of God, *alaha*, may signify the Trinity or any Person of the Trinity. Hence they say 'Mother of God the Son, or God the Word or Mother of our God,...'. They give, perhaps, the greatest veneration to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Divine Liturgy of the Indo-Chaldean Church itself is a testimony to this. She is venerated and praised several times everyday also in her 'Liturgy of the Hours'. Moreover, the Wednesdays throughout the year are fully set apart to extol the praises of the Bl. Mother. We meet with all the prerogatives of our Lady in these prayers. She is acknowledged as perfect Virgin and Mother of our God and Lord (23). She is understood as the source of all helps (24), and the one who consoles the world in its tribulations from the wicked one (25).

In order to have a real insight into the East Syriac Mariology, may I quote certain prayers from the 'Liturgy of the Hours' of the Indo-Chaldean Church: "The angels in heaven and men on earth celebrate together the glorious day of the commemoration of Mary, the Mother of God (26), with the canticles of the Holy Spirit, because the Lord elected her and made her the dwelling for his hiddenness and the glorious mansion for his Divinity; the Splendour of

the Eternal Father was pleased to be manifested in our humanity, and in her were fulfilled the mysteries and types, which the just had typified about the birth of Emmanuel, who dawned to us from the house of David and from the Bl. Mary. O Christ, who in his divinity, is born from the Father and in his humanity from Mary, the God-Man, have mercy on us" (27).

"Blessed are you, O corporal ship, filled with riches! The life for mortals was hidden in you; Blessed are you, the bodily mansion, because the Son of the King dwelt in you. Blessed are you, O the harbour, because the first righteous ones finished their course in you. Blessed are you, O Mary, because the words of Isaiah were fulfilled in you; and he said: 'behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son and he will be called Emmanuel, to be interpreted as 'God with us': Let there be bliss to you, hope to us and praise to Him" (28)

The speciality of Marian devotion in the East Syriac Churches is, that it is sober and purely biblical. All the liturgical and para-liturgical prayers are based on the fundamental axiom in the Symbol of faith, "the communion of Saints". The Bl. Mother and other saints are invited 'to pray with us' and never the prayer is directly addressed to them. "O Mary, the Holy Virgin, the Mother of Jesus, our Redeemer, 'pray with us' to your Son that he may make his peace dwell among us and protect us from all deceits, night and day" (29).

The neo-liturgical trends prevalent today in the Western Church is a great scandal to the Eastern mentality. They can never understand the irresponsible adaptations to current fashions of thoughts and modern moods. Such tendencies in the western Church may be due to its relations with the Protestant churches. Anyhow, it has caused a de-emphasis also in the true veneration of the Bl. Virgin Mary. She must be understood in the proper place and according to the authentic dogmatic teaching of the Church. Jesus Christ is the sole and natural Mediator in between God and man. Mary's mediation is something participated and hence secondary. Moreover, her mediation is not an end in itself, but a means to an end. It depends upon her motherhood to the divine Son and thus she is a bridge between God and man. Both extremes are to be avoided in Marian devotions; on the one side, fantastic devotions which obscure the true mediatorship of Christ and on the other side, a reconstruction

of the Church without giving any importance to the Bl. Virgin Mary. A house is barren without a mother; so too the Church will be barren without the divine Mother.

So many other points of interest in Eastern Mariology, may I leave to those who are interested in such research work, and let me conclude this with another quotation from the 'Liturgy of the Hours' of the Syro-Malabar Church: "Our race was condemned in Eden in the person of Eve, who transgressed the commandments; but we were freed from the curse of the evil one and from the death that was reigning over us by the Daughter of Eve; for, he who redeems us from the mouth of these, was born of her. Hence we celebrate always her memory, so that she may ask her Son and he may answer us during times of distress, and that he may grant us peace and tranquility, health to the body, and remission of debts. Let the prayers of Mary be for us a high fortress and a place of refuge at all hours" (30).

7. Eschatology

The Eastern liturgical texts, as the Fathers interpret them, are very rich in eschatological theology with liturgical, biblical, catechetical, homiletical spiritual mystical importance. They are the replica of an eternal heavenly liturgy, more or less mysterious, but real (31).

Usually, the divine action is Trinitarian. Hence, the Father is the end and final cause of both the earthly and the heavenly liturgy. He sends down the Son and the Holy Spirit. They in their turn, redirect all praise and glory to him. The Son appears as the true Liturgist in both these liturgies. He is called and praised as the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the High Priest, Christ or Redeemer. He appears also as the head of the heavenly choir. The Holy Spirit is considered as the efficient cause without whose help these liturgies can never take place. He is the one who fulfills all realities, and who is effused continuously on the Church.

The heavenly court which accompanies the King is composed of angels of various orders, namely, the angelic hierarchy (32). Moreover, there are saints of different grades and types of sanctity. This court is always around the King and all of them together worship the Father, and participate also in the earthly liturgy.

This heavenly liturgy, as explained by the Eastern liturgical texts, is eternal and cosmic. It is begun with the Resurrection of the Lord and will have no end. It remains as the true eternal reality both to angels and to men. The whole created reality, namely, the angels, the saints, the men, the heaven, the earth and so on, all participate in this festal worship rendered to God.

It is a liturgy of praise, of glorification, of thanks-giving and of adoration. All these are rendered to God, first, because he is worthy of all these, and secondly, because of his concern for us, men. He has sent his Son and the Spirit to accomplish our salvation, and then he himself controls the course of time from creation upto the *parousia*, which opens the eternity.

This heavenly liturgy presupposes the transfiguration or the paschalisation of all created realities. This is to be effected through the earthly liturgy. This is the ultimate reality to which we move, because, beyond this there doesn't exist any movement or gesture before God. And finally, it is the true reality which is present and operative in the earthly liturgy; and hence, the Church must necessarily expect the descent of heaven on earth for the enrichment of her liturgy.

When we enter deep into the Oriental mentality, we understand that these are not vain poetical phrases, nor mystical imaginations, but the fruit of continuous study and contemplation of the Sacred Scripture. In fact, already in the Old Testament there are such elements which are repeated also in the New Testament in relation to the work and personality of Jesus Christ. In Ex. 25.8-9, the Lord asks for a sanctuary to remain among his people, and it is to be built in the model of the heavenly Sanctuary, shown to Moses. The Lord promises his presence in the Temple and hence also in the liturgy of the Temple (1 King, 8,22-53).

In New Testament, the theme of heavenly liturgy comes principally in the Epistle to the Hebrews and in the Book of Revelation. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man: he is the High Priest of the New Covenant; he offered himself in the Spirit, and the Father raised him and enthroned him as King and the Messianic Judge. Jesus, thus makes his triumphal entrance into the new heavenly Sanctuary, where he inaugurates the cosmic eternal liturgy of praise, and where the heavenly choir sings in exultation 'Hossana',

For the Orientals, the earthly liturgy is a prolongation and an imitation of this heavenly liturgy. On one side, it is aware of its inferior status; but on the other hand, it is fully aware of its relative identity. However, the terrestrial liturgy tends to that of heaven, while that of heaven continuously intervenes in the earthly one.

The Liturgist is the same in both these liturgies. Here on earth, the bishop or priest is the representative of Christ. Moreover, according to Orientals, the whole celestial liturgical assembly descends and divinises the earthly liturgy, really producing the paschal effect.

In the Eucharistic celebration, according to the Fathers, two typical expressions, at two characteristic moments of liturgical action, make this irruption of the divine into the earthly liturgy clear:

a) **The Small Exodus:** This is the Gospel procession. The celebrant or the archdeacon, with deacons and other ministers and with the accompaniment of the Cross and candles brings down the Holy Gospel to the *Bema*. This signifies the descent of the Divine Word down to the nave (earth) to be with men, to convert them, to instruct them, and to prepare them to the Eucharistic mystery (33).

(b) **The Great Exodus:** This is the Offertory procession. The same court, during the offertory, starts from the *Beth Gaza* and goes to the Sanctuary through the nave. Here, the sacrifice itself makes irruption on earth. The King of kings comes with his court and the hymn sung then celebrates this real coming of the Lord with his heavenly court.

These two symbolical actions express clearly the full participation of the heavenly choir in earthly liturgical celebrations.

The words of Prof. Thomasso Federici are clear enough to distinguish between the Western and Eastern eschatological vision and at the same time, to conclude our discussion on Eastern Eschatology. He writes: "As a student of both the liturgies, Eastern and Western, one must bear in mind that both of them have different visions. The Roman liturgy, in fact, think of the earthly reality worked out by the Church, and prays that it may be taken to heaven by the angel of the Lord (34) to the heavenly altar, to have it the definitive sanction from God. The Orientals, on the contrary, think first of all about

the heavenly liturgy and transfer everything here and now, on earth to that in such a way that the earthly altar really becomes the heavenly altar''(35).

Notes:

1. Dom David BALFOUR osb, Uniatism: A Handicap to Reunion, in Pax 86 (Spring 1928) 61-69, passim.
2. There is only one negative epithet in the last Gehantha, cfr. Thaksa d-Qudasa, Always 1960, p. 33.
3. Homilia 15, 28-29, in studi e Testi, N. 145, Citta del Vaticano 1949, pp. 209-301.
4. Thaksa d-Qudasa, Always 1960, p. 26
5. Homilies and Interpretations on the Holy Qurbana, Sandesanilayam, Changanacherry 1977, pp. 98-99.
To understand better the real value of silence in Christian life, cfr. Catherine de Hueck DOHERTY, Poustinia, Christian Spirituality of the East for Western Man, Notre Dame 1975.
6. At least after Vatican II, we are in a position to admit the origin and development of different spiritualities. Vatican II has also enforced the preservation and development of all these spiritualities, being faithful to the identity and tradition of each Individual Church. cfr. the Council Decrees on Eastern Catholic Churches and on Ecumenism.
7. The Cathedral Church at Modena in Italy.
 - i) Nicea I (325) **Consubstantiality of the Son with the Father (against Arianism.)**
 - ii) Constantinople I (381) **Holy Spirit is God as the Father and the Son.**
 - iii) Ephesus (431) **The unity of person in Christ and Mary as the Mother of God.**
 - iv) Calcedonia (451) **Duality of nature in the one person of Christ.**
 - v) Constantinople II (553) **Against Origenism, suspected of Nestorianism.**
 - vi) Constantinople III (680-81) **Against Monothelism.**
 - vii) Nicea II (787) **Against Iconoclasm.**

9. "May Christ who offered himself in sacrifice for our salvation and commanded us to celebrate the memorial of his passion and death, burial and resurrection, accept this offering from our hands by his grace and mercy for ever, Amen;" cfr. Holy Qurbana according to the Syro-Malabar Rite, Allehabad 1970, p. 38.
10. Thaksa d-Oudasa, Alwaye 1960, pp. 29-30, 33, 35, 51, 52 etc.
11. Ibid, pp, 20, 33.
BEDJAN, 'The Liturgy of the Hours' in 3 vols, (Syriac), Romae 1938, cfr. the prayers for all Wednesdays and Marian Feast days.
12. Gerald O' COLLINS sj, The Easter Jesus, London 1973, pp. 117-18.
13. Attila MIKLOSHAZY sj, East Syrian Eucharistic Pneumatology, Roma 1968, pp. 8-9; our Appendix to Ch. IV.
14. cfr. Inter. Hier. Epist. 98, 13 in PL. 22. 801.
Homil. Bapt. 3,9 in ed., Studie Testi, p. 421
In Baptismum Christi, PG. 46, 581
15. cfr. Vatican II documents such as, SC. 41-42; CD. 22; AG. 19; UR. 15-17; OE. passim.
16. A Bishop can never remain satisfied by celebrating alone in his private chapel. He has to preside over the Eucharistic celebration in his Cathedral, at least on Sundays and Feast days.
17. Someone may argue that the situation in the West is drastically changed; but according to my experience and conviction the mentality still persists.
18. This was the custom also in the West; but the Stipend system, as it was being introduced in the West, encouraged more and more the practice of daily celebrations and Private Masses. Several Oriental Churches, including the Syro-Malabar Church, are tragically affected by this Western Stipend system and consequent material out-look in Eucharistic celebrations.
19. Eastern Liturgical texts are fully communitarian and conscious of the local community, as well as of the Church at large. A comparative study of the texts of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana and the Latin Missal, will make it clearer.

20. In this context, the precarious juridical status of the Syro-Malabar Missions as Suffragans to the Latin Ecclesiastical Provinces and the over-enthusiasm for latinisation and westernisation in some of them, seem to be very strange.
21. cfr. our Chapter IV.
22. It is good to remember here, that the Syro-Malabar Liturgical Year begins with the Period of Annunciation.
23. 'The "Nestorian" (East Syriac) Liturgy of the Hours', Trichur 1940 p. 71
24. BEDJAN, loc cit., arabic numbers, p. 10
25. Ibid., p. 23
26. "Mary, the Mother of God", was originally, "Mary, the Mother of Christ", and this is more accurate according to the literary tradition of East Syriac.
27. BEDJAN, loc. cit., p. 39
28. Ibid., p. 93
29. Ibid., p. 81
30. Ibid., p. 158
31. cfr. The Anaphora of Cyril of Jerusalem or of Alexandria, the introduction to Sanctus in HANNGI-PAHL, Præx Eucharistica, Freiburg 1968, pp. 285 ff.
The Great Entrance Prayer of the Byzantine Rite is another example.
32. Dionysius of Areopagus (ca. 6th century) calls it so. cfr. also SC. 8
33. Every East Syriac Church must have at least three essential parts: the Sanctuary, which is the symbol of heavenly Jerusalem, the Nave, the Symbol of earth and the Bema, the raised platform in the middle of the nave, as the symbol of earthly Jerusalem.
34. cfr. The Roman Canon, the Canon I in the Latin Missal; the third paragraph after the Institution Narrative.
35. Tommaso FEDERICI, Introduzione alle Liturgie Orientali (PIL, pro manuscripto) Roma 1975. pp. 122-23.

APPENDIX

THE STRUCTURE OF INDO-CHALDEAN QURBANA
ACCORDING TO ANCIENT DOCUMENTS

(We give only the structure of the Most Solemn Celebration, i.e., Raza. This can be shortened to suit the less Solemn and Simple forms of celebration, but without doing any violence to the genius, theology, spirituality and main structure)

A. Enarxis

Puadanakon, "Your Commandment": An official formula to request the permission of the community to begin the Eucharistic celebration. It is a typical Malabar custom at the beginning of all communal activities or celebrations (1).

Puadane Damesiha, "The Command of Christ": The communal response, reminding the explicit command of our Lord, to do this as his memorial (1 Cor. 11,24).

Gory to God in the highest (Lk.2,14): 'Christ has come': the first tangible call of God, extended to man for his salvation: It is to set the scene of the celebration.

Our Father (Mt. 6,9-13+Lk. 11,2-4) with intermittent 'Holy' hymn from Rev.4,8 and Is. 6,3: This is a typical human response to the call of God, fully in the biblical background and diction. It looks back to the Old Testament, passes through the New Testament and looks forward to the eschatological fulfilment.

Slotha: A prayer of introduction to the psalms (2): There are special prayers for the Sundays and Feast-days.

Marmitha: A set of three or four Psalms; they are to bring out the special phase of the Mystery emphasised in the celebration, as it was already promised, revealed and celebrated in the Old Testament time. A Psalm of Praise is always seen in this group.

De-Qanke, "The Anthem of the Rails": A hymn of the Cross, to introduce the community to the special phase of the Mystery emphasised, and its relation to the Cross, one of the principal phases of the accomplishment of human salvation.

Rite of Incensing: The sanctuary, the church, and the community are being incensed. It is a rite of purification in order to sanctify the place and the community at the beginning of the celebration.

Laku Mara: with its introductory and concluding prayers: It is the Resurrection hymn to introduce the community to the essential theme of every celebration, the Resurrection of our Lord.

B. Qurbana of Catechumens

Trisagion: with its concluding prayer: It is a hymn to the most Holy Trinity (3), to show the readiness of the community to hear the revealed Word of God.

Readings: from the *Law* and the *Prophets*: The special phase of the Mystery emphasised in the celebration, as it is revealed in the Books of the Law and as foreseen by the Prophets are announced here.

Surava: Responsorial Psalm—the human response to the call of God in the Old Testament.

Stotha: Introductory prayer before the Epistle.

Turgamma: Homiletic hymn: The essence of the Epistle to be read is sung by the community for better assimilation.

Epistle: The special phase of the Mystery as experienced by the Apostle and transmitted to us.

Zummara: The exclamation of joy to hear the Word of God in the Gospel, expressed in Halleluyya hymn.

Blessing of Incense: The smoke of incense going upwards throughout the Gospel reading symbolizes our constant response to the call of God, proclaimed in the Gospel.

Gospel: The Word of God as it is written is proclaimed (4).

Karozutha: It is the proclamation of the assimilated Divine Word and that of the special intentions to pray for.

Preparation of Bread and Wine: It is done by the celebrant or by the Archdeacon (always a priest) during the *Karozutha* prayer. As the community offers up the intentions, the celebrant prepares the Eucharistic matter, the symbol of the toils, afflictions and aspirations of the community.

Prayer of Imposition of Hands: The special blessing imparted to the Catechumens before they are sent out.

Dismissal of the Catechumens: Special formula of dismissal which contains also profound theological signification with regard to the Qurbana of the faithful.

C. Qurbana of the faithful

1. Pre-Anaphoral Part

The Rite of Prostration and of the Threshold: It contains Eucharistic, Epicletic, and Sacerdotal elements: The celebrant, convinced of his sublime but awful power, humbles himself before God, making prostrations before his Majesty. He attributes the whole mystery of sanctifying the people's offering to the work of the Holy Spirit, ignoring his own instrumental participation in it.

De-Raze: "The Anthem of the Mysteries": This is the hymn during the offertory procession, and changes according to Sundays and Feast-days. Thus it brings out the special phase of the Mystery emphasised in the celebration and the special intentions offered thereby.

Washing of the hands: A symbolic gesture of internal purification before bringing the offerings to the altar.

Offertory Procession: It goes from *Gaza* to the *Bema* and therefrom to the Altar to signify the intermingling and participation of the heavenly ones and earthly ones in this most sublime celebration of the Mystery. It is also the symbol of 'Our Lord being led to Gagultha'.

Offertory: It symbolizes the Passion and Death of our Lord. The offertory prayer is a masterpiece of Christology. It is fully a Christological prayer. The prayer is directly addressed to Jesus Christ. It is he who accepts the offering. Hence, he is considered both as the offerer (in his humanity) and as the one who accepts the offering (in his divinity).

Veiling of the Mysteries: It symbolizes the burial of our Lord.

Conclusion of the Anthem of the Mysteries: It is the same for every celebration. It celebrates the memory of the Virgin Mother, the Apostles and other Saints, especially of St. Thomas the father and patron of the Indo-Chaldean Church, all the departed, who are buried in the hope of Resurrection, and the power of fasting, prayer and contrition of heart for the pardon of sins.

Nicean Creed: After an introductory prayer comes the universal Creed of the Church, recited before any solemn and official action of the Church. Of course, the Eucharistic celebration is the most solemn action of the Church.

Proclamation of the Deacon: The community is invited to pray for everyone in the Church, the living and the dead.

Formal Entrance: It is now that the celebrant officially enters the sanctuary; the offertory is supposed to have been performed by the Archdeacon. Here again the celebrant confesses his unworthiness to celebrate the divine Mysteries: still, he shows his confidence in the mercy of God and in the prayer of the community.

Kusapa: A penitential prayer of the celebrant because of the awareness of his own sins: a necessary condition to offer up praise and thanks giving to the Lord, for the accomplishment of human salvation.

2. Anaphoral Part:

Gehantha I: Praise and thanksgiving, the essential condition for any memorial celebration: thus it is the fulness of biblical prayer: *Berakah* and *Azkarah*. In this first *Gehantha*, we offer general praise and thanksgiving to the Lord.

Exchange of Peace: In accordance with the command of the Lord: "If you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (*Mt* 5,23-24).

Announcement of the Deacon: The usual announcement at the beginning of all Oriental Anaphoras to remind the community about the tremendous Mystery celebrated, and the need of total conversion of heart.

Unveiling of the Mysteries: A preparation for the great Eucharistic prayer. The accompanying penitential prayers are recited by the celebrant in a low voice.

Incensing: Again a symbol of purification and ascending prayer.

The Dialogue: As it is at the beginning of all Eucharistic prayers: the divine plan of salvation, the priest as mediator,

the proper function of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharistic celebration etc. are the principal themes developed in it.

Kusapa: A penitential prayer to bring in the proper awareness of our fallen state to understand better the value of our Redemption.

Gehantha II: The second thanksgiving prayer where the works of the most Holy Trinity, especially that of the Father, are given special momentum.

Sanctus. The 'Holy' hymn, a hymn of praise, the natural outcome of the awareness of the great things done by the Lord of all.

Kusapa: Again a penitential prayer to deepen the awareness of our miserable state. It includes also the request of the celebrant to the community for helping-prayer, and the prayer of the community which is purely Christological.

Gehantha III: The third thanksgiving prayer where the redemptive works of the Son are recalled.

Institution Narrative: It comes in the middle of the third *Gehantha*; It is sung separately on the Body and Blood to signify the actual death of the Lord Jesus.

Anamnesis: The memorial is the second part of the third *Gehantha*: It is according to the command of the Lord, "do this in remembrance of me" (*Lk.* 22, 19) and it is concluded with a *Qanona* of praise and thanksgiving.

Announcement of the Deacon: to remind the community again of the awefulness of the Mystery and the need of prayer.

Great Intercession: The celebrant prays for the whole community, both the living and the dead, both the present and the absent; special intentions also can be added here. After this, the celebrant, conscious of his unworthiness, requests again the prayer of the community, and it prays for him in a special way with the usual Christological formula.

Gehantha IV: The fourth eucharistic prayer, where the work of the Spirit in the present economy is stressed, and which flows into the Epicleotic prayer.

Epiclesis: Invocation of the Holy Spirit, which, according to Pauline theology, signifies the Resurrection of the Lord.

Doxology: The conclusion of all Anaphoras, rendering praise and thanksgiving to the Lord.

3. Post-Anaphoral Part

a. Rite of Reconciliation

Prayer to Christ: A perfect Christological prayer—the summary of the Pauline theology in his captivity Epistles. It begins the typical Reconciliation rite in Indo-Chaldean Qurbana.

Penitential Psalms: Pss. 51 and 122 (5), expressing the compunction of heart.

Rite of Incensing: Symbol of purification and propitiation, where too there are certain typical Malabar additions.

Elevation: This is the only Elevation in Indo-Chaldean Qurbana. The Holy Mystery is presented to the community before fraction.

Fraction and Consignation: Broken for the pardon of sins and for distribution; Consignation to show the unity.

Kusapa: A remembrance of the ancient 'Rite of Atonement'.

Litani Penitential Prayer: It signifies the peace among themselves in the community.

Prayer of Absolution: The natural conclusion of the Rite of Reconciliation.

b. Rite of Communion

Our Father with an introductory prayer and final *Embolism*: The prayer of the children of God, who are already reconciled to the Father through the Rite of Reconciliation.

Pax and Sancta Sanctis: Solemn invitation to communion, accompanied by the community's confession of faith in the most Holy Trinity.

De-Hilath: On important feast days, a special prayer in remembrance of the special phase of the Mystery emphasised in the celebration.

Prayers before the communion: and the communion of the celebrant and the ministers—symbol of perfect union with the Lord,

De-Bema: "Anthem of the Bema": Communion hymn, which changed according to Sundays and Feast-days.

Bathe: Invitation to communion, which too is changed according to Sundays and Feast-days.

Communion of the rest of the community—first priests, then the other clerics, men and women.

Purification of the sacred vessels and the accompanying prayers.

c. Rite of Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving: Separate prayers for the celebrant, the Deacon and for the rest of the community, in which the others take part with appropriate responses; most of these prayers change according to the special occasion of the celebration. The second prayer of the celebrant is always Christological.

Our Father: as in the beginning.

Huthama: Final blessing: this too changes according to the occasion.

Farewell to the Altar, borrowed from the Maronite Liturgy, but is fully according to the genius and spirit of Indo-Chaldean Liturgy, and explains profoundly the significance of the Altar.

Notes:

1) In the present context, *Puqdanakon* and *Puqdane Damesiha* may be changed as follows:

Celebrant: My dear brethren, shall I begin this celebration with your permission?

Community: The Command of our Lord and the Imposition of hands do authorise you to accomplish the Mysteries.

2) Some authors interpret it as a collect.

3) At least to the Churches of the Antiochean Family, it is a Christological formula: cft. our chapter VI, 2 on Christology.

4) In other Chaldean Churches, there is a *Turgamma* after the Gospel.

5) We have followed the *Peshita* numbering of the Psalms. The East Syriac Churches use always the *Peshita* version of the Bible in their Liturgy.

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