

Ordained to the priesthood in 1936 by the late Archbishop Mar Ivanios of Trivandrum, Fr. Givergis Paniker Karichal was the first married deacon to have been raised to the dignity of the priesthood in the Malankara Catholic Church.



Though never educated formally in a Catholic Seminary, Fr. Givergis grew up as a leading theologian of the Malankara Catholic Church. His unparalleled interest in the Antiochene Liturgy led him to be a great scholar in the Syriac language. By studying the language of liturgical texts he was able to shed new light on the meaning of the oriental traditions of the Eucharistic Service. His learned article on 'The Holy Qurbono in the Syro-Malankara Church' which he contributed to *The Eucharistic Liturgy in the Christian East* edited by Dr. J. Madey of West Germany testifies to this. His notes and diaries which he kept on the Malankara Liturgy were posthumously published in two volumes by his son Fr. P.G. Thomas Paniker. His writings and especially his lectures which he gave to the students of the Pontifical Seminary, Alway, when he was a professor there, were noted for originality and depth which derive from his own prayer and reflection upon the mysteries of the liturgy.

A resident priest of the village of Karichal in the District of Alleppey in Kerala, Fr. Givergis lived with his wife and children serving his folk faithfully till he died on October 23, 1986. He was a rare example of holy and dedicated priestly life. Born in the year of 1912 at Karichal, he was educated at the M.D. Seminary of the Orthodox Jacobite Church of Kerala and was ordained deacon in 1928 by the Metropolitan Vattasseril Mar Dionysius. He took Aleyamma as his wife in the year 1929 and was stirred by the Reunion Movement of Mar Ivanios who received him into the Catholic Church in 1931.

# THE HOLY QURBONO IN THE SYRO- MALANKARA CHURCH



Fr. GIVERGIS PANIKER  
KARICHAL

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**THE HOLY QURBONO**  
**IN THE**  
**SYRO-MALANKARA CHURCH**

Revised and Edited

by

Rev. Dr. Thomas Paniker P.G.

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Syro-Malankara Church  
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(English)

by  
Fr. Givergis Paniker Karichal

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Rev. Dr. Thomas Paniker P.G.  
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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Five years ago, at the end of the Malankara Liturgical Year, my beloved father was called to participate in the glorious liturgy in the heavenly Jerusalem. Liturgy was the centre of his life. He found joy and happiness in the celebration of liturgy and its study. He imbibed this deep love and interest in the Malankara Liturgy from the late Archbishop Mar Ivanios.

Some time back I edited two volumes in Malayalam dealing with my father's study on the Malankara Liturgy especially the Holy Qurbano. He had contributed an article on 'The Holy Qurbano in the Syro-Malankara Church' in the book *The Eucharistic Liturgy in the Christian East* edited by Dr. J. Madey. This present publication is the revised edition of it. In re-editing it I have remained faithful to the spirit of the original though I have revised and enlarged it. I have supplied sub-titles and simplified the matter. In the Appendix I have included two of my articles, one on the Significance of the Eucharistic Epiclesis and another on Popular Devotions in the Malankara Church.

I wish to thank all those who have helped me to publish this book. My sincere thanks are due to Dr. J. Madey who so kindly allowed me to re-edit the article from his book. I hope this small book will be a fitting tribute to my dear father on the fifth anniversary of his death.

Trivandrum  
23.10.1991

Fr. Thomas Paniker P.G.

## THE SYRIAN CHURCH IN KERALA

The Syrian Church in Kerala forms part of the great Oriental Church which extended its influence from Antioch right across Asia to India and China in the East. This Church was founded by St. Thomas, the Apostle of Jesus Christ. Hence, the members of this Church are still called St. Thomas Christians. Tradition has it that St. Thomas reached Kodungalloor in A.D. 52 and was martyred at Mylapore in A.D. 72 after establishing seven Churches in different parts of Kerala. This Apostolic Church has been in communion with the Catholic Church ever since its inception. Till the middle of the 17th century the Syrian Church of Malabar (at present Kerala) was an Eparchy in the Patriarchate of Babylon. Thus the Syro-Chaldean Rite was used by all the St. Thomas Christians in Kerala until the 17th century. East Syriac was the language used by this church. Qurbana, Qudasa etc (with which we are very familiar) are East Syriac, while Qurbono, Qudoso etc are West Syriac which is proper to the West Syrian Church.

### The Great Division.

From the time of its establishment until the Koonan Kurisu Sathyam in 165 the Syrian Church was an undivided whole. During the Portuguese regime, the Syrian Church was brought under the Portuguese Latin rule. They suppressed the Syriac Liturgy and the indigenous customs. They adopted the policy of latinising the liturgy and imposing western customs. The reduction of the Metropolitan See of Angamali to the status of a mere suffragan diocese and the extension of the Padroado of the King of Portugal over it led to wide unrest among the

St. Thomas Christians. In 1652, there arrived one Ahatallah from Mesopotamia carrying a letter from the Pope of Rome. The Portuguese authorities without delay deported him to Goa via Cochin. There followed revolt and schism and hence the Koonan Kurisu Sathyam in 1653.

### The Introduction of the Antiochene Rite in Kerala

The dissidents held a meeting at Edappally and then met at Alangatt and twelve priests imposed their hands on Archdeacon Thomas calling him Archbishop Mar Thomas I. The pseudo Archbishop, finding his position becoming weakened, brought a Jacobite Bishop from Jerusalem by name Mar Gregorios in 1665 with the intention of receiving from him valid episcopal consecration. It was only several years after the separation that the non Catholic Thomas Christians accepted the West Syrian Rite or Antiochene Rite in its fullness.

The personality of Mar Severios the patriarch of Antioch and the organizing ability of Jacob Burdana brought about the formation of a Church at Antioch which rejected communion with those bishops who supported the orthodox faith of Chalcedon. This new body adopted the ambiguous formula 'There is only one nature in the Word of God made flesh'. On the strength of this purely verbal adhesion this Syrian Church is called monophysite, and specified as 'Jacobite' after Jacob Burdana.

### The Successful Attempt at Reunion

In the 18 th and 19 th centuries the Malankara Jacobites made several futile attempts at Reunion. Mar Ivanios, the celebrated Metropolitan of Bethany in the Malankara Church, initiated the successful Reunion Movement of the 20 th century. Realising the heinousness of the schism and anxious to bring

the Jacobites to the unity of the Catholic Church, Mar Ivanios corresponded with Rome regarding reunion and this he did with the knowledge and consent of his brother bishops. When the time came, he alone remained faithful to the idea of Reunion, with his suffragan bishop Mar Theophilos. On 20 th September 1930, Pope Pius XI received Mar Ivanios and his followers into the Catholic union and graciously permitted them to continue the use of the West Syrian Rite. This is called the Syro-Malankara Rite. The Malankara liturgy is very similar to the Jacobite (Syrian Orthodox) liturgy in India and is a variation of the well known Syrian Rite of Antioch with divergent and supplementary practices peculiar to the Maphrianate of the East.

Thus the Malankara Catholic Church is to be understood as part of the ancient Malankara Church that traces its origin to the preaching of St. Thomas the Apostle. Retaining its apostolicity and identity as an ecclesial community and regaining its communion with the Holy See of Rome after its rupture in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, it has established itself as an individual Church in the Catholic communion. During the past sixtyone years of its communion with the Catholic Church, the Malankara Church could grow up considerably and establish its position as an Individual Church regaining its vitality and spiritual strength. Growing as a vigorous Christian community, the Malankara Catholic Church at present consists of 3 dioceses, about 300,000 faithful, 800 Churches and mission stations, 400 priests and about 900 religious. As part of an ancient Christian community of India, it is deeply rooted in the spiritual traditions and cultural values of India. A significant development in the recent past has been the establishment of parishes outside Kerala for the members of the Syro-Malankara Church in different parts of India and in the United States of America and the beginning of a Major Seminary at Trivandrum.

### Diversity in Unity.

One of the remarkable achievements of Vatican II is the rediscovery of the nature of the Church as a communion of Churches<sup>1</sup>. Each individual Church is not the whole Church, but none the less fully represents it. It is in no way to be seen as a subdivision of the real Church. Strictly speaking, the universal Church has no concrete existence outside the individual Churches. The Church is not a limited company or organisation of individual Churches. It is also true that the whole Church is not a collection or association of the individual Churches. Rather, the Church of God exists in each individual Church however small or insignificant and the individual Church is a full and perfect manifestation of the Church of God. Therefore, unity is not uniformity. "Variety within the Church in no way harms her unity, but rather manifests it"<sup>2</sup>. In the Catholic Church, though the Holy Qurbono is essentially the same everywhere, various accidental modifications and peculiarities of ritual enjoy authoritative recognition and compose various rites in which the Holy Qurbono is offered in different parts of the Christendom. In other words, the Holy Qurbono is one, but the ways of celebration are many. This aspect of diversity in unity is as clear and striking as it is important. Hence we find more than twenty rites in the Catholic Church today. The Holy Qurbono in the Syro-Malankara Church is one of these.

### Christ - Experience the source of Diversity.

The sharing of Apostolic Christ-Experience through the proclamation of the word, with the power of the Holy Spirit is the basis of all individual Churches. It can take on different expressions resulting from the subject of that experience on the one hand and from the encounter with the different cultures of the world on the other. The sharing of the Christ-Experience

1. *Lumen Gentium* 13, 23

2. *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* 2

should be relevant to concrete life situations. This has been the practice of the Church ever since its beginning at Pentecost, when every nation heard the same good news and gave thanks in its own language. The very existence of four Gospels in the New Testament is a shining example of the manifold expression of Christ-Experience and tradition by different persons. Therefore the particular Christian experience in a certain place has to take on a particular form of life, worship, spirituality, theology and discipline integrated into the socio-cultural milieu of the people.

### The Liturgy-Expression of Church's Faith.

The liturgy is no doubt the most important way in which the Church expresses her faith. Here the Church lives at full stretch and in its purest form. The Church celebrates its mysteries and expresses its faith through this celebration. This is the reason why the different individual Churches are mainly characterized by their liturgies. Though the liturgy is the culminating expression of faith, there are other expressions of faith such as theology, spirituality and discipline which all together constitute the Individual Church.

Etymologically, liturgy comes from the Greek 'leitourgia' which is a combination of 'leitos' an adjective which means pertaining to the people (laos) and 'ergon' a noun which means work. Hence the word meant any service for the common good. From the Acts of the Apostles we know that the life of the early Church was firmly based on two cardinal points: the celebration of the Eucharist and life of charity. These two elements gave unity to Christian existence and they represented the same Christian reality under two different aspects. The Eucharist was the climax of the life of charity. Thus liturgy is the totality of Christian life lived under the impulse of the Spirit of the risen Lord. The celebration of the Eucharist was its climax and therefore it was called 'Leitourgia'.

## THE WEST SYRIAN LITURGY - ITS GENERAL FEATURES

It was under Jacob Burdana in the sixth century that the liturgy was translated from Greek into Syriac and the present West Syrian Liturgy came into being. Already from the fourth century itself several usages were imported from Jerusalem notably from the eucharistic anaphora of St. James. Also this liturgy drew largely on the traditions and customs of the Syriac speaking East Syrian Church, together with the hymns and chants of St. Ephrem and his successors. Early in the sixth century, patriarch Mar Severios of Antioch compiled a collection of chants arranged according to the liturgical cycle. This was known as Oktoekhos, and in the following century it was translated into Syriac by Mar Jacob of Edessa. He also revised the Syriac text of the liturgy of St. James using the corresponding Greek Liturgy. This liturgy continued to grow from the seventh to the thirteenth century, borrowing not only from the East Syrian Liturgy, but also from the Byzantine tradition. St. John Chrysostom's homilies and other sources testify to the enthusiasm of the people of Antioch for processions, especially for those held at night. Vigils seem to have been exceptionally in favour. Thus there gradually grew up a liturgy of incomparable splendour and beauty.

The West Syrian liturgy is an Oriental form of worship which though it owed something to the Greek world through its centre in Antioch remains rooted in the semitic world of the middle east. It belongs to the same world as that of the Bible itself. It sprang from the same language which was used in

Palestine, expressing itself not in the metaphysical terms of Greek theology, but in the rich symbolic language of the Bible. The liturgy consists largely of long prayers of great beauty and solemnity and of songs and chants set to solemn music and composed for the most part in the golden age of the liturgy. Biblical imagery, biblical echoes and parallelisms, paraphrase of the biblical passages woven into the text abound in the prayers of the liturgy and thus the original flavour of revelation as expressed in the Bible is preserved intact. The gestures and symbolic actions in the liturgy are fundamentally oriental and an Indian, for the most part will find them suited to his ethos and expressive of his genuine religious sentiments.

### The main spring of Christian life

For the Syrians as well as for all Orientals, liturgy is the main spring of Christian life. The whole life of piety of the oriental faithful is centred on their liturgy. They do not have very many pious exercises as the Christians of the Western Church. Their life of prayer is lived in and through the liturgical celebrations. Any authentic liturgical outlook is so deeply interwoven with the devotional life of Syrians that they feel personally and socially involved in liturgical actions. They may not be able always to describe and express their involvement in a reflexive way; they rather live it existentially. Thus the liturgy is so fundamental, so co-extensive to spirituality, theology and the authentic life of the Church. It is such a close-knit and dynamic reality that to change the liturgy would almost amount to change the Church. If understood in the right spiritual outlook such a view is really as great as fruitful. Yet it could also become bogged down in ritualism, sentimentalism and juridicism, making the Church a mere cultic community.

### Matter filled with the Holy Spirit.

To the Syrians, everything is mystery in the sphere of faith. After the Incarnation of Christ, the ceremonies and rites of the



Church have a deeper significance, than their external appearance. They are the means of the entrance into the divine world. They receive this special significance from the Spirit of God. In the mysteries of the Church the matter is filled with the Holy Spirit. The word 'mystery' has strong salvific connotations. In the Bible the word designates the divine plan of salvation which centres upon the person of the Lord (1 Cor 2.6-3.2; Rom 16.25-27; Eph 1.9; 3.3; Col 1.26; 2.2ff 1 Tim 3.16). The mystery indicates the transcendent character of the liturgy as well as the mystical identity between the historical work and the ever active liturgical act of God. Hence the Syrian liturgy is a reality which is at the same time heavenly and earthly, divine and human. It takes place at the same time on earth and in heaven since it actually transcends time by opening up to eternity, since it belongs to a new time, the time between the ascension and the second coming.

#### Heaven on Earth.

The Syrian liturgy is perhaps unique for the rare combinations and balance of opposites. The mysterious character of the Syrian liturgy is often described by the words 'Heaven on Earth'. They really express the splendour of the liturgy. In the Divine Liturgy, the real communion between the visible and the invisible, terrestrial and celestial, man and God is activated and brought to fulfilment by the Incarnate Word. Thus Ps-Dionysius' hierarchical approach is liturgy oriented. It is approached in the perspective of the irradiating dynamism of the unfathomable divine essence. The latter however lets itself participate analogically i.e. according to each participant's capacity. Thus the creature rises according to its own analogy in order to co-operate with God (heavenly Hierarchy). Every created being now shares in the dignity provided by a virtual theophany. The luminous character so intimately linked with the theophany is signified here on earth at its highest degree by the liturgical archetype. It culminates in the Eucharistic

mystery. In it the theophany is achieved beyond all reality in the real presence, when man is mystically assimilated to Christ, to the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus who at the same time lives in the glory.

#### Wonderful balance of dreadful majesty and loving compassion.

One of the characteristic marks of the Syrian Liturgy is its sense of awe and wonder before the divine mystery. It is greatly influenced by the scene in the vision of the prophet Isaiah (Is 6.1-9) when he saw the Lord on a high and lofty throne in the temple in Jerusalem and heard the Seraphim crying 'holy, holy, holy,' before him. The scene is introduced many times during the liturgy and the scene of wonder and mystery which inspires it fills the whole liturgy. Together with this sense of awe in the presence of the holiness of God is a profound sense of human sin. As the prophet was led to cry out, 'Woe to me, for I am, a man of unclean lips and I dwell among a people of unclean lips,' so the Syrian liturgy is filled with this sense of human sin and unworthiness and one of the principal themes of the liturgy is that of repentance. But this sense of sin and need for repentance is accompanied by, or rather is actually an expression of the awareness of God's infinite love and mercy which comes down to man's aid and raises him to share in his own infinite glory. Thus there is in the Syrian liturgy a wonderful balance of dreadful majesty and loving compassion, of abasement and exaltation.

#### Liturgy directed towards the last things.

More than any other, the Syrian liturgy is directed towards the last things intent on the second coming of Christ, which is already with us through the sacraments. In the liturgy the historical and eschatological dimensions of the divine economy are joined. So we must include in it both the evangelical

affirmation of the finished work of Christ and the free working of the Holy Spirit. While the once for all Christ event is the object of an anamnesis, the free working of the Spirit is the object of the Church's epiclesis.

The great stress on the resurrection of the Lord is another noteworthy feature of the Syrian liturgy. The cross without a figure or with Christ as the victorious Lord adorns the Syrian Churches. The Johannine theology of the Spirit of the Risen Christ seems to have influenced the doctrine and worship of the Syrian Church. Thus the Holy Spirit plays a very important role in the Syrian liturgy. It attaches great importance to the invocation of the Holy Spirit. Through the prayer of the Church ceaselessly seeking the Spirit from the Father, the energy of the Spirit transforms, vivifies, makes whole, perfects and confirms.

#### Emphasis on the divine nature of Christ.

It is no doubt, a result of the 'monophysite' tendency of this liturgy, that there is a tremendous emphasis on the divine nature of Christ, which is nevertheless completely orthodox. Its Trinitarian doctrine, mostly derived from the Greek and even using Greek terms, is very firm and impressive. But its distinctive note is seen in the custom of addressing prayer directly to Christ as 'Our God', and not to the 'Father through Jesus Christ our Lord', as is the normal custom of the Western liturgy. The emphasis on the divinity of Christ is seen also in the immense veneration paid to Mary as the 'Mother of God'. This devotion is very profound and very theological. It is based entirely on a continued meditation on the fact that the person whom Mary brought forth was truly God.

## THE PILGRIM WORSHIPPER

"I was glad when they said to me: 'Let us go to the house of the Lord'" Psalm 122 is recited in the Malankara liturgy when the dead body is laid to rest in the tomb. The sojourn of the Christian here on earth is a pilgrimage to the house of the Lord.

The Church is "like a pilgrim in a foreign land"<sup>1</sup> as the ancient Israel was a pilgrim people. As Israel, she finds herself on a pilgrimage, having no permanent city on earth, exposed to temptations and tribulations. None of the patriarchs entered into the full possession of the promise that God had made to Abraham. To the end of their days they were nomads, never living a settled life in a settled land. They had to be ever moving on. The letter to the Hebrews employs the word *paroikein* (Heb 11.9) to refer to the sojourn of Abraham. A *paroikein* was a resident alien. He was always an outsider and only on payment a member of the community. The word parish is derived from this Greek word.

#### No fatherland on earth

The picture of the sojourner became a picture of the Christian life. Tertullian says thus of the Christian: "He knows that on earth he has a pilgrimage but that his dignity is in heaven". Clement of Alexandria adds, "We have no fatherland on earth". Augustine further points out "We are sojourners exiled from our fatherland". It was not that the Christians were

<sup>1</sup> Vatican II, Constitution on the Church 8

foolishly otherworldly, detaching themselves from the life and work of this world. But they always remembered that they were people on the way. "For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city which is to come (Heb 13.14). There is an unwritten saying of Jesus. "The world is a bridge, the wise man will pass over it but will not build his house upon it" (William Barclay).

### Quest for God and encounter with him

A pilgrimage is a sacred journey made by believers to a place consecrated by some manifestation of the divine or by the activity of some great religious figure, in order to offer their prayers and sacrifices there in particularly favourable surroundings. Thus pilgrimage is a quest for God and an encounter with him in the context of liturgical worship. That is what happens in Sunday worship in Malankara Churches. The pilgrimage to the Church on every Sunday is a foretaste and miniature type of the pilgrimage to the heavenly Jerusalem. The pilgrim nature of the Church and her worship reminds the worshipper of certain important things. We should be conscious of the fact that we are not of the world though we are in the world (Jn 15.19). Hence we should not be immersed in worldly matters. St. Paul reminds the Philipians of one great truth: "Our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil 3.20). That is why St. Peter advises the Christians: "Beloved, I beseech you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh that wage war against your soul" (1 Pet 2.11).

### Intimately linked with mankind

And yet the Christian Community realizes that it is truly and intimately linked with mankind and its history. Nothing human is outside its scope and purview. Therefore, since we have no lasting city here, but we seek the city which is to come, the letter to the Hebrews asks us not to neglect to do good and

to share what we have (Heb 13.14-16). Vatican II has affirmed this in the preface of its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father".<sup>2</sup>

### Pilgrimages in the Bible

The earliest pilgrimages recorded in the Bible were to the shrines or cultic centers that existed throughout Israel before the reform of King Josiah. At a critical point in Jacob's life he made a pilgrimage in ritual purity to Bethel (Gen 35,1-15), the place where he had earlier created an altar seeing God in a dream (Gen 28.10-22, 12.8). In the time of David, Jerusalem was established as a religious center (2 Sam 6,12-19) and following the completion of the Temple under Solomon (1Kgs 8;2 chron 7,8- 10) it increasingly became the goal of pilgrimage. It was a place to which the people could bring their offerings and a place they could celebrate the feasts and offer sacrifices to God (Deut 12,6-7, 11-12, 17-18). The old Israelite religious legislation required pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times a year; at Passover (the feast of the unleavened bread, the feast of Weeks (Pentecost) and the feast of Booths (Deut 16,16; Ex 23,13-17, 34,18-22). According to the fourth Gospel, Jesus made several pilgrimages to Jerusalem to celebrate the feasts (Jn 2,13; 5;1,7,2-10). Those on pilgrimage often travelled in groups (Ps 42,4; 55, C 14; Lk 2,41-44) and the joy of the occasion would be marked by singing and rejoicing (Is 30,29). Several of those songs are preserved in the 'Songs of Ascent' or 'Pilgrim Songs'

2. Constitution on the Church in the Modern World 3

sung by the pilgrims as they approached Jerusalem (Ps 24,84,118,120-134). In a figurative sense the New Testament portrays the Christian life as a journey toward the heavenly city (Heb 11,13-16; 1 Pet 1,17; 2,11). The allegory in 'The Pilgrim's Progress' by John Bunyan is a popular expression of this concept.

### The pilgrimage to the Parish - Church

It is in this context that one makes the pilgrimage to the parish church. The active participation in the Holy Qurbono is itself an eschatological pilgrimage that prepares the faithful for the full participation in the heavenly liturgy. In the liturgical gatherings on Sunday in the Parish church, the Syrian Church sees an opportunity for the faithful to show their fellowship in faith and prayer and above all it seizes this golden opportunity to remind them that they are on a journey towards the heavenly Father under the leadership of Jesus Christ. "For by reason of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, this community is ceaselessly on the way with Christ to the Father".<sup>3</sup>

### Let us go to the house of the Lord

As far as the Malankara Church is concerned, the faithful conduct their pilgrimage to the parish Church every Sunday in the following way. Every morning after the night prayers, the Faithful prepare themselves for the pilgrimage by taking bath and wearing clean clothes and reading certain passages from the Holy Scriptures. Then they recite Psalm 25, an alphabetical meditation song. Each of the 22 verses begins with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. This helps the pilgrim to place himself in the presence of God and examine himself. As he is conscious of his sins he asks mercy from God. Finally when he hears the Church bell, makes the sign of the cross on himself and whispers as he moves along the road towards the Church. "I was glad

3. Vatican II Decree on the Missionary Activity,15

when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord' (Ps 122.1). This is one of the 15 Psalms of ascent (Pss 120-134) sung by the pilgrims as they approached the Jerusalem Temple.

### This is the Gate of heaven

When he reaches the gate of the Church compound looking towards the Church he bows and makes the sign of the cross saying "I will go near the sanctuary of God and near God who gladdens my childhood (Ps 43.4). As he moves to the western door of the Church the pilgrim worshipper says silently; "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I did not know it,... How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God and this is the gate of heaven (Gen 28,16-17). As he enters the Church he adds, "Open to me the gates of righteousness that I may enter through them and give thanks to the Lord. This is the gate of the Lord". (Ps 118.19-20). Then bowing and making the sign of the cross on himself he says." O God I will come into thy house with burnt offerings, I will pay thee my vows".

### The Church - Building

The word Church is used to mean the gathering of God or community of believers, as well as the building used for common worship and the celebration of the Eucharist. It is the faith and practice of the Syrian Church to face the East in all formal worship. Therefore the Church is built always with its sanctuary to the East so that the people stand facing the East, the place of the rising sun, symbol at once of the Risen Christ and the place of his expected Second Coming from heaven. Since our Lord Jesus Christ the sun of righteousness (Mal 4,2) shall appear in the end, from the East, those who call on Him ought to turn their face to the East and pray awaiting His arrival. The church is divided into four parts, the portico where the catechumens stand, the nave (haiklo) where the faithful stand, the choir (gestromo) and the sanctuary. The four parts of the Church are

symbolic of the four steps on the way of salvation - justification, sanctification-glorification and beatific vision. The sanctuary with priests represents heaven and heavenly hosts. The other parts of the Church represent the earthly paradise, earth and the cosmos successively. The Church building in general represents Paradise. The tree of life is represented by the cross in the central place. Priests and deacons represent the host of saints singing in paradise and the Holy Mysteries stand for the fruit of the tree of life in the centre.

### The embrace of the Prodigal Son's Father

After entering the haiklo (nave of the Church) and bowing before the sanctuary and placing his hands on the chest by crossing his right palm over the left, the pilgrim worshipper says in a low voice: "Into your house O God, have I entered and before your throne have I worshipped, O heavenly king pardon whatever sins I have committed against you"<sup>4</sup>. In the first part he envisages the scene in the temple-vision of the Prophet Isaiah (Is 6.1-9) and by this he reminds himself of the supreme presence of God in the Church. For the Church is a specially dedicated place where God's universal presence, promised presence, dedicatory presence and Eucharistic presence are together felt by the faithful souls. But the second part of the prayer has a reference to the prodigal son's appeal to his ever loving father (Lk 15.18-19). Then in accordance with the Nomocanon he moves forward meditating upon the vision of Isaiah and recites the 'Sanctus' and the 'Benedictus' making three obeisance at each step. In the end he kisses the Holy Bible permanently placed on the table in the questromo. This kiss recalls the embrace and reception given by the prodigal son's father. In this situation this kiss symbolically shows the reception of the pilgrim-worshipper in the Church by God the Father who is signified by the Holy Bible. The pilgrimage

4. Bar Hebraeus, Nomocanon Ch 5 Sect. 5

described above is a special feature of the spirituality of the Malankarese. Then the pilgrim-worshipper joins the community for the canonical prayers. For the Malankara Liturgy of Sunday consists of the recitation of the divine office, reading of the Holy Scriptures and the Holy Qurbono.<sup>5</sup>

5. Bar Hebraeus, Nomocanon 5.3

## THE HOLY QURBONO

The Syriac word "Qurbono" means offering or sacrifice. It is the usual name given to the offering of the Eucharist in the Syro-Malankara Church. It is also known by various other names each of them emphasising different aspects of the Eucharistic sacrifice "Qurobo" literally access, means bringing near or offering. It signifies that it is through it that man draws near to God. It is so called, because by it they that were far off and they that were near, and they of heaven and they of earth, have been brought near to one another (Eph 2. 18). Syrians call it also 'Roze' which means mysteries. It is called so, because Christ delivered them secretly to the disciples in the Upper Room and also because by this he revealed to them the mysteries, concerning his passion'.<sup>1</sup>

### In the pattern of Hebrew Meal Prayer

The variety and range of liturgies in use today at first sight obscure their inner unity of structure. In his famous *Apologia*, Justin (second century) twice describes the Eucharistic liturgy and he says nothing to suggest that it differed notably from place to place. The fact is that in those days the liturgy followed practically exclusively the very simple pattern that the Christian communities had received from our Lord himself. The framework was basically Jewish in the pattern of Hebrew Meal Prayer. This consisted of readings from the Bible interspersed with the singing of psalms and hymns, a prayer of the assembly

1. *Moses Bar Kephai, Two Commentaries* pp 24-25

for all man's needs, and the consecratory thank. giving over the bread and wine. This consecratory prayer had three parts. The first part is directed to God who creates and nourishes the world in his bounty, love and mercy. The second part recalls the saving economy of God. Finally there is the supplication and invocation (epiclesis) for the complete and final fulfilment of this economy by the coming of the kingdom of God. This pattern of course conformed to the Trinitarian theology which was prominent when the liturgy was being formulated. Thus the liturgy of St. James was built upon the three fold pattern. The Father is praised for all creation, gathered into this Church of the first born which is designated as the heavenly Jerusalem. The Son is acclaimed as the one in whom and through whom the divine economy of infinite mercy is brought to fruition. The Holy Spirit is invoked as the one through whom the work of the Son finds its ultimate fulfilment in us now and for eternity.

### Trinitarian Structure.

If we look at the Eucharist of St. James as a whole we are especially struck by the clarity of its Trinitarian theology. We can definitely find in it a clearly developed structure according to the scheme of the Trinitarian theology of the 4th century. One of the greatest Anglican liturgists, Bishop Walter Howard Frere thinks that the continuity of its development and the logical unity of the Trinitarian structure are really fascinating.<sup>2</sup> As L. Bouyer says, "In the economy and balance of its composition the liturgy of St. James remains the most accomplished literary monument of perhaps the whole of liturgical literature". It is his opinion that it can be considered the ideal, at least in the sense that nowhere else has the whole traditional content of the Christian Eucharist been expressed with such fulness and in such a satisfying framework for a certain logical type of mind.<sup>3</sup>

2. *The Anaphora or The Great Eucharistic Prayer*, London 1938

3. *Eucharist* p. 268

There are authors even in the 20th century who look upon it as the most ancient and pure form of Eucharist and try to show the hypothetical evolutionary process by which the Roman Liturgy itself must have originated from it.

### Stress on the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Long before the sad disputes between the Greeks and the Latins in the later Middle Ages, the attention given to the epiclesis and the function assigned to it gave the Eastern Eucharist a different emphasis from that of the Latin Mass. The Syrians laid explicit stress on the coming of the Holy Spirit to put the seal on the accomplishment of the sacrament, thus underlining that the whole Trinity is at work in it. It is explicitly attested in the Catechetical Homilies attributed to St. Cyril of Jerusalem. In the West, attention is concentrated on Christ's act of offering. In the East, after recalling what Christ did for our salvation and the memorial that he instituted, the celebrant humbly prays the Spirit, source of life and holiness to make the Church's offering really to be Christ's body and blood for those who participate in the sacrifice. This is an expression of two points of view that are different yet complementary. The same mystery of salvation is looked at and experienced under different aspects. In the West Jesus Christ actualises the redeeming sacrifice throughout time and place. It is he who acts through the ministry of those whom he has delegated the apostolic sacramental power. In the East, the Eucharistic celebration signifies and makes operative the whole economy of salvation in which the whole Trinity is involved and mysterious 'property proper to each of the divine Persons' is explicitly evoked.<sup>4</sup>

4. H. Dalmais, *The Eastern Liturgies* pp 76-77

### Structure of the Holy Qurbono.

The Holy Qurbono of the Syro-Malankara Church is so constructed as to bring before us Christ in all the fulness of his person and mission. The four parts of the Holy Qurbono are fitted together on the basis of the four offices of Christ the King, the Prophet, the High Priest and God-Incarnate. These four themes are portrayed respectively in the four gospels. The four corresponding fruits of the above four offices of Christ are Redemption through Christ the King, Revelation through Christ the prophet, Reconciliation through Christ the High Priest-Victim and Reunion through Christ our God. These four fruits must be applied to each and every man in all future ages in all places. The Holy Qurbono was instituted to apply these four fruits to everyone. Therefore it was absolutely necessary that the structure of the Holy Qurbono should represent these four offices and reproduce their four fruits mentioned above. These four fruits of the four offices of Christ render possible the adequate fulfilment of the four ends of Religion, namely Propitiation, the complement of Redemption, Adoration the complement of Revelation, Petition the complement of Reconciliation and Thanksgiving the complement of Re-union, which are renewed in every Holy Qurbono.

### Restoration of the Dignity of Man.

Adam himself was created in the image and likeness of God. He was King, Prophet, Priest and son of God. Unfortunately as a result of his sin he lost all these offices. Adam's fall resolves itself into four steps namely Disobedience, Disbelief, Disruption and Disunion. The salvific work of Christ consisted in giving back to Adam the dignity and offices which were lost. Hence the mission of Christ also resolves itself into four steps. This was accomplished by Redemption, Revelation, Reconciliation and Reunion with God. In other words, Redemption undid the harm done by Disobedience, Revelation undid the

injury done by Disbelief, Reconciliation annulled the damage done by Disruption and Reunion removed the harm done by Disunion. In this manner the four parts of the Holy Qurbono were for all time to re-enact the four offices of Christ the King, the Prophet, the High Priest and God Incarnate. They were to fulfill the four corresponding ends of religion namely Propitiation, Adoration, Intercession and Thanksgiving. These are the foundations, on which 1) Tuyobo (Prothesis = preparation of the bread and wine; 2) Tulmodo (Liturgy of the Word) 3) Debho or anaphora (the Eucharistic sacrifice proper and 4 )Mestuso (the communion)' the four distinct parts of the Malankara Liturgy are constructed. The Holy Qurbono must necessarily continue to the second coming of Christ when Redemption will yield to Possession, Revelation to Vision. Reconciliation of Fruition and Reunion will be consummated in ultimate and everlasting union with the Holy Trinity.

#### Four distinct parts of the Holy Qurbono.

<i>Four steps of Adam's Fall</i>	<i>Offices which he lost</i>	<i>Gospels and the office of Christ</i>	<i>Steps of Salvation and ends of religion</i>	<i>Four parts of the Holy Qurbono.</i>
Dis-obedience	King	Mathew King	Redemption Propitiation	Tuyobo Prothesis
Disbelief	Prophet	Mark Prophet	Revelation Adoration	Tulmodo Liturgy of the Word.
Disruption	Priest	Luke High Priest	Reconciliation Intercession	Debho Anaphora
Disunion	Son of God	John/God Incarnate	Reunion thanksgiving	Mestuso Communion

#### Whole Mystery of Christ.

When Christ instituted the Eucharist at the Last Supper in the Cenacle at Jerusalem, he gave his Apostles the power to re-enact sacramentally this most sublime sacrifice saying "Do this in remembrance of me" (Lk 22.19) The Syrian liturgy interprets this command of Christ in the widest sense. In this sense, the Holy Qurbono is not only a living and precious memorial of Christ's Passion and death but also the sacrificial and living commemoration of his entire life in Palestine and his glorious heavenly life both past and present including his future second coming. In other words, the whole mystery of Christ is presented in all the dimensions from the creation of the cosmos to the parousia.

#### Memorial Repast and Sacrificial Banquet.

According to the teaching of the Church, the Holy Qurbono is a living and precious memorial of Christ. As we celebrate this greatest memorial action, Christ becomes really present among the assembly of worshippers, even though concealed beneath the appearance of bread and wine. The Holy Qurbono gives to the sacred humanity of Christ an ubiquity and a marvellous mode of existence. It is not only a memorial, it is also his sacrifice making present among us the sacrifice of Golgotha. Hence, the Holy Qurbono is our one, unique and perfect Christian sacrifice and the greatest act of worship possible on earth. Besides being a living, precious memorial of Christ and making present again his sacrifice of the Cross, the Holy Qurbono is also the food of our Christian life. In other words, the Holy Qurbono is the most significant memorial repast and sacrificial banquet which imparts everlasting life in union with Christ. In short, the Holy Qurbono is the actualization of the salvific reality 'Jesus' through the words of thanksgiving pronounced over bread and wine.



## WELCOME TO THE KING OF JUSTICE *TUYOBO*

The first part of the Malankara Qurbono is called Tuyobo. It is the service of Preparation of the Table of life. In this part the worshipper meditates on the theme of the Kingship of Christ. Christ is the supreme King who redeemed man from the bondage of Satan. Man had disobeyed God and had lost the dignity of kingship with which he was adorned in the garden of Eden. The liturgical preparation for the Holy Qurbono is threefold.

1. Spiritual Preparation. This consists of the recitation of canonical hours and the performance of the service of repentance given in the preliminary part of the liturgy.
2. Bodily preparation. In this part the celebrant washes his hands and puts on the special liturgical vestments for the celebration of the Holy Qurbono.
3. Material Preparation: The celebrant prepares, the bread and wine for the sacrifice. Properly speaking, it is this which is designated by the word Tuyobo.

This preliminary secret service is built upon the two prototypes of Christ in the Old Testament, Melchisedech (Gen 14.18; Heb 6.20; 7.1) and Aaron (Ex 28 Lev 6.9; Heb 5.4). Thus we have two services in the Tuyobo (1) The service of Melchisedech and (2) The Service of Aaron.

### The First Service

The first part of the preparatory service when the bread and wine are prepared on the thronos (altar) is called the Service of the Oblation of Melchisedech. This recalls the story of Melchisedech the 'Priest' of the Most High God, who brought out bread and wine at his meeting with Abraham (Gen 14.18). Melchisedech is shown in the Epistle to the Hebrews to have been a type of Christ, who is called a Priest for ever after the manner of Melchisedech (Heb 6. 20). This signifies that Christ the messianic King, came to fulfill not only the sacrifices of the Jewish Law but also those of the Natural Law, which have been offered from the beginning of human history, so that Christ the King is the Saviour of all mankind.

### The Thronos, the heavenly throne of Christ the King.

The altar has three names in the Malankara Rite. The first is the name thronos. The thronos ( a greek word which means throne) is the Holy Table in the middle of the Madbhaho (or Sanctuary). It is the heavenly throne upon which the King of Glory sits so as to enable us to offer our homage to his majesty. The second is the Sacrificial Altar on which the lamb of God immolates himself by perpetuating his unique sacrifice for our salvation. And the third name is the Table of life on which he allows us to partake of his body and blood. According to Dionysius of Athens, the thronos signifies Emmanuel who is the tree of life.<sup>1</sup> According to St. John Chrysostom it represents the tomb of Christ.

The thrones is duly vested with Chithola consisting of an invisible inner lining which directly touches the Holy Table and a visible outer part which is made of fine red silk in the front.

<sup>1</sup>. Moses Bar Kepha says, it is the symbol of Christ.

Another white linen cloth is also spread over the surface of the table. These three clothes signify the members of Christ's mystical body, the Church. The outer red symbolizes the militant Church or the Pilgrim Church on the earth, the invisible lining underneath the red symbolizes the suffering Church, and the uppermost white cloth signifies the triumphant Church in heaven. The Chithola is intended to stress the dignity of the thronos as the heavenly throne of Christ the king on earth. The white linen cloth is meant to show the dignity of the thronos as the sacrificial table and the sacrifice itself as a pure offering (Mal 1.11). The chithola symbolically represents Christ's robe of glory and the costly burial cloth in which Christ's body was wrapped. That the thronos is covered represents also the ignorance of Adam in not recognizing the tree of life in the Paradise of Eden.

### Return of the Prodigal son.

After the recitation of the Canonical hours with the congregation, the celebrant in his wide sleeved black cassock comes in front of the sanctuary door. This symbolizes the homeward pilgrimage of the prodigal son with torn and untidy dress (Lk 15.22). He then says the initial prayers asking for grace to perform the sacrifice in a worthy manner. Then he recites the penitential psalm 51 which is a confession of his sinfulness and a plea for divine mercy before beginning a sacred rite. Having asked forgiveness of the gathered community, he enters the sanctuary saying Ps 43.3-4. As he approaches the thronos he worships saying, "Into your house O God have I entered and before your sanctuary have I worshipped. O heavenly King, pardon whatever sins I have committed against you". This is reminiscent of the confession of the prodigal son. Then the celebrant kisses in the middle and the four corners of the thronos saying Ps 118.28-29. This kissing is an expression of respect, love and spiritual fellowship. It is also means of receiving blessing from Christ. Since the priest represents, the

assembled worshippers the kiss is the reverential greetings of the Church, the bride of Christ to her divine Bridegroom. Every Qurbono is a fulfilment of the work of redemption which Christ described as a spiritua; espoussal (Mt.22.2). The kiss is also like the embrace of the merciful Father and the prodigal son (Lk 15.20). Hence the kiss is a symbolic gesture, expressing the purpose and effect of the entire Qurbono, the work of redemption. Every Christian who comes for the Holy Qurbono is embraced by Christ the Bridegroom.

### Christ the sun of Justice.

On entering the sanctuary, the deacon lights the candles saying,

In your light we shall see the light, Jesus full of light you are the true light which enlightens all creation. Enlighten us by your joyous light, splendour of the heavenly Father. (In 1.9 cfr Ps 36.9).

Light is regarded as the symbol of the presence of God. God created light (Gen 1.3), appeared to Moses in the burning bush (Ex 3.2) and went before the people of Israel as pillar of light (Ex 13.21). He dwells in inaccessible light (1 Tim 6.16) and is himself light and in him there is no darkness (1 Jn 1.5). Light is a symbol of Christ, the true light which enlightens everyman that comes into the world (Jn 1.9). Christ is the light of light and is called the Sun of Justice (Mal 4.2). His teaching enlightens the minds of man and delivers from the spiritual darkness of moral death. As the glorified Lamb, Christ is the lamp of heavenly Jerusalem (Rev 21.23) At the Holy Qurbono the light points to Christ who is present in person as the high priest of the sacrifice. Three candles at the Holy Qurbono is the general rule in the Syrian Church. The middle one in front of the cross represents God the Father the northern one represents the Son of God and the southern one represents the Holy Spirit. For the divine office at least one candle must be lighted in the

centre. At solemn services more candles are lighted but always in odd numbers (5,7,9,11,13). The lighting of the candles reminds the worshippers of their duty of living as the children of light.

Pure and holy one, who dwell in habitations of light  
keep from us evil passions and fruitless tribulations.  
Grant that in purity of heart we may do the works  
of justice.  
(cfr 1 Time 6.16, Mt 5, 14-16, Jn 8.12, Eph 5.8)

The lighting of candles is symbolic of the divine act of creation because according to the Syrian Fathers, it is light which God created in the beginning of creation. (Gen 1.1)

### The Tablito

The bread and wine for the Eucharistic sacrifice are arranged on the Talbesto spread over the Tablito in the middle of the Thronos. The Tablito is a plank of wood 18" x 12"x1/2" anointed with Holy Muron (Chrism) and consecrated by the bishop. It is handled only by persons in Sacerdotal orders and the holy Qurbono cannot be celebrated on the thronos without the Tablito. In places where a consecrated thronos is not available, the Tablito alone is used on a clean table. In the middle of the Tablito on one side is written crosswise in Syriac: The Holy Trinity sanctified this tablito by the hands of Mar N(Name of the Bishop) on (date month and year). The Tablito is generally covered tightly with a cloth.

### The Talbesto

The Talbesto known as Virikkoottam in Malayalam is the corporal in the Malankara rite. This consists of three pieces of fine silk white, green and red respectively. It represents Christ who was offered on the cross. The front part of the Talbesto

is usually decorated with ornamental embroidery work. The red piece signifies the entire created fiery cosmos. The green is smaller than the red and is set over the red to symbolize the green earth, the central planet of the cosmos from the spiritual point of view, wherein God created and placed man for whose salvation the second Person of the Trinity became man. The white piece which is still smaller is set over the green and signifies the Church on earth wherein is treasured the Holy Qurbono. The paten and chalice containing the bread and wine are placed on the white piece. Three pieces that make up the Talbesto have each a narrow border of golden colour. It signifies the three ranks of angels who guard the created cosmos, the earth and the Church. The golden colour signifies that their glory is the reflected glory of the Divine Majesty. In the front there are five crosses symbolizing the five wounds of the crucified Jesus, two on the red silk, two on the green and one on the white piece.

### The Hamiro.

The bread (lahmo) used for the Eucharistic sacrifice is traditionally called *Hamiro* in the Malankara Church. It is the leavened wheat bread as against the *Patio* which means unleavened bread. Generally a portion of the leaven is kept while the hamiro is being made so as to leaven the flour on the next occasion. It is believed that the leaven is directly derived from a loaf of bread given to St. John at the Last Supper and is transmitted through St. Thomas the Apostle of India. The Hamiro is generally known as *Bukro* (the first born) symbolizing that it is an offering of the first born and it is a symbol of Christ the first born of the heavenly Father (Col 1.15). It is also known as *Tabh'o*(Seal) because it is sealed with twelve small crosses representing the twelve Apostles and one big cross representing Christ. The *Hamiro* is made out of flour of wheat representing the Holy Spirit received at Baptism, Salt representing the love of God and olive oil signifying God's mercy towards us

(Lk 10.34). Thus it is symbolic of the Economy of Salvation. It is also symbolic of creation as its five constituent elements represent the five elements of the cosmos.

### He was led as lamb to slaughter.

The celebrant marks on the lines of the bread with the paten saying, "He was led as a lamb to slaughter and as a sheep before the shearer is silent, so he opened not his mouth in humiliation" (Is 53.7-8). This signifies Christ's immolation on the cross. Looking at the thronos, he continues, "The place, O Lord which your hands have established. The Lord shall reign for ever and ever" (Ex 15.17- 18). He then lifts up the bread and places it on the paten saying, "O first-begotten (Bukro-Christ) of the heavenly Father, do accept this first-begotten (Bukro-Bread) from the hands of your weak and sinful servant". The priest then pours wine into the chalice and says, "Our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified on the tree between two thieves in Jerusalem, and was pierced in his side with a spear and there flowed from it blood and water to wash away the sins of all creation. He who saw it bore witness and we know that his witness is true" (Jn 19.34-15). He mixes a little water in the wine saying "O Lord God, as your divinity was united with your humanity, so unite this water with this wine". Then he lifts up the chalice and recites the following from Psalm 116 "What shall I return to the Lord for all his goodness to me. I will take the chalice of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows in the presence of all his people" (Ps 116.12-14). Finally the paten and chalice are covered with small veils. All this is intended to indicate that the Pilgrim Church and the Suffering Church join with the Triumphant Church, even with Christ himself in celebrating the heavenly liturgy.

### The Service of Penitence

Among the Syrians, the service of Melchisedech gives a poenitential atmosphere to the preparation of the offerings. Hence there follows the service of Penitence, immediately after the preparation of the bread and wine. Thus in the hymn after the Sedro of the first service we have this stanza. "At your door, O Lord I knock and from your treasure house I ask for mercy. I am a sinner who for long have turned aside from your way. Help me to confess my sins and to depart from them and to live by your grace. At what door shall I knock, if not at yours, compassionate Lord? Who is there who will plead for our faults, if your mercy does not plead for them, O king whose glory is worshipped by Kings."

### The second service

The second service of the Tuyobo is called the 'service of Aaron' because during it the priest is arrayed in sacred vestments and incenses the offering recalling the vestments (Ex28) and the incense (Num 16.47-48) which were ordained for the priests of the Old Covenant of which Aaron was the chief. In the Old Testament Aaron and his sons are designated (Ex 28.1) and installed (Lev 8.1-10.20) as priests with Aaron as high priest. In the New Testament imperfect priesthood of Aaron is contrasted with the perfect priesthood of Christ (Heb 5.4; 7.11). The service of Aaron is also performed within the veiled sanctuary during which three ceremonies take place; vesting, commemoration and incensing.

### Commemoration of the Saints.

After the initial prayers, the celebrant goes to the diakonikon (vestry), washes his hand, takes off his wide sleeved black cassock and puts on the liturgical vestments one after another reciting prayers benefitting each. These actions symbol-

ize the bath and dressing of the prodigal son (Lk 15.22). He then comes before the thronos, prostrates before it and prays for himself. "So that I entirely belong to you and the gift of your sacred mysteries may be bestowed on me". Then he kisses the step (dargo), ascends the thronos, uncovers the paten and the chalice, and crossing his right hand over the left, he takes the paten in his right hand holds them so crossed while he recites a lengthy prayer of commemoration. This action shows symbolically that all the blessings come through the cross. The prayer of commemoration recalls the mysteries of the life of Christ, and then the remembrance of all the the saints from Adam and Eve downwards, including the prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, doctors and holy fathers and all the faithful departed. This prayer is reminiscent of the ancient Book of life (Spar haye) which was used in the early Church. It recalled the names of all the living and dead who were specially to be remembered in the Holy Qurbono. According to Moses Bar Kepha, one of the reasons for commemorating the saints is :

by proclaiming them it urges us to imitate their holy way of life and also their right faith, that we too may be worthy of their blessed end, and after our decease be proclaimed upon the thronos, as they are proclaimed.<sup>1</sup>

### Susepo.

Having remembered the special intention of the Qurbono the celebrant places the offerings on the *tablito* and covers the mysteries with the *susepo*. *Susepo* is the large veil which is spread over the oblations. This embroidered large silk veil is also called anaphora. It has a rich symbolic significance and is solemnly waved over the gifts before the Eucharistic Prayer. Its covering the mysteries in the beginning of the Qurbono

1. Two Commentaries p 42

represents the transcendence of God hidden in the mysteries and the Old Testament period before the revelation of Christ to the world. Moses Bar Kepha makes the following comment on the ritual veiling: "And we say that the anaphora is spread over the mysteries for these reasons":

First: because it signifies the secretness and the invisibility of the Godhead which is hidden in the mysteries.

Secondly: it is a symbol of the stone which was placed over the tomb of our Redeemer.

Thirdly: it makes known that Emmanuel Himself was covered over and hidden in the sacrifices of the Law and in that figurative services".<sup>2</sup>

### The Rite of Incense.

For the performance of the rite of incense the celebrant descends the step and begins the Proomion and Sedro. They are addressed to Christ as the creator of the world and the Arranger of the creations. In these and in the following hymns commemoration is made once again of the saints with the offering of incense. After the Proomion the celebrant puts incense into the thurible and receives it from the deacon and incenses the thronos. At the conclusion of 'Sedro', he ascends the step of the thronos and offers incense by waving the burning censer on four sides of the anaphora making memory of the Virgin Mary in the eastern; Propohets, Apostles and Martyrs in the western; the priests, the just and the righteous in the northern and the Church and her children in the southern sides of the anaphora respectively. Reciting the ethro (Prayer of incense) he waves the censer three/ times round the anaphora.

2. Two Commentaries pp 44-45

The ethro is followed by a greeting to the Trinity. Offering incense by waving the censer thrice towards the middle of the thronos, the celebrant greets the Father saying: 'Worship to the merciful Father'. In the same way offering incense to the northern side of the thronos he says, 'Worship to the compassionate Son. Here he also folds back the left corner of the Susepo and kisses and says: 'The Son died on the Cross'. This action is symbolic of the sealing of the tomb of Christ after the burial (Mt 27.66). Finally he incenses the southern side and greets the Holy Spirit saying 'Worship to the Living and Holy Spirit'. The second service is concluded by the Huthomo (Prayer of seal) in which the celebrant prays for peace and tranquillity in the four quarters of the world. During the service of Melchisedech, Old Testament lessons are read by the Lector standing in the Qestroma. During the service of Aaron the pilgrim worshippers standing in the nave sing appropriate hymns.

### The Mystical Hours in the Malankara Liturgy.

Since these two stages of the preliminary services are hidden from the view of the congregation by a curtain at the Holy Door, it is called the First Mystical Hour. In every service of the Holy Qurbono there are three times when portions of the Holy Liturgy are read in a low inaudible voice and corresponding manual acts are performed within the curtain of the sanctuary. The second Mystical Hour is in the middle of the liturgy during the ceremony of Fraction and the third Mystical Hour is at the end of the Qurbono just before the procession of the Mysteries. The first mystical hour represents the period of the heavenly life of Christ as the lamb of God slain in sacrifice ever since the world was made (Syriac Apocalypse 13.8). It also represents the Old Testament period of expectation for the Messianic King. The Eucharistic commemoration during this first mystical hour has reference to the following mysteries.

- a) the eternal pre-existence of the Son of God in the mystery of the Holy Trinity namely the eternal generation of the Logos from God the Father (Jn 1.1-2).
- b) the eternal self oblotion of the Son of God; Jesus Christ is the lamb of God slain in sacrifice before the cosmos was made. The Son of God gave himself up from eternity to be slain for the redemption of the sinful human race.
- c) the self-manifestation of God in creation and in history.
- d) the supreme self-revelation of the Son of God in the sublime mystery of incarnation, namely the temporal generation of Christ in the fulness of time (Gal 4.4).

### The Public Celebration of the Holy Qurbono.

When the first mystical hour is over, the sanctuary curtain is drawn aside to signify that the time of expectation is over and the promised Messianic King (Jn 1.4-9) has now appeared. As soon as the worshippers end chanting the last stanza of the hymn on the departed the celebrant after concluding the rite of Aaron joins the worshippers. He then begins the public celebration of the Holy Qurbono commemorating the manifestations of Christ, the promised Messianic King, as the 'Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world' (Jn 1.29) and as the beloved Son with whom the Father is well pleased (Mt 3.17). This is the climax of the first part of the Holy Qurbono when we see and adore Christ as King. The celebrant and the congregation together sing with all solemnity. "I will magnify you, O Lord the King (Ps 145.1) the only begotten Son, the Word of the Heavenly Father, Immortal in his nature....." This incarnational Hymn attributed to patriarch Severios of Antioch (+538) is addressed to Christ the King and is in praise of him. Preceded by the deacon holding the candle and accompanied by all the servers in the sanctuary holdings bells

and fans, the celebrant waving the censer goes in procession round the thronos and incenses the congregation. The deacon going in front with a burning candle signifies John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus to prepare (Lk 3,4) the way for the gospel of Christ and the celebrant represents Christ the King. The unveiling of the sanctuary at this moment symbolizes the opening of heaven and the ceremonial procession around the thronos with singing symbolizes the appearance of the angels with singing at Bethlehem, the visit of the shepherds and of the wise men from the East.

## REVELATION OF CHRIST THE PROPHET *TULMODO*

This part of the Holy Qurbono recalls the public ministry of Christ the Prophet who as the Way, the Truth and the Life (Jn 14.6) went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity (Mt 9.35). This is done by various scriptural lessons read by the celebrant and the lectors and by the living voice of the Church in the sermon. Since adoration is the complement of revelation, the scene of the seraphic hymn is introduced here by the solemn recitation of the Trisagion as a preparation for the liturgy of the Word of God. It shows the deep reverence and adoration before the infinite sanctity of God. Thus after the dramatic introduction of Jesus as the worshipful God, the worshippers turn to adore him. The response consists of antiphonal reciting of a Christological doxology and of making the sign of cross. This doxology was introduced into the Christian worship probably in the middle of the fourth century A.D. and the fourth stanza "who were crucified for us" was added to it in the fifth century by Peter the Fuller the Patriarch of Antioch (470-488).

### The Trisagion

At first this hymn was certainly addressed to Christ and was a profession of faith in his divinity; and in the patriarchate of Antioch after the council of Chalcedon this was made clear by the addition of the words "who were crucified for us". The Trisagion in the Malankara liturgy is Christological one and not Trinitarian doxology. According to both Moses Bar Kepha and

Bar Salibi the Trisagion is addressed to Christ, referring to his unchanging holiness, his might in enduring suffering and death and his immortality by resurrection. To emphasize the Christological nature of Trisagion they associate the introduction of the fourth stanza with the funeral procession of Christ. Moses Bar Kepha describes the scene as follows.

But others say that at the time of the crucifixion after Christ had given up his Spirit into the hands of his Father, the holy Seraphim came together round about the body of Christ and sang this hymn as far as 'who was crucified for us'. and they left out this clause, and very rightly, since it was not for them that he was crucified, but for the whole race of men. At that time they say Joseph the Councillor was present, he who begged the body of Christ from Pilate the judge and embalmed it, and they say that when he heard them saying Holy are thou-----, his own mind was enlightened and he added 'who was crucified for us, have mercy upon us.'<sup>1</sup>

The Christological character of the Trisagion is further evident in the seasonal variations of the fourth stanza. On the feast of Nativity instead of 'crucified for us', 'born for us' and the feast of Epiphany 'was baptised for us' are chanted.

### Sign of the Cross

At the recitation of the fourth stanza of the Trisagion the worshippers make most solemnly the sign of the cross on themselves. They bow deeply before they make the sign of the cross to signify that they are delivered from the bondage of Satan by the salvific Cross of Christ. The Malankarese make

1. Two Commentaries p 26

the sign of the cross with one finger of the right hand, the thumb and second finger joined together below the first finger. This shows that there are three distinct Persons in the Trinity of one God. The thumb denotes the Father, the first finger the Son, and the second finger the Holy Spirit. The first finger is extended above the other two showing thereby that there are two natures (divine and human) in Christ and that only the second Person of the Trinity came down from heaven and became man and redeemed the human race by his saving death on the cross. The West Syrian practice of making the sign of the cross from the left shoulder to the right was begun in Syria from the time of Mar Severios the patriarch of Antioch in the sixth century. Bar Hebraeus notes specifically that the West Syrians' sign of the cross is made in the way opposite to that of both Byzantines and Nestorians. The movement from brow to the chest and from the left shoulder to the right signifies that the Son of God descended from heaven to the earth for the salvation of the world and by the death on the cross brought humanity from the sinister and destructive left to the inheritance of light and salvation of the right. While blessing persons or things priests of the Malankara Church make a cross over object not with two straight movements of the right hand as do the latins but with four punctuating as it were the extremities of the cross with dots and joining them in the form of an arch with three fingers joined together. When blessing is done by touching the objects, they make a cross over the object with two movements of thumb only.

The recitation of the Trisagion is accompanied by the waving of the fans and ringing of the bells at the chanting of the fourth stanza. And the mood of awe and wonder with which the celebration began turns to love and adoration in the performance of the rite of making the sign of the cross. Jesus is the one who stands in the most intimate of relationships and therefore the great desire to be identified with him. The introductory part of the public celebration closes with the thrice repeated acclamation 'Kurieleison' which means 'Lord, have



mercy on us'. This acclamation is used as a concluding and as a transitory liturgical devise in the Syrian Liturgy.

### Proclamation of the Word of God.

Then comes the didactic service consisting of at least seven readings from both the Old Testament and the New Testament Scriptures and finally the homily. It is the solemn announcement of the Word of God. Four Old Testament lessons and three New Testament lessons are read here in the Patriarchate. But according to the tradition of the Maphriante, the four Old Testament lessons are read after the canonical hours and only the three New Testament lessons are read in this part of the Holy Qurbono. This practice is followed also in Malankara. The Old Testament lessons read before the beginning of the public celebration are related to the Gospel lesson according to a typological exegesis. The Syrian Fathers redact the books of the Old Testament according to the criterion of the prophetic movement beginning with Moses and culminating with Isaiah.

The New Testament lessons consists of three readings, one from the Catholic Epistles or from the Acts of the Apostles from the northern side, followed by a lesson from the Pauline Epistles from the southern side and finally the reading from the Gospel. According to the Syrian Fathers, reading from the northern side is symbolic of the preaching of the good news to the Jews first and the reading from the southern side is symbolic of the mission to the nations of the world. As the lessons from the Epistles are being read, the celebrant remaining at the thronos facing the east prays in silence asking help to understand the message of the Gospel lesson and to observe them in life. As the reading from the Pauline Epistle concludes the Table of the Word (Gospel stand), which is decorated in the same way as the thronos, is brought to the middle of the sanctuary and the candles on either side of the Gospel on it are lighted. Then the celebrant accompanied by those who carry the bells, the fans

and the candles on either side turns to the west and proceeds ceremonially to read the lesson from the Gospel. Meanwhile a Hulolo (Canticle) is sung by the worshipping community. It is a psalm versicle sung with the chant of 2 Halleluyas before and one after. As the celebrant approaches the Table of the Word, he puts incense in the thurible and the deacon (assistant) standing on the northern side of the sanctuary admonishes the worshippers, while censing the Gospel to listen to the living Words of God in silence and awe and reverence

After the proclamation of the Gospel, the congregation sings the hymn for the entrance of the holy mysteries during the procession back to the thronos. The hymn varies according to the liturgical seasons. This indicates that upto the tenth century, the Syrians had a procession of the mysteries inside the church, like that of the Byzantine rite (Great Entrance). But since long this has disappeared. The lectional rites are intended to commemorate the events of the Salvific Economy of Christ step by step during the liturgical year. On some occasions the events commemorated are contemporarised with appropriate auxiliary rites that the worshipping community could participate in them with appropriate emotions as if they were contemporaries of the events commemorated.

### The Solemn Prayer of Entrance.

The Solemn Prayer of Entrance introduces the Qurbono of the Faithful. This consists of Prumiyon and Sedro and other related prayers. The Prumiyon is always preceded by the exclamation 'Stamen Kalos' which means 'let us stand well' said by the deacon and the reply 'Kurieleison' by the congregation. It is one of the Greek ritual expressions which have been preserved in the Syrian Liturgy. It serves as an exclamation to exhort the congregation to take part in the service as reverentially as possible. Very often it marks the beginning of an exceptionally solemn prayer.

Prumiyon and Sedro is a typical form of solemn prayer in this Church. It is used in all the prayers of the Divine office and in all the Sacraments and other services. At first it offers praise and thanksgiving for the blessings which God has given us, above all in the sacrifice of Christ and then makes petition for his grace to be given to the assembled congregation. The majority of the Prumiyons are addressed to Christ and they invariably end with the formula "..... to him belongs honour, glory and worship at this time when the Holy Eucharist is performed at all feasts, moments hours, times and all the days of our life". This invariable ending of the Prumiyons for the celebration of the Holy Mysteries shows that the celebration as a whole is also a service honouring and worshipping Jesus as the God Incarnate. At the conclusion of the Prumiyons the celebrant unfolds the corner of susepo which he had folded during the service of Aaron and kisses the thronos saying 'The Son rose from the tomb'. He then puts incense into the thurible and recites the prayer of Absolution. The prayer is a fixed one and is addressed to Christ as the Forgiver by using the Old Testament expression for describing the divine act of forgiving. It asks forgiveness of sins for all the faithful, both the living and the dead. Then the celebrant lifting up his hands in supplication recites the sedro. The word literally means 'series' or 'order'. It is a long set form of prayer in prose or verse. Originally it was a series of short prayers not unlike the litany. But in course of time it developed into a long prayer fitting to the liturgical celebration modelled according to the intercession of King Solomon at the dedication of the Temple of Jerusalem (1 Kgs 8,22-53). After the Sedro the celebrant pronounces the formula of absolution. " May we receive from God pardon of offences and forgiveness of sins in both worlds for ever".

### The Blessing of the Censer.

The hymns and other prayers which normally follow the Prumiyon and Sedro are replaced by the Blessing of the Censer.

This rite is the most stirring glorification of the infinitely Holy Trinity and it is a very solemn moment for the Syrians. The revelation of the Holy Trinity is associated with the baptism of Jesus when the Father was heard from heaven and the Spirit was seen descending and resting upon the Son (Mt 3.17). Therefore this first occasion when the Holy Trinity is solemnly invoked in the Qurbono is considered a symbolic representation of the baptism of our Lord. The priest blesses the censer in the name of the Holy Trinity making the sign of cross three times over the chains and then turns to incense the people. It is the public confession of faith in the Holy Trinity.

The top cup of the censer represents in one sense the heavens, the lower one the earth and the charcoal in it represents us who are sinners. Fire signifies God the Holy Spirit by whose contact the black coal shines and glows. In another sense the cup of the censer represents Virgin Mary the mother of God. The fire in it signifies the Son of God who is fire and came and stayed in the Virgin's womb, as the fire on the bush did not burn it. The first chain stands for God the Father, the second and the third together for the Son who is man and God and the fourth stands for the Holy Spirit. The conjoining of the chains on the circular disc on the top with the hook symbolizes the unity of the Trinity. And the bells, twelve in number represent the apostles of Christ. According to the manifold symbolism of the censer, the ritual of blessing the censer is a ritual blessing of the worshipping community. According to Bar Salibi, the censer is also a symbol of John the Baptist whose message was one of repentance. At this moment of the blessing of the censer, the congregation relive their evangelic experience of repentance, forgiveness and baptism in the name of the blessed Trinity.

### The Creed

The liturgy of the Word of God reaches its end in the Nicene creed, a profession of our faith in response to the Word of God

and in anticipation of the sacrificial action which is about to begin in the third part of the Holy Qurbono. During the recitation of the creed the deacon carrying the censer, proceeds to the farthest end of the haiklo incensing the whole congregation and announcing that the catechumens may disperse now, and the sacrifice of the Holy Qurbono is about to start. Moses Bar Kepha makes the following comment on the censuring of the whole nave at this moment of the celebration. "The incense which goes forth from the altar, and goes about the whole nave and then returns to the altar, signifies these things, First: the goodness of the Holy Trinity, for although it goes forth to all the saints by its care, yet it does not leave its own fixedness, and it is not changed or diminished. Secondly: it signifies God the Word, who came down from heaven, and was made a sweet savour and an incense of reconciliation, and offered Himself for us to God the Father, and made an atonement for all the world and turned it back to His Father, without being changed or losing His Godhead. Thirdly: again, in that the thurible of incense goes forth from the altar, which represents Emmanuel, and goes about the whole nave among the faithful, it takes their assent and their good will towards Him, and returns and brings it in to Emmanuel, which is the altar."<sup>2</sup>

The creed used in the West Syrian Church is Nicene Constantinopolitan Symbol of faith. It was introduced into the liturgy by Peter Fuller, the Patriarch of Antioch. But Moses Bar Kepha and Bar Salibi claim the authority of the council of Nicea (325.A.D.) for the introduction of the creed<sup>3</sup>. The creed expresses our glad acceptance of the divine truths which have been spoken to us in the various scriptural lessons and in the homily, and our readiness to follow Christ the Prophet who is our way, our truth and our life (Jn 14.16). Thus faith is the door by which we enter the Holy of Holies, the sanctifying part of our Holy

2. *Two Commentaries* p 37

3. *Ibid*

Qurbono. Moses Bar Kepha gives the following reasons for the introduction of the creed at this moment.

The faithful therefore recite it for these reasons.

First: that they may let it be known that they believe and confess alright. Secondly: (to show) that their faith and confession are one. Thirdly: that by it minds and hearts and mouths may be hallowed<sup>4</sup>

He also gives an explanation of the content of the creed according to the Theological Paradigm.

Again, it is right to know that this faith is divided into five heads: the first, the theology, the second the incarnation, the third concerning baptism, the fourth concerning the general resurrection, the fifth concerning the future judgement and recompense.<sup>5</sup>

Thus the mood of awe and wonder with which the Public Celebration began turns to trust, confidence and hope at the conclusion when the creed is recited.

Meanwhile, the celebrant washes his fingers as a ritual preparation for the Holy Sacrifice because hands are a symbol of action and washing them is a sign that we ought to be pure and free from all sinful deeds. The celebrant, turning to the congregation bowing his head and stretching forth his hands, in humility asks the help of the prayers for him worthily to celebrate the Holy Qurbono. By the same gestures he invites them to unite with him in prayers, and intentions of the Holy Qurbono. Then prostrating in front of the thronos he prays silently before he ascends the step and kisses the thronos to begin the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

4. *Two Commentaries* p 37

5. *Two Commentaries* p 38

## RECONCILIATION BY CHRIST THE HIGH PRIEST - (Anaphora)

The solemn prayer of thanksgiving constitutes the fundamental element of the Syrian liturgy. It is generally called Anaphora (the Greek word means send up), since in this prayer the celebrant as the minister of the Church sends up the Eucharistic oblation to heaven. Anaphora is therefore the backbone of the Syrian Liturgy. In this part of the Holy Qurbano, the Holy Table is mystically conceived as the sacrificial table on which the lamb of God immolates himself by perpetuating his unique sacrifice for our salvation. Besides the word thronos, another Syriac word 'madbho' includes the holy table and all the ministers worshipping within the curtain of the Holy of Holies. The Syrian idea is that the congregation and the earthly madbho are all lifted up to heaven so that it is there in the heavenly Holy of Holies that the faithful are worshipping. Our bread and wine are lifted up to be presented to God as the body and blood of Christ. This is emphasized by the screening of the sanctuary during certain parts of the celebration, so that the worshippers in the Church may realize that they also must keep their hearts lifted up to heaven in the worship of God. In short, the Syrians describe the madbho as a visible representation of the heavenly Holy of Holies, and the Church is mystically understood as the 'Heavenly Jerusalem'

### Ordo Communis

It is necessary to differentiate the anaphora from the 'ordo communis'. The ordo communis is the common framework into

which the several anaphoras are fitted, including the whole of the liturgy of the catechumens. By the anaphoral part we mean all that which is said and done during the course of the liturgical celebration from the 'prayer before peace' till the dismissal. The anaphora properly said includes only the 33 prayers attributed to a determined author and which is inserted in the places determined in advance by the Ordo communis.

It was comparatively easy for one man to add new phrases to a traditional framework, or to compose a wholly new prayer and read it from a manuscript. But the deacon and the people did their parts by custom and by rote; and to change these which were as much their special liturgies as the celebrant's prayer was his, was much more a difficult matter. Thus there is a constant tendency for the people's response, the deacon's proclamations etc., which form the framework in which the celebrant's prayer is set to remain more archaic than the prayers themselves.<sup>1</sup>

### More than a hundred Anaphoras.

In the Fore-mass, the sacerdotal prayers remain much the same in all the oriental liturgies, only the lessons and the songs vary. In the sacrificial prayer which is called the anaphora, the prayers of the priest are subject to change. But these anaphoras do not differ among themselves by giving expression perhaps to a certain festive mystery. They are simply parallel creations formulating the identical theme but in a slightly different way. West Syrian liturgy possesses a rich store of anaphoras, not all of them ancient. The basic formulary is the so-called anaphora of St. James, named after the Apostle James, the first bishop of Jerusalem. This formulary originated in Jerusalem and was

1. G. Dix, *Shape of the Liturgy* (London, 1975) p 7

already in existence in the fourth century. For St. Jerome, living as a hermit in Bethlahem, once quotes a passage from it, and it is also quoted in the Mystagogical Catecheses ascribed to St. Cyril of Jerusalem. In the course of time, new anaphoras were composed according to the pattern of the anaphora of St. James.

Besides the liturgy of St. James the Apostle, more than a hundred anaphoras are known by name and are found in manuscripts in various libraries. An examination of them would reveal considerable variety of local usages. But in course of time, these differences were grouped into two, namely that of the patriarchate of West Syria and that of the Catholicate of the East. When, in the 13th century, Gregorios Barhebraeus became the Catholicos (Maphrian) of the East, many of his liturgical works were adopted by the patriarchate. Among these were the abridged baptismal rite and the minor anaphora of St. James which he had abridged from the major anaphora of St. James which is rarely used in Malankara. During the course of the advent of Jacobite prelates from Syria, they imported Jacobite liturgical books to Malankara. The most important one was in 1751 when Sukralla Mar Baselios came with other prelates. He brought with him several liturgical manuscripts in Syriac. One of them was the minor anaphora of St. James which is widely used by the Malankara Church instead of the major anaphora of St. James.

The order of the Holy Qurbono of the Syro-Malankara Church (Teksod-Qurobo) edited in 1987 contains nine anaphoras. At present this book is used. It contains 1. The minor anaphora of St. James, 2. The anaphora of St. John the Apostle, 3. of the Twelve Apostles, 4. of Mar Dionysius, 5. of Mar Ivanios (St. John Chrysostom), 6. of St. Peter the prince of the Apostles, 7. of Mar Xystos, 8. of Mar Eustathios and 9. of the Doctors (M'qanesto). It is incontestable that the anaphoras attributed to the Apostles and the Fathers of the Church are not all in reality their work. As Renaudot points out, later Syrian writers attributed them to some famous personalities. On the

other hand, it is a common tradition among the Syrians that nobody below the order of a bishop can compose an anaphora.<sup>2</sup>

### Prayer of the peace.

In the Syrian anaphora, the great Eucharistic prayer is preceded by three prayers considered generally ordained by the canons of the Synod of Laodicea (A.D. 363). They are the prayer of the peace, the prayer of the imposition of hands and the prayer of the veil.

A greeting and the kiss of peace serve as an introduction to the Eucharist. It is a characteristic common to all the Eastern liturgies that, unlike the Latin liturgy, they put the kiss of peace at the beginning of the anaphora, in accordance with our Lord's words.

So 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)

The kiss of peace is of apostolic origin. St. Peter (1 Pet 5.14) and St. Paul (Rom 16.16; 1 Cor 16.10; 2 Cor 13.12 Thess 5.26) exhorted the Christians, 'to greet one another with a holy kiss'. This kiss of peace is an expression of fraternal charity. It reminds us that the love of neighbour is a necessary part of our participation in the Holy Qurbono. It symbolizes the 'fellowship of the Spirit' of which the Holy Qurbono is the visible sign. It is a sacramental which gives grace for further purification of our souls. It is a splendid symbol of Christianity, of the union of Christians among themselves and of their union with Christ. Hence it is Christ himself who embraces all who participate in the Holy Qurbono. It is a beautiful symbol of the mystical

2. *Liturgiarum Orientalium Collectio II, 307*

union of all in Christ. Formerly the kiss of peace was given by a holy kiss. But the present custom is to place one's palm in another's palm.

On the need and the appropriateness of the ritual of the kiss of peace at the beginning of the anaphora, Moses Bar Kepha makes the following comment.

By the peace which we give to one another at this time we signify the following. First: since we are making ready to communicate with God through his body and this cannot be so long as we are divided in ourselves and in regard to each other; accordingly we give the peace that we may show that as we embrace outwardly, so inwardly we have love and concord. Secondly: by being made at peace with one another we are made at peace with God. Thirdly: the peace which we give one to another quenches and does away mutual enmity. Fourthly: by the peace which we give we signify that Christ has made an end of the enmity which was between God and men, and between the people and the peoples, and between the soul and the body, and has caused peace and love to reign among us. Fifthly: again, by the peace which we give at this time we fulfil the word of the Lord who said "so if you are offering ..... (Mt 5.23.24).<sup>3</sup>

### Prayer of the Imposition of Hands

After the kiss of peace, there are still two prayers in preparation of the Eucharist. The first of these is a prayer of the Imposition of Hands. Upon the inclined heads of the cultic

3. Two Commentaries pp 40-41

community the celebrant recites 'the prayer of inclination or imposition of hands beseeching God the Father to 'bless them through the grace and mercies and love of Christ towards mankind....' (Anaphora of St.James). The imposition of hands imparts a blessing (Gen 48.15-18; Mt 19.33). As a ritual the 'laying on of hands' occurs frequently in the sacrificial cult. The priest puts the hand upon the head of the sacrificial animal before it was slaughtered (Ex 29.10;15.19, Lev 1.4;3.2,8,13). Thus the prayer of the imposition of hands points out that the cultic community is the real object of sacrifice.

### Lifting up of the Veil

Then comes the prayer of the veil. The veil (Susepo) referred to here is the large peace of cloth which covers the mysteries at the beginning of the service. Once it was long enough to cover the whole altar. But now it is shortened and is only big enough to cover the chalice and paten together. It is also called anaphora by the commentators since the priest lifts it up from the mysteries. Earlier it was the deacons who lifted and waved the veil while the celebrant recited the prayer of the veil. The veil and the prayer of veil were introduced into the celebration of the Eucharist by the Syrian Church by the middle of the fourth century. It is mentioned by St.John Chrysostom and by the time of Mar Severios of Antioch it was an accepted liturgical practice in Antioch and in Jerusalem. The use of the veil and the prayer of the veil are not limited to the celebration the Eucharist, but they are adopted for other liturgical actions of the Church like the consecration of the baptismal water and the blessing of water on the feast of Epiphany.

The ritual of the lifting up of the veil begins with the prayer of the veil.

"O God the Father who by reason of your great love for mankind did send your Son into the world (Jn 3.16) to bring back the sheep that was gone astray

( Is 53.5; Ps 119.176 Lk 15.31; 1 Pet 2.25) do not Lord reject this service of bloodless sacrifice (Ps 51.17); for we do not trust in our own righteousness but in your mercy (Ps 31.2;52.8;71.2;143.1-2 Dan 9.18). Let this mystery which is being performed for our salvation be not for our condemnation (1 Cor 11.27 -32) but for the wiping out of our sins (Ps 51.9) and for giving thanks towards you and to your only begotten Son....."

This prayer of the veil in the anaphora of St. James according to Bar Hebraeus' recension is full of biblical allusions and affirms that he anaphora is a service of giving thanks devoid of the blood shed of sacrificial cults. The first person plural in the text of the prayers of veil as well as Moses Bar Kepha's commentary on this prayer clearly show that the Eucharistic offer is performed by the whole cultic community. Bar Kepha writes, " In this prayer the priest makes supplication to God the Father that he will receive of him and of the people ranged behind him, this sacrifice....."<sup>4</sup>

After the prayer of the veil the priest lifts up the veil and makes it flutter. The veil may have a star or a cross or a dove made on it. The star symbolizes the star of Bethlehem which invited the wise men and all the nations to the Divine Babe of Bethlehem. The cross symbolizes the saving passion of Christ. The dove symbolizes the Holy Spirit, the agent of God's self revelation. The lifting of the veil is symbolic of the self revelation of God in the Incarnation and in the Eucharist. The fluttering signifies the earthquake on Golgotha (Mt 27.51) and at the resurrection (Mt 28.2) . The removal of the veil signifies thereby that the doors of heaven are opened then. When the mysteries are unveiled the nine choirs of the angels and all the saints come to meet and honour the Holy Mysteries. The prayer

4. Two Commentaries p43

which the priest recites in a low voice while lifting up the veil compares the veil to the stone which covered the sepulchre of Christ and which is now as it were rolled away and to the rock in the desert which gave water to the people of God (Num 20.2-13), signifying the water of life (Jer 2.13) which Christ gives to his people in the Qurbono ( 1 Cor 10.1-4). The lifting and lowering the veil three times over the mysteries signifies the descending and ascending of the sheet which St. Peter saw in his vision (Acts 11.5-10). Hence the veil is lifted and lowered and fluttered over to signify the flow of grace into the mysteries and through them to all who believe giving them pardon and salvation. The veil is also compared to the ladder which Jacob saw at Bethel (Gen 28.12) through which our prayers are lifted up to heaven and the grace of God is brought down to earth. The communication between the heavenly choir and the earthly choir is also signified by the fluttering of the veil. As the deacon concludes his admonition the worshippers respond by assenting to him that the Qurbono is 'Mercy, peace, sacrifice and thanksgiving'. Moses Bar Kepha makes the following comment on this exclamation of the people.

The mercies of God which have been poured out upon us, they are this sacrifice which has been offered for our race, and it has been pardoned. But (they say) peace, because it (the sacrifice) made peace between heavenly, and earthly being, and between the people and the peoples, and between the soul and the body. Again, confession (giving thanks), for when Christ confessed (or gave thanks) and gave it to his disciples in the upper room. He confessed to His Father on our behalf, as Paul has said: ' The bread of blessing which we receive, and the cup of confession' (1 Cor 10.16).<sup>5</sup>

5. Two Commentaries p 45

### The Eucharistic Prayer

After these preparations the Eucharistic Prayer itself begins with a solemn blessing. The blessing is a modified form of the blessing found in 2 Cor 13.14 and is therefore called the Apostolic blessing. It was introduced in the liturgy in Antioch and then in Jerusalem when the theology of the Trinity was developed. It replaced the 'Peace be with you' which marked the beginning of the Anaphora. The Syrians in order to establish the hierarchical order of the Holy Trinity placed Father in the first part of the formula and added 'indwelling' to the communication of the Holy Spirit. This is the first of the three solemn blessings during the Holy Qurbono. Moses Bar Kepha makes the following observations on the ritual of sealing with the cross and on the Trinitarian formula of blessing:

He commits them to the Holy Trinity, sealing them with three crosses that their standing may be pure and blameless. By saying the love of God the Father; he shows that in his Love God gave his Son to death for us, as the apostle has said. By saying and the grace of the only begotten Son, he signifies that it was by His grace that the Son tasted death for all, and not as though they were worthy of this. Again by saying ' and the lighting down and communion (indwelling and fellowship) of the Holy Spirit, he declares that by the lighting down of the Holy Spirit the sacrifices are accomplished and accepted".<sup>6</sup>

This shows that the anaphora is centered around the Persons of the Trinity and that it explains the activity of the three Persons. Father's love opens the door of mercy in heaven.

6. *Two Commentaries* p 48.

The grace of the Son gives us confidence in front of God (Heb 10.19) and the indwelling and fellowship of the Holy Spirit transform us and the offerings.

### Lift up your hearts

The dialogue between priest and people which follows is one of the most ancient liturgical formulas found in all Christian liturgies and used by the Jews before them. The people are asked to lift up their hearts and minds to where Christ sits at the right hand of his Father and then to give thanks in holy fear, to which the people respond: 'It is meet and right'. They thus associate themselves with the priest is the sacred action which is about to follow. The basic Semitic attitude before theophany is fear as well attested in the Old Testament (Gen 3.10;28.17 Ex 3.6;13.18). According to Moses Bar Kepha and Bar Salibi this moment of celebration is a cultic moment of theophany and hence the need to give thanks in holy fear. Moses Bar Kepha comments as follows.

And why does he command them to confess (to give thanks) to the Lord in fear? We say for three reasons, First because the mysteries which were hidden have been revealed. Secondly; because the angels have come down and stood round about the mysteries. Thirdly; on account of this great gift which he has given us.<sup>7</sup>

### The Song of the Angles

The Syrian tradition puts before the Sanctus a simple invocation to all the powers of heaven and earth and the nine angelic choirs to praise God. Sometimes this develops into a celebration of God describing the theology of the Trinity. Then the people break into the song of the angels. "Holy,holy,holy"

7. *Two Commentaries* p 48.



recalling that the angels are present at the solemn moment, joining their praise to that of the Church on earth. The text of Sanctus is based on the vision of the prophet Isaiah and St. John (Is 6.1-9; Rev 4.8). This hymn of adoration was already in use in the synagogues. It is a joyful expression of homage to Messiah. The Benedictus which continues this homage, is a joyful greeting of the Son of God who comes down to the thronos. In the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Jews sang Ps 118.26 (Lk 19.38). "Hosanna blessed is he the King who came and comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest." These same words with which the people greeted Christ on Palm Sunday (Mt 21.9) were used frequently by the Jews to express the longing for the coming of the Saviour. The Syrian Liturgy adds the Benedictus to Sanctus in order to express the longing for the appearance of Christ on the thronos.

At least after the inclusion of the "Sanctus" within the anaphora, the West Syrian anaphoras demonstrate a complex scheme. There are two dominant themes, the theme of the divine celebration and the theme of the economy of salvation. For, man's deification is not the only purpose of the Eucharistic liturgy; but the glorification of God, the adoration of his splendour and sanctity, are also essential elements of it. God should be magnified and exalted in virtue of his transcendence. Thus there is absolutely no opposition between the celebration of God before the sanctus and the anamnesis after sanctus. In fact, sanctus is the link between these two aspects of the same mystery. For, commenting on it Moses Bar Kepha says.

Hosanna is in the Hebrew tongue, and the Greeks and the Syrians took it from the Hebrews and in the Hebrew tongue Hosanna is interpreted 'redemption' but in the Greek tongue 'glory' and with truth, for Jesus is Redeemer, and he is the Lord of Glory.<sup>8</sup>

8. Two Commentaries p 50

## The History of Salvation

After the Sanctus - Benedictus, the priest gives thanks for the mighty deeds of redemptive history and their fulfilment in Christ. If the prayer before sanctus was predominantly celebration of God, the prayer after sanctus is mostly anamnestic. It is in the prayer after sanctus that the anaphora mainly develops the history of salvation. The anaphora recounts the whole history of salvation beginning with the creation and first sin. Thus we have in the anaphora of St. James:

You are holy ..... full of loving kindness and mercy. You had great goodness towards your creation. You fashioned man out of dust in your image and likeness and you gave him Paradise for his portion when he had transgressed your command and was fallen, you did not scorn and forsake him, o God of goodness, like a compassionate Father You corrected him, You appealed to him through the Law, You guided him through the Law, you guided him through the prophets. And in the fullness of time you sent into the world your own and only Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, that he might restore and give new life to your image. He came down from heaven, took flesh from the Holy Spirit and blessed Mary, the ever-virgin mother of God; he lived amongst men and ordered all things for the world's salvation.

The ineffable union in Christ of divine and human is the peace which has broken down the dividing wall of hostility having cancelled the bond which stood against us. Thus the Incarnation is the antithesis of the fall of man and the unifying plan of God for men. Hence the history of salvation described in the post-sanctus prayer can be summed up in the words of St. Paul " But God who is rich in mercy, out of the great love

with which he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made alive together Christ and raised us up with him." (Eph 2. 4-8)

### The Institution Narrative.

This evocation of the saving process leads straight to the account of the Eucharistic institution. The Syrian tradition had always well integrated the Institution within the history of salvation. The heart of any Eucharistic anaphora is the recital of the Institution of the Eucharist at the last supper. As the celebrant begins to recite aloud the Eucharistic words, he assumes the role of Jesus in the Upper Room in the paschal night. The wording of the Eucharistic words varies from anaphora to anaphora. But the enacted part is the same in all the anaphoras. Behind its many variants and elaborations in the different anaphoras the institution is the same, the foundation stone and core of the whole Eucharistic celebration. The narration of the history of salvation including the institution narrative, the anamnesis and the epiclesis forms a unit which is the central part of the Eucharistic Prayer. The institution narrative together with the epiclesis constitute only one moment, a moral simultaneity in the Eucharistic action.

### Horizontal and Vertical Time

Horizontal or linear time is time in the normal sense that we know it, consisting of a consecutive string of events where one event is before or after another. There is also a time which can be called vertical time. It has no before or after. All events that are of equal significance from a religious point of view, or whose effect is achieved by a combination of events may be far separated by the horizontal time. God enjoys a kind of time which is a permanent NOW. We can call it the vertical time. Sacred or liturgical time is the point where the horizontal and vertical time meet together. The great veil in the oriental church

is a symbol of this dimension of time. When the veil is drawn, it is the doors of the history which are closed, while the doors of the kingdom of God are opened. Those who abide in the church enter into eschatology. The whole celebration is directed towards the glorious second coming of Christ when history and the cosmos embodied in and symbolized by the bread and wine will be enkindled. The Eucharistic time is thus divine human time, which on the one hand plunges down into the depths of the cosmos, into the sufferings and joys of humanity, and on the other hand soars up into the heavenly liturgy where the cosmos, pneumatized in Christ, comes to be transfigured by the mediation of the world's true history, the history of the saints.

### Anamnesis

It is at the explicit command of Christ that we offer the Eucharistic sacrifice. 'Do this in remembrance of me' (1 Cor 11-26, Lk 22.20). Thus we proclaim his death, resurrection and ascension until his second coming. The celebrant and the congregation together remember the mystery of the death and resurrection of Christ which is made present in all its saving power. They look forward to the second coming of Christ, for which the Holy Qurbono prepares them. In short, both past and future are brought together in this sublime mystery through the real presence of Christ in person among the congregation. As the celebrant says, "Do this in remembrance of me as often as you participate in these mysteries, commemorating my death and my resurrection, until I come", he takes the spoon together with the cushion upon which it rests and raises them abruptly with his right hand over the head and places them on the right hand side. This abrupt action is to signify the second coming of Jesus in the sky like a lightning (Mt 24.27). The change of place symbolizes the change from the seat of mercy to the throne of final judgement. The scene shifts from the historical scene of the upper room to that of the last judgement and the celebrant who played the role of Christ assumes the role of intercessor.

At the conclusion of the priestly prayer, the worshippers find themselves before the seat of last judgement and join the celebrant in the cry for mercy, "Have mercy upon us O God the Father Almighty!"

### The Epiclesis

In all Eastern liturgies the anamnesis is followed by the Epiclesis or Invocation, in which the Holy Spirit is asked to descend upon the gifts. It must be recognized that the words of Institution do not have the dominant place in Eastern instruction and piety that they have in the Western tradition. This is a difference which is not necessarily a disagreement. It is a fact that from at least the fourth century the epiclesis which is found in various forms in all liturgies took on an ever increasing importance as more clearly expressing the Holy Spirit's part in the sacrificial gifts becoming the Lord's body and blood for those who receive them. This is clear from the admonition of the deacon at this point in which he says, "How solemn, O my beloved, and how dreadful is this time when the Holy and quickening Spirit descends from heaven, from the heights above and broods upon this Holy Qurbono and sanctifies it".<sup>9</sup>

Every good and perfect gift comes to us from the Father through the Son by the Holy Spirit. The distinctive oriental manner is to view all supernatural graces in a Trinitarian framework and trace their efficacy to the action of the Holy Spirit. The transformation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ is effected by the operation of the Holy Spirit. This operation is symbolically represented at the Epiclesis by prayer and manual acts. During the prayer of the Epiclesis the priest waves his hands over the gifts in a fluttering motion

9. Cfr I.H. Dalmais O.P. *The Eastern Liturgies* p 91

signifying the descent of the Holy Spirit. The words which are peculiar to the Syrian Liturgy, 'Hear me, Lord' repeated three times, recall the cry of Elijah, which brought down fire from heaven on the sacrifice which he had prepared. (1 Kgs 18. 37)

### The Great Intercessions.

The litany or prayer of intercession originally took place before the anaphora, but in many liturgies it was transferred later to the anaphora, because the prayer of intercession was considered to have a special efficacy in the presence of the Body and Blood of Christ. Thus St.Cyril of Jerusalem says, "It will be a great benefit to those souls for whom prayer is offered, while the holy and most sacred sacrifice lies before us". There are six Prayers of intercession; three for the living-clergy, the faithful Christian people and Christian rulers; and three for the dead - the saints, the Fathers of the Church and the faithful departed. Hence they are called Diptychs in Greek which means two leaved tablets. On one leaf the names of the living were inscribed and on the other the names of the dead. Thus there were only two intercessions in the beginning, but in the 7<sup>th</sup> century Mar Jacob of Edessa amplified them as they are today. For each intercession there are two prayers said by the priest, one silently, the other aloud and an exhortation by the deacon calling the people to pray to which the people respond, *Kurie eleison*.

In fact the prayers of intercession are continuation and integral part of the prayer of the Epiclesis. In them priest asks the Lord to grant the Church rich gifts of the Holy Spirit.<sup>10</sup> This is perhaps the reason why these prayers are known as *Tubden* (and again), the first two Syriac words of the diaconal exhortation. Then in the first part of the prayer of Epiclesis we pray that the Eucharistic bread and wine may become the Body

10. *Silent Prayer of the 1st Great Intercession*

and Blood of Christ by the operation of the Holy Spirit. And in the second part we pray that the Holy Spirit may operate in the Church and transform it into the real Body of Christ. Without the Holy Spirit there is neither the Church nor the Body and Blood of Christ. And there is no Body and Blood of Christ independent of the Church. This part of the anaphora concludes with an eschatological petition and a more or less elaborated Trinitarian doxology.

### The Breaking of the Bread.

After the Christological blessing, which is taken from St. Paul's Epistle to Titus (Tit. 2.13), the veil is drawn and the priest proceeds with the Fraction. Originally this was simply the rite of the 'breaking of bread' preparatory to communion. But it is now invested with much further symbolism. This is the second Mystical Hour in our Holy Qurbono, since the service at this time is hidden from the view of the congregation. The fraction ceremony is a further commemoration of Christ's passion, death and resurrection. The Church dares not commemorate these dreadful and sublime mysteries in public. It is written in the gospels that while our Lord hung on the cross, suffering in agony both in soul and body, three hours' darkness enveloped the earth. The Syrians believe that this phenomenon was the result of God's consideration for the Blessed Virgin Mary. To prevent her from dying of broken heart at the foot of the cross itself, God so mercifully brought three hours' darkness on the earth at mid-day. To symbolize this, the Holy Door is closed at the fraction ceremony. At this time the Holy table is known as madbho (sacrificial table) on which the Lamb of God immolates himself by perpetuating his unique sacrifice for our salvation. The priest breaks the bread and anoints it with the precious blood, signifying that the body and blood of Christ, which were separated in death were reunited at the resurrection. The portions of the sacred bread are arranged in a pattern so as to represent a Lamb or a Man or Cross according

to the liturgical seasons. The prayer which accompanies the fraction is a meditation of St. James of Sarug on the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ.

### The Lord's prayer

After the fraction and consignment the sanctuary is unveiled. The removing of the veil signifies the rending of the veil of the temple of Jerusalem at the death of Jesus (Lk 23.24). The unveiling of the sanctuary at this moment also means the removal of the barrier between God and man, granting access to the Holy of Holies with confidence as children of God (Heb 10.19-22). When the veil has been drawn aside, the people join with the priest in saying the Lord's Prayer. It is placed here on account of the petition for bread and also on account of the petition for the forgiveness of sins. Having been reconciled with God by the sacrifice, we have confidence to address him as our Father. This version of the Lord's prayer concludes with the doxology, which is found in the ancient Syriac version of the Bible called the Peshitto. 'The bread we need', as we have forgiven' and 'from the evil one' are distinctive of this version. According to Moses Bar Kepha the Lord's Prayer contains all the motives like confession, praise and petition. He writes: "Our father who art in heaven is a prayer of confidence which shews us to be sons of God by grace. And there is in it a confession of the Maker, and love of things good, and also a complete deliverance from things evil, and hope and forgiveness of sins".<sup>11</sup> The Lord's Prayer is followed by an embolism and the prayer of the Imposition of hands, the theme of which is blessing and preparation for the reception of the mysteries.

11. Two Commentaries p 73

### The Elevation

After the third solemn blessing which invokes the Holy Trinity with sevenfold attributes, the celebrant elevates the holy mysteries for the congregation to see them in preparation for communion. At this all look up to the mysteries with fear and trembling. They look upward as did the disciples when Christ ascended into heaven. The elevation of the mysteries is a type of the ascension of Christ and the blessing before it symbolizes the blessing given to the disciples by Christ before his ascension (Lk 27.50). The two subdeacons holding candles on each side of the altar represent two men in white robes who stood at the scene of ascension (Acts 1.10). During the elevation of the mysteries we witness Christ the High Priest entering the Holy Place with his own blood, securing an eternal redemption (Heb 9. 11-12). The words, 'Holy things to the holy, belong to a very ancient tradition in the liturgy and remind us of the great holiness of these mysteries and the holiness which is required of those who approach them. The people's response insists beautifully on the Holy Trinity as the source of all human goodness and holiness. Then holding the chalice in his left hand and the paten in the right hand, the celebrant crosses his right hand over the left hand and performs the communion of the Holy Trinity saying the prescribed prayers. He also commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit as on the day of Pentecost. It is also to be noted that according to the Old Testament sacrificial rituals, God is communicated first through lifting and waving the breast of the sacrificial animal to and fro before the altar (Lev 7.30). Thus the elevation of the mysteries is intended to signify the Divine communion and serves as a preparation for the communion of the priest and of the people. He then sets the holy mysteries on the 'Table of Life' and covers them with the small veils. At this point, the commemorations of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Ps 45.9-11), the saints (Ps 92.12-14) and the faithful departed (Ps 103.13-15) are made with solemn hymns and incensations.

### THE SACRIFICIAL BANQUET *MESTUSO*

This is the final stage of the sacramental pilgrimage. At this stage the Reunion with Christ our God is accomplished. Holy Qurbono is not only a sacrament and sacrifice, it is also a sacrificial banquet. It is a foretaste of the day when we shall share the banquet with Christ in heaven (Lk 22.16). It is the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev 19.9); the banquet prepared for the prodigal son who has returned home.

After the ritual communion with the Deity and with the departed members of the Church, through commemorating them with the offering of incense, the living members of the Church communicate themselves in the Body and Blood of Christ. First the celebrant and the servers communicate. Now the altar is mystically conceived as the 'Table of Life'. The curtain of the Holy Door is shut. This is the third mystical hour in which the people wait for the second coming of Christ. This mystical hour symbolizes the close of the Christian dispensation. As the sanctuary is veiled, the priest prostrates before the Table of Life and prays silently.

"Grant us, Lord God, to eat your holy Body and to drink your propitiatory blood, that we may be inheritors of your heavenly Kingdom with all those who have pleased your holy will, our Lord and our God for Ever".

Then follows the communion of the celebrant and the clergy in the sanctuary according to their clerical rank. When this is over the worshippers cry aloud "Worshipped and praised be

the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit from the beginning and praise to Him until generation of generations, Hallelujah", This loud cry signifies the loud trumpet call 'Behold the bridegroom; Come out to meet him' (Mt 25.6). At the shout of Hallelujah, the sanctuary is again unveiled as if the door of heaven is opened for the second coming of Christ. The holy mysteries are held up before the people. This procession of the mysteries, which was originally a procession through the church, is accompanied by lights and the waving of the fans. Traditionally this is said to represent the second coming of Christ. It is a kind of solemn invitation to the people to approach the Table of Life for Communion.

The communion is given to the people under both kinds as is the custom in Eastern Churches. The particle from the host, which is called the 'live coal' recalling the live coal with which the lips of the prophet Isaiah were touched to make him clean (Is 6.6), is dipped in the precious Blood and is received by the faithful standing, as was the universal custom of the ancient Church. Standing is a symbol of the resurrection. The holy Eucharist is a token of the new life of the Resurrection and is called by the Fathers of the Church the 'medicine' and 'gift of immortality', 'the fruit of the tree of life', 'the food of the Cherubim' and 'the heavenly manna'. The reception of the Holy Mysteries is the receiving of the vision of Christ and the union with the Holy Trinity. This is the foretaste of the messianic meal in the Kingdom of Heaven where the blessed hope of the worshippers will be realized.

The Lord left behind a pledge of this hope and strength for life's journey in that sacrament of faith where natural elements refined by man are changed into His glorified Body and Blood, providing a meal of brotherly solidarity and a foretaste of the heavenly banquet.<sup>1</sup>

1. *Vat II Gaudium et spes* 38

The second coming of our Lord is also the time of the judgement. This judgement is symbolically expressed by the stretching forth of hands holding the mysteries to the right side and left side (Mt 25.31-46), after the communion. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgement upon himself (1 Cor 11.29). Then the procession returns to the sanctuary to show that the elect will be taken by Christ to his Father's house (Jn 14.3) after the judgement. Meanwhile all sing a doxological hymn.

All the world shall bow down and worship you and every tongue shall confess your name. You are the resurrection of the dead and the blessed hope of those in the grave. We praise you, Lord God, we praise you and we give thanks for your goodness to us (cfr Phil 2.10-11; Rev 5.9-14).

### Prayer of Thanksgiving:

As the procession returns to the sanctuary, the celebrant ascends the step of the altar and sets the paten and chalice back upon the altar. Remaining on the altar step, the celebrant recites the prayer of thanks which according to St. James is as follows:-

We give thanks to you, Our Lord, for the abundance of your mercy wherewith you have accounted us worthy to partake of your heavenly Table, grant, my Lord that our participation in your Holy Sacrament may not be a cause for our condemnation and that being accounted worthy to partake of your Holy Spirit we may find a portion and an inheritance with all the saints who were from the beginning...

This prayer emphatically specifies that communion in the Body and the Blood of Christ is communion and fellowship with the Holy Spirit and with all those who follow the path of justice

and righteousness. Communion with the Holy Spirit through the participation in the Body and the Blood of Christ is a necessary consequence of the Epiclesis. This is clear from a hymn of St. Ephrem.

Who, it is said, has held the Spirit in his hands?  
Come and see, O Solomon, what the Lord of thy  
father has done for, fire and Spirit not according to  
its nature, He has mingled and poured into the  
hands of his disciples. In the bread and the cup is  
fire and Spirit.

There is a second prayer of thanks which is another prayer of the Imposition of hands. This prayer is addressed to Christ the Son of God that at his second coming we may receive mercy. It is thus looking forward to the second coming of Christ that the Qurbono concludes. We have shared in the mystery of his life and death and resurrection, his ascension and his gift of the holy Spirit. And now we look forward to his second coming seeking to be so conformed to his likeness that he may live in us and we in him. Moses Bar Kepla explains the reason why this prayer is addressed to Christ.

All the prayers of the Qurbono are addressed to the Father. And this is evident from the fact that the priest who offers typically represents (hold a type of) Christ himself, who became a mediator of God and men' (1 Tim 2.5) since he calls the body and blood his own, as though holding the person of Christ...Wherefore it is evident from these things that all the prayers of the Qurbono are addressed to the Father, except this prayer, the last of all the prayers, which is addressed to the Son, wherein the priest confesses (gives thanks) to the Son, because that through him we have gained access to the Father, and he is the way that leads us into the Father...But it is right that the prayer which is the

last of all the prayers should be addressed to the Son, because he became to us a means by which we might draw near to the Father. Wherefore let us confess and give thanks to him in this prayer for that he is become to us the cause of this great benefit, and that when we were far off and rejected by his Father, in him and through him he called us and brought us near to himself".<sup>2</sup>

The name 'coal' given to the Eucharist and used in the formula of communion refers to the vision of Isaiah when he was called and equipped for his prophetic mission. Therefore, participation in the eucharistic mysteries means not only sharing in a sacrificial meal but joining in the prophetic and salvific mission inaugurated by Jesus. This mission is given to the worshippers as the sacramental pilgrimage comes to an end. The priest solemnly dismisses the people with a three-fold blessing. "We commit you to the grace and mercy of the holy Trinity with the provision and the blessings which you have received from the propitiatory altar of the Lord". Therefore the Qurbono (sacrifice) does not come to an end in the parish church. Only the sacramental representation of it comes to an end for the time being. The real sacrifice continues - from the church to the houses, to the community, to the world at large and again back to the church. Thus the pilgrimage will continue until we reach the heavenly home. In fact the second Vatican Council says:

For all their works, prayers and apostolic endeavours, their ordinary married and family life, their daily labor, their mental and physical relaxation, if carried out in the Spirit, and even the hardships of life, if patiently borne - all of these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (1 Pet 2.5). During the

2. Two Commentaries pp 89-90

celebration of the Eucharist, these sacrifices are most lovingly offered to the Father along with the Lord's body.<sup>3</sup>

### Farewell to the Altar

The concluding rituals are performed within the veiled sanctuary by the celebrant and the assistants. Ascending the step of the altar the celebrant consumes the remaining sacred mysteries and cleans the sacred vessels. As he recites Psalms 23, 26 and 29 in a low voice, the worshippers sing appropriate hymns describing the spiritual nature of the Divine Liturgy. Finally the celebrant takes leave off the altar with a striking ceremony. He kisses the altar and says:

Remain in peace, holy altar of the Lord, for I do not know whether I shall return to you or not. May the Lord make me worthy of the vision of you in the assembly of the first-born in heaven; in this covenant I trust.

The sense of ultimacy and finality with which the Syrian Fathers end the celebration of the Holy Qurbono is highly remarkable. The formula of final blessing and dismissal as well as the ritual of farewell to the altar imply the immediacy of parousia and the hope of meeting again in the eschatological Kingdom of God.

3. *Lumen Gentium* 34

## THE LITURGICAL YEAR

The Syrian Church, before and after the Council of Chalcedon, was remarkable for the creative spirit of her liturgy which blossomed until the thirteenth century. In the case of liturgical year also the Syrian Church made great developments. The organization of the cycle of the liturgical year seems to have begun in Jerusalem in the time of St. Cyril (+386). The most famous of the Syrian Calendars is the Menology of Mar Jacob of Edessa in the seventh century. The Syro-Malankara Church has a very ancient and a very rich calendar of fixed and movable feasts. The first calendar is found in a manuscript written at Edessa in A.D. 411. It is known as the Syrian Martyrology. The Greek and Syrian Menologies have a common background and incessant exchanges, all along the centuries because of their common stock and co-existence in the Middle East. Hence the manuscript Syriac calendars have much in common with the Byzantine calendars.

### The Crown of the Year.

The Liturgical year is the unfolding of the mysteries of Christ in the prayer of the Church in the course of one year. Time is the appropriate framework for the celebration of the prayer of the Church. The hours of the day and the watches of the night mark the time of Christ. The weekly celebration of the economy of salvation culminates, on the Lord's Day, in the common thanksgiving and sharing of the believers in his Passion, Death and Resurrection in anticipation of his coming in glory at the end of time. The course of the year provides a fuller unfolding of the economy of salvation. The prophets had



already described the promised salvation in such terms as the day of deliverance, the year of grace (Is 61.1-2; Dan 9.24). Jesus himself declared the fulfilment of it in himself in the synagogue at Nazareth (Lk 4.17-21). According to the tradition of the Syrian Church, the Liturgical year is the crown of the year and the mysteries commemorated are the jewels of the crown. Through the celebration of the crown of the year the Church re-enacts and lives the mysteries of salvation in continuation of the Incarnation of her Lord.

Within the cycle of a year, moreover, she unfolds the whole mystery of Christ, not only from this incarnation and birth until His ascension, but also as reflected in the day of Pentecost, and the expectation of a blessed, hoped-for return of the Lord. Recalling thus the mysteries of redemption, the Church opens to the faithful the riches of her Lord's powers and merits, so that these are in some way made present at all times, and the faithful are enabled to lay hold of them and become filled with saving grace.<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of the Incarnation of the Son of God is nothing less than the restoration of man's divinity, lost at the fall through sin. This restoration is described as a becoming, as a sharing in the very being of God. Through the liturgical seasons and feasts of the year, the Church provides a bountiful sharing in the mystery of the deification of not only man but of all the creation dramatically revealed by St. Paul (Rom 8.22-24). Thus the liturgical year is not simply a remembrance of the past events of the whole life of Christ, but it is a re-enactment of the whole mystery of Christ, by which the Church is able to share in his saving grace and the faithful to be conformed to the likeness of Christ.

1. *Vat II S.C 102*

### Church as the Bride of Christ.

The liturgical calendar of the Syro-Malankara Church is different from that of the Western Church. Its ecclesiastical year begins on the Sunday nearest to the last day of October. It is the Sunday of the consecration of the Church. The next Sunday is of the Renewal (Dedication) of the Church. In this manner, the Syro-Malankara Church has set before the faithful from the beginning, the mystery of the Church as the 'Bride of Christ' (Eph 5.23-32) whom he prepares for his marriage feast (Rev 15.6-7) by teaching her to follow in his footsteps. Sealed by his passion, Death and Resurrection, the work of redemption was accomplished once for all by Christ. Yet salvation is to be communicated to all generations down the centuries. This is the work of the Church entrusted by him for this purpose with the great sacraments of life.

The Church is a paradise full of good things,  
The Bride of the most high  
In her is baptism for the new life  
The holy altar and the bones of the martyrs,  
In her dwell the priests who consecrate  
and offer the Eucharist and distribute it,  
halleluia, halleluia, the medicine of life".<sup>2</sup>

### Centered on the Mystery of Resurrection

The liturgical year is centered on the mystery of Resurrection. In the early days there were only two important festivals in the Church, namely Resurrection and Pentecost. The whole period between these two was considered as a holy season in which the Church anticipates the new life of the world to come. These two festivals are connected with the Jewish feasts of Passover and Pentecost but acquired fresh significance from the

2. *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit, Vol II p.30*

Resurrection of Christ and the coming down of the Holy Spirit. The other feasts were introduced in the yearly cycle only gradually.

### Basic Cycle and Temporal Cycle.

Basic Cycle is the original succession of 52 full weeks, each made up of a Sunday and six ferial days. The Syrians inherited this division of the year into weeks from the Jewish calendar and only gradually replaced the Sabbath by Sunday as the day of the Lord. Temporal cycle is the Christ cycle or the Proper of the season, so called from the seven liturgical seasons of seven or eight weeks each. All the mysteries of Christ's life have worked together to effect our salvation. The Church therefore commemorates them yearly in the various feasts of the temporal cycle. For example, at Christmas, the Church offers to God the Divine Child in the manger together with everything which in Christ's life as a human child gave special glory to God the Father. In that way the Church ensures that we too shall receive a special application of the graces which Christ merited for us; they will enable us increasingly to practise each year those virtues exemplified in this period of the life of Christ.

### The Seven Seasons of the Liturgical Year.

1. *Suboro* Season: This period is both a prologue to the commemoration of the redemption and a special preparation for its first event, the nativity of our Lord. Of the seven Sundays of the season the first two are Sundays of the Church. Then follows the Sundays of Annunciation (*Suboro*), namely the Annunciation of Zacharias, the Annunciation of the Mother God, the Visitation, the Birth of the Baptist and the Revelation to Joseph.

2. *Yaldo - Denho* (Christmas - Epiphany) season begins on the Sunday before Christmas and ends before the Lent. It

celebrates the redemption prepared by the Incarnation of the word and its manifestation. The Epiphany, known also as the feast of Lights comes as the great Theophany, the revelation of the Blessed Trinity and of the Messiahship of Jesus of Nazareth. The whole season celebrates the mystery of God's forgiveness of man's sin through the humiliation of his Son in the waters of the river. The Son is manifested as the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

3. The Fast of Our Lord (*Saumo*) and week of his Passion: The fifty days of preparation for the Resurrection were the origin of this Lenten Season. The fourth Wednesday is Mid-lent with the commemoration of the Exaltation of the Cross and the Penitence of Abgar, King of Edessa.

4. The *Qyomto* (Easter) season is the period of fifty days between the two original feasts of Resurrection and Pentecost. It is a time of joy and thanksgiving in which the Church enters into the new life of resurrection. For this reason the Sunday after *Qyomto* is called the 'new Sunday'.

5. The season of Pentecost: From Pentecost onwards, every Sunday remembers the twofold mystery of the Resurrection and the gift of the Holy Spirit, two aspects of the same mystery, that is of the new life of communion with God which is given to us through the Resurrection. With Pentecost, the great Theophany of the Holy Spirit, it is the mystery of the Church which is celebrated. This is also called the season of the Apostles with its preparatory fast from June 16 and culminating in the feasts saints Peter and Paul on June 29 and St. Thomas on July 3.

6. The Season of the Transfiguration of our Lord makes us again witnesses of a great Theophany, this time on the holy mountains. It is centered around the feast on August 6.

7. The last season is that of the Glorification of the Cross which begins on September 14. It recapitulates the whole economy of salvation.

### The Weekly Cycle

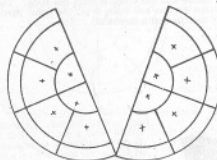
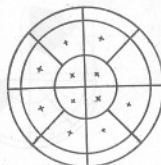
Besides the annual cycle, the Syro-Malankara Church has also a weekly cycle. Every Sunday is a commemoration of the Resurrection of Christ. Already by his baptism, a Christian has begun to participate in the new life in Christ. Every Qurbono makes this mystery really present among us. Thus the Sunday observance is intended to bring this mystery to mind at the beginning of every week in order that the Christian may continually renew the memory of the resurrection, and strive to live week by week in its light. But the other days in the week have each of them, a special significance in this liturgical tradition and the breviary is quite expressive of this. Monday and Tuesday are days of repentance. It is the theme of the preaching of both St. John the Baptist and Christ. 'Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand'. In this way, every week the Christian has opportunity to renew his Catholic faith, to turn back to God and look for the coming of his Kingdom. Wednesday is kept in honour of the Mother of God, because, according to a very ancient tradition, the Annunciation took place on a Wednesday. In this way, every Wednesday calls us to reflect on the place of St. Mary in the economy of salvation, on her divine motherhood, as the mother of Jesus Christ and through him of all Christians. Thursday is kept in memory of the Apostles, to whom we owe the original preaching of the gospel. With the Apostles, the Syrian Church also associates the Prophets of the Old Testament who prepared the way for the gospel and the Martyrs who laid down their lives in witness to it. Friday is the commemoration of the Cross recalling the mystery of the passion of Christ by which we were redeemed and the victory over death which was won on the Cross. Finally Saturday is dedicated to the departed especially to the departed priests through whom the ministry of the gospel is continued. Thus at the end of the week our thoughts are turned to the end of this life and to the second coming of Christ which will bring the general resurrection.

### Appendix

#### FRACTION CEREMONY—ILLUSTRATIONS

The shape of the host at offering.

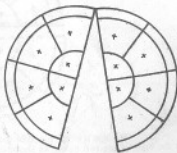
It is called 'Thabao'—Seal. The seal is a host made of leavened bread with 13 crosses marked on it. Five wounds are marked on the large cross. The priest takes it with both hands and making the sign of the cross with it, he places it in the paten.

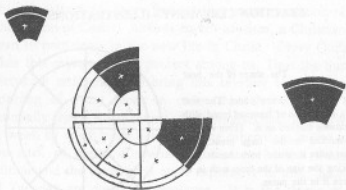


At the fraction ceremony.

The priest takes the host and breaks it into two halves from top to bottom.

The top portions are joined together again. Then the priest breaks from bottom to top and holds as in the Fig.



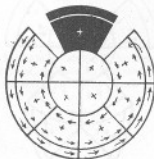


He places the second half over the first half as shown in this figure. Then he detaches the shaded portion. This is the shape of the live-coal (Isaiah 6,6). This particle is put into the chalice at the fraction ceremony. This shows that this flesh belongs to the blood in the chalice and this blood is from this body. The priest then detaches the other shaded portion and holds it in the right hand. With this particle the ceremony of consignation is conducted.



He dips it in the blood in the chalice, and with that particle he marks on the lines of the two halves as shown in Fig. .

The priest dips this particle, making the sign of the cross over the whole body, twice anticlock-wise and finally once clock-wise as indicated in Fig. 6. Then, he places this particle, representing the head of Christ, on the top of the bread as shown in the figure.



There is a simple way of Consignation. It is shown in Fig.7. The priest takes the small detached particle, representing the head of Christ and with the right hand, he dips it in the blood, by making the sign of the cross, and again smears the blood by making the sign of the cross in the middle portion of the body. A second time he dips it in the blood and again smears the blood by making the second sign of the cross on the left portion of the body, and similarly making the third sign of the cross on the right hand portion of the body.

Lamb-Pattern. There are four forms of this. After fraction ceremony, the host takes the form of the Lamb of God. "Behold the lamb of God". John 1,29,36. "Like a lamb that is dumb before his shearer". Acts 8,32. "He is brought as a lamb to slaughter. Is 53,7. "With the precious blood of Christ as a lamb without blemish". 1 Pet 1,19. "The lamb that was slain before the foundation of the world". Rev.13,8.



The host takes the form of the lamb when one wafer is used.



Besides the Lamb-Pattern, there are two other most common alternate patterns. It is called the 'Son of Man'-BarNoshho. The Buk'ro (First-born) takes the pattern of the Son of Man, from Easter Sunday to the Exaltation of the Cross on September 14. This man-pattern is the symbol of the Pilgrim Church, otherwise called the Militant Church. It shows the acts of consignation.

This pattern is arranged in the paten from Easter Sunday to the Exaltation of the Cross on September 14. This is the symbol of the Pilgrim Church.

"Behold, with the clouds of heaven, there came one like the Son of Man," Daniel 7, 13. "I will prove to you, then, that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins," Mk 2, 10. Mt 9, 6. Lk 5, 24.

"I assure you that you will not finish your work in all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes." Mt 10, 23: 16, 27.

"When the Son of Man came, he ate and drank, everyone said, look at this man!" Mt 11, 19. Lk 7, 34.

"For the Son of Man is the Lord of Sabbath", Mt 12,8. Mk 2,28. Lk 6,5. "The man who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man." Mt 13,37. "of him will the Son of Man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his father." Mk 8,38. Lk 9,26.

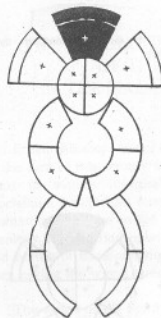
"The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men." Mt 17, 22. Mk 9, 31. Lk 9, 44.

"When the Son of Man shall sit on his throne, you who have followed me will also sit...." Mt 19,28. 25,31.

"For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of the Father." Mt 16, 27.

"So will the Son of Man be in his day." Lk 17,24. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up." John 3, 14.

"He said, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God'." Acts 7,56.



Son of Man

The Buk'ro takes another form of the Son of Man from Easter Sunday to Exaltation of the Cross on September 14. It is the symbol of the Pilgrim Church.

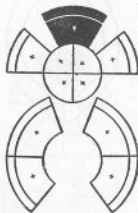
It shows the full shape of Man-pattern after consignation.

SLEEBO-Cross-pattern. The Buk'ro takes this Cross-pattern when one wafer is used. This pattern is arranged in the paten from the Exaltation of the Cross on September 14 to Qudosh Edio. This symbolizes the Triumphant Church.





It shows one form of the Cross-pattern.



It shows the second form of the Cross-pattern.



It indicates an alternative form of the Cross-pattern.

## THE THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EPICLESIS IN THE MALANKARA QURBONO

Edmund Bishop, one of the greatest liturgical scholars living at the turn of this century insisted that the epiclesis lay at the heart of matters liturgical. More recently Lukas Vischer proclaimed the epiclesis question to be of key importance to the ecumenical dialogue on the Eucharist. In the past Eucharistic theology has been riddled with sterile debates about the moment and nature of transformation of elements. For long we have been asking the wrong questions.

The action of the Spirit is the cause of ascribing universal effects to a particular historical occurrence. This action of the Spirit is present all throughout the Qurbono though in an inarticulate manner. On the other hand Christ is the objective foundation of the outpouring of the Spirit. The whole anaphora is anamnetic and epicletic. While the once for all Christ event is the object of an anamnesis, the free working of the Spirit is the object of the Church's epiclesis. Hence there is always a tension between *the already* and *not yet*. Often there are no simple either or answers to the questions which this tension raises. The epiclesis mirrors the tension in theology between the activity of Christ and that of the Holy Spirit.

### The Biblical Background.

The Church lies between the ascension of Christ and his second coming (Acts 1.11). As such she experiences the eschatological period of the history of salvation. On the day of

Pentecost she received the promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1.4; 2.33). And the life of the Church is a constant pentecostal experience, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The ascension is the termination of the earthly mission of Jesus (Heb 1.3) and the prelude to giving of the Spirit (Acts 2.33; Gal 4.4-6, Jn 7.39). Jesus Christ exalted at the right hand of God is the sender of the Spirit of sanctification.

Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin (Lk 1.35; Mt 1.18,20). At his baptism he is installed in his messianic office by the Spirit (Mk 1.10, Acts 10.38). He acted in the power of the Spirit (Mk 1.12, Mt 12.28; Lk 4.14,18). On the Cross, he offered himself in the Holy Spirit to the Father as a victim (Heb 9.14). He was raised from the dead in the power of the Spirit (Rom 1.4; 8.11). He was exalted at the right hand of the Father and received the promise of the Spirit (Acts 2.33) and himself became a life giving Spirit (Cor 15.45). Jesus was wholly penetrated and filled with Holy Spirit (Is 61.1; Lk 4.21; Acts 10.38). This Spirit character was expressed in the metaphorical language of patristic theology by the image of *unction* or anointing. Because Jesus is fully anointed with the Spirit he is the Christ, i.e. the Anointed.<sup>1</sup>

It is with his exaltation that the great mission of the glorified Lord begins in which he pours the Holy Spirit in all the creation (Acts 2.16). His glorified body constitutes the unquenchable source of the Spirit for the whole creation (Jn 7.37-39; 3.14; 12.12). It is only through being raised above the whole creation that his grace can be poured out upon the whole creation (Eph 4.8-10, Ps 68.18). God's love was shown first through Christ (Jn 3.16), now after the ascension of Christ it is expressed through the bestowal of the Holy Spirit. "God's love has been poured into our hearts, through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us" (Rom 5.5). After Pentecost contact with

1. P.Verghese, *Die Orthodoxe Kirche und der Heilige Geist*, Marburg 1966

Christ is possible only through the Spirit and in the Spirit. As there is no access to the Father except through the Son, so is there no access to the Son except through the Spirit.<sup>2</sup> Cyril of Alexandria commenting on the Gospel of St. John says that Christ did not allow Mary to touch him after the resurrection since he had not yet gone to the Father and sent the Holy Spirit (PG 74,696). The Spirit makes in us actual that which Christ achieved for us once and for all.

### The Age of the Spirit

The age of the Church is the age of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit filled Church baptizes (Acts 2.4) and celebrates the Eucharist (Acts 2.42). In the comfort of the Spirit the Church grew up (Acts 9.31). The Church and the Spirit belong to each other inseparably as body and soul. According to St. Paul, the Church is the glorified body of Christ, which is permeated by the living power of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12.12; Eph 4.2). The Spirit himself cries in our heart 'Abba, Father' (Gal 4.6) and no one can say 'Jesus is the Lord' except by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12.3).

We cannot isolate Christ and the Spirit, a truth which was already formulated by St. Athanasius in these terms. 'Christ became *Sarkophoros* that we might become *Pneumatophoros*'.<sup>3</sup> The Pentecost has always a Christological aspect. The flesh of the Son of Man is now clothed in heavenly glory and becomes omnipresent through the Spirit.

### The Holy Spirit and the Saving History.

If Christ is the sacrament of encounter between God and man, it is because he bears within his 'body person' the fullness

2. Athanasius, *Epistle to Serapion* 1. PG 26, 576; Cyril of Alexandria, *Dialogue about Holy Trinity* VI, PG 75, 1092

3. *De Incarnatione* 86 PG 26,996

of the Holy Spirit. One may speak of a Johannine Alexandrian approach which stresses the Incarnation or the descendent *Logos-Flesh* movement. In this approach the emphasis is on the fact that the *Logos* became man and by so doing divinised man. One also may speak of the Pauline - Antiochene approach which stresses the death-resurrection (glorification) or the ascendant, *Man-God* movement. Here the emphasis is on the fact that the Son of God became man, is made *Kyrios* or Lord only at the moment of his resurrection. In any case Incarnation is a lifetime process of becoming human, fully human. For Christ it involved a progressive opening up in living obedience to his Father and in love to his fellow men. Corresponding to this opening up on the part of Christ was his progressively being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Though there is no clear evidence in the Scripture of the role of the Spirit in the Church's sacramental life, there is quite sufficient indication in this line. While speaking about the Baptism and the Eucharist, Jesus makes mention of his Ascension to make the disciples comprehend the mysteries (Jn 3.13; 6.62). This becomes quite clear with regard to the Eucharist, when Christ says. "It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh is of no avail" (Jn 6.63). In the actual life of the Church it is only after the Pentecost, after having been baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 1.5) that the disciples began to break the Eucharistic bread (Acts 2.42). D.Bar Salibi says that on the first day of the week of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon the Apostles; on the second day they consecrated the *Muron*. On the third day they blessed the table or the altar and on the fourth day James the brother of Our Lord celebrated the Liturgy.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, since after the ascension, it is only in and by the Holy Spirit that Christ is present to his Church; the intervention of the Holy Spirit is indispensable for the accomplishment of the Eucharistic wonder.

4. *Expositio Mysteriori CSCO 14, 36*

### Jewish Origin.

The framework of the Malankara liturgy is basically Jewish as Fr.Louis Ligier has established in recent times.<sup>5</sup> It is true that the Eucharist as a memorial of the mysteries of the glorified Christ is a Christian creation. However, the structure and prayers for the most part were borrowed from the already existing Jewish prayers. The Hebrew meal prayer (*Berakah*) has three parts. A number of studies have traced the broad lines of the *Berakah* and have pointed out how the *Berakah anamnesis* often unfolds into supplication. Noteworthy in this context are also the general attempts to link the Jewish concept of the divine *Shekhinah* or the divine presence with the epiclesis. It may reasonably be maintained that from the beginning, what was later known as the epiclesis, was in its essence a prayer for the divine presence among the worshippers during their most solemn act of worship. The text of the *Berakah* reads:

Have mercy, Yahweh our God, on your people Israel... upon which your name is invoked... Feed us... And may Elijah and the Messiah, the son of David come in our lifetime and restore the Kingdom... and reign over us.... and bring us up in Sion your city...

### The East Syrian Anaphoras

We treat them here because they are very primitive and they give us the pure Syrian tradition. They introduce the epiclesis by the words *may the Holy Spirit come*.

5. L.Ligier, *Anaphores Orientales at prieres juives* in PO 13,(1963)pp 3-20; 99-113



1. *Addai and Mari.*

May the grace of the Holy Spirit come and reside on this offering of your servants and bless and sanctify it, so that it may be for us, Lord....

2. *Theodore.*

May the grace of the Holy Spirit come and reside in and overshadow this bread and this cup and bless sanctify and seal them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit and may this bread become, through the power of your name, the holy body.

3. *Nestorius.*

May the grace of the Holy Spirit come, Lord, and reside and rest upon this offering and may he bless and sanctify it making this bread and this cup the body and blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ changing and sanctifying them by the working of the Holy Spirit.

### What is an Epiclesis?

Epiclesis in the strict sense is a prayer of invocation which appeals for the Holy Spirit to transform or sanctify the bread and wine and to sanctify the faithful who partake of these gifts. Thus the Eucharistic epiclesis has in common three basic elements:

1. an appeal for the Holy Spirit.
2. to transform or sanctify the bread and wine.
3. so that they may benefit those who partake of them worthily.

The epiclesis of the West Syrian anaphoras is both consecratory and communion epiclesis; consecratory in the sense that it appeals for the transformation of the bread and wine into Christ's body and blood. A communion epiclesis or the epiclesis of sanctification appeals only for the sanctification of those who

receive the mysteries on which the name of the Holy Spirit is called upon.

### The West Syrian Anaphoras.

Syrian Anaphoras of the Antiochene family have their characteristic arrangement. Introductory dialogue-Praise and thanks - Introduction to the sanctus and the sanctus itself - Prayer of Thanks - Praise after the sanctus - Institution Narrative - Anamnesis - Epiclesis - Intercessions - Doxology.

The epiclesis itself has 4 elements in the present scheme of the West Syrian Anaphora.

1. The diaconal admonition.
2. The Invocation of the Holy Spirit recited in a low voice by the priest while the deacon admonishes the people.
3. *Answer me, Lord* - the epiphonesis to which the faithful answer thrice *Kyrieleison*.
4. Blessing of the Eucharistic gifts.

The second and the fourth elements of the Syrian epiclesis vary according to the different anaphoras while the first and the third elements are invariable because they belong to the *ordo communis*. The third element interrupts the epiclesis prayer and seems to be a late addition. Originally the second element was composed of two distinct parts of which one was penitential and the other epiclesis. In the IV century the Syrian Church had adopted a posture expressive of the sentiments of adoration and humility to invoke the Holy Spirit on the gifts. In his hymn on the priesthood St. Ephrem gives testimony to a prostration during the epiclesis. This confirms the view that the penitential and epiclesis parts were originally in one prayer. Probably

between VIII and IX century, the two parts were fused to make one prayer in which the penitential prayer was represented by only one phrase, *Have mercy on me, God almighty Father*. The prostration also slowly disappeared since the priests could not be expected to memorize all the different prayers of epiclesis. A new invocation has been introduced to replace the penitential prayer which almost disappeared. The new invocation is the third element of the present epiclesis. The fourth element of the epiclesis ends with a prayer for the benefits of those who receive the sacred mysteries.

Among the other characteristic traits of this type is the fact that the *sanctus* seems to interrupt the flow of the prayers of praise and thanks which come before and after it. These two prayer taken together generally praise God for the creation of the universe and especially of man, and for the redemption of man made possible by the Incarnation. Another interesting trait is the *anamnesis*. It is directed to Christ and protracts the events of his life to include his second *awesome coming* at which point the people break in with *Have mercy on us*.

### The Epiclesis in the early liturgical texts.

1. *The Apostolic Tradition*, generally attributed to Hippolytus of Rome and dated around 215 AD.

"And we pray that you send your Holy Spirit upon the offerings .....so that they may be filled with the Holy Spirit".

The context makes it clear that the addressee in this epiclesis is God, the Father. The prayer asks the Father to send his Holy Spirit upon the oblation of the Church. The explicit mention of the Holy Spirit does not however entirely exclude the possibility that for Hippolytus the term *Holy Spirit* referred to the *Logos*.

2. *The Testament of Our Lord* B. Botte attempted to reconstruct the original Greek passage on the basis of the Syriac translation which has come down to us. The text reads " We give thanks.....Lord send the Holy Spirit upon this drink and this your holy food, cause it to be for us not judgement, disgrace or perdition but rather health and strength of our spirit".

The addressee in the text is the Father and the Holy Spirit is the person called for. It asks the Father to send the Holy Spirit upon the oblations so that they become a means not of spiritual harm but of benefit to those who partake in them.

3. *The Apostolic Constitution*, seems to date from around the end of the IVth century and the eighth chapter contains an anaphora often referred to as the Clementine Liturgy.

And we beg you to look favourably on these gifts... and send down your Holy Spirit upon this sacrifice so that he may show this bread to be the body of your Christ and this cup to be the blood of your Christ, so that these sharing in it may be strengthened.

The addressee has been throughout God, the Father. The assembly prays that he look graciously upon the gifts and that he send the Holy Spirit upon the sacrifice, so that the Holy Spirit may show or declare the bread and wine to be the body and blood of Christ.

### Different Types of Epicleses.

We divide the West Syrian Epicleses into 4 groups according to their different structure and style.

I. The pattern using the verb 'come' (*nise*) as in the East Syrian Anaphoras, occurs in a certain number of West Syrian

anaphoras, notably the Maronite *Sharar* (IIIrd Anaphora of St. Peter which has many affinities with the East Syrian anaphoras).

(1) *Sharar*

Hear me Lord and answer me.....  
may your living and Holy Spirit come Lord and  
reside and rest upon this offering of your servants,  
may it be to these who partake.....

(2) *Jacob of Sarug I*

We beseech you, Lord God almighty, have mercy  
on us..... may your holy Spirit come..... may he  
overshadow and hover and rest..... and change  
them.....appointing the bread as the body. (*nise*,  
*unagen, vanrahep., unesthnih, vanshahalep.*)

- II. A notable feature in some of the West Syrian anaphoras is the fusion of the two types of wording, thus combining send your Spirit and may he come.

*Dioscorus* (Patriarch of Alexandria)

Lord, may your Holy Spirit come and overshadow  
with his grace, sanctify and perfect this sacrifice....  
send your holy Spirit....hovering in his grace he  
make this bread into..... (*nise, unagen, vanqadesh*,  
*ushadar, magen, nebed*).

- III. The first imperative (send) is followed by a second, making the Father the subject of the verb of consecration.

*Timothy of Alexandria.*

Turn and send to us, Lord your Holy Spirit... and  
sanctify them so that..... (*shadar...uqadesh.*)

- IV. The normal pattern in the West Syrian Anaphora follows the initial imperative (send) with a final clause, making the

Holy Spirit, the subject of the verb of consecration. It is the one found in the Greek and Syriac Anaphora of St. James, which exerted an enormous influence of the authors on the later Syriac Anaphoras.

*St. James*

Have mercy on us God the Father almighty and  
send upon us and upon these offerings your Holy  
Spirit.....so that descending he may make this  
bread.... (*shadar, magen, nebed*).....

The anaphoras of St. Xystus, St. John the Evangelist, St. John Chrysostom and many others follow the same pattern.

It is a striking feature of the Antiochene Church that there is an epiclesis in the three principal mysteries. There is an invocation of the Spirit in the blessing of the baptismal water, the consecration of the *Muron* and the Eucharist. From a comparative table of epicleses in these mysteries one can notice the similarity of style.

Epicleses of

<i>The Anaphora of St. James</i>	<i>Blessing of the Baptismal water</i>	<i>Consecration of Muron</i>
<i>Have mercy on us, O God the Father almighty</i>	<i>Have mercy on us, O God the Father almighty</i>	
<i>and send upon us and upon these offerings,</i>	<i>and send upon us and upon this water that is being consecrated</i>	<i>Send us</i>
<i>Your Holy Spirit, Lord and giver of life.</i>	<i>the Paraclete, your Holy Spirit the esta- blisher, Lord and "life - giver.</i>	<i>the Paraclete, your Holy Spirit the esta- blisher, Lord and giver of life.</i>

Who spoke in the  
and in the prophets  
and in your New  
Testament

Who spoke in the law  
and in the prophets  
and apostles,

who spoke in the law  
and in the prophets  
and apostles.

Who descended in the  
likeness of adove upon  
Our Lord Jesus Christ  
in the river Jordan who  
descended upon the holy  
apostles in the likeness of  
tongues of fire.wishes

Who everywhere is  
close at hand, who  
fills all things, who  
acts authoritatively  
and not like a minister  
with these whom he  
through your  
goodwill.

Who is present  
everywhere

So that descending he  
may make this bread  
the body of the Lord,  
the life giving body . . .

appear O Lord upon  
this water and grant  
that they who are  
baptised in it may be  
changed so that they  
may strip off the  
old man . . .

send upon us and  
upon this oil which  
is before us and con-  
secrate it so that it  
may be for all these  
who are anointed  
with it, Holy Muron  
sacerdotal Muron.

Philoxenos of Mabboug develops clearly the parallelism between the Eucharist and the other mysteries.

The mysteries appear to the eyes as simple things, but by the irruption of the Holy Spirit, they receive a supernatural power, the water for its part becomes the maternal bosom which gives birth from the material things to the life of the Spirit; the oil receives a sanctifying power which anoints and consecrates at the sametime the soul and the body; the bread and wine become the body and blood of the Son of God made man.

But Philoxenos is not the first one to make this parallelism. Already St. Ephrem had observed this in the 10th Hymn on Faith. 17th verse reads:

See, fire and Spirit in the womb that bore you  
See Fire and Spirit in the river where you were baptised.  
Fire and Spirit in our baptism.  
In the bread and the cup, fire and the Holy Spirit.

Here St.Ephrem sums up his doctrine of the Spirit's agency in the Incarnation and the Sacraments.

An examination of the various epicleses addressed to the Father which employ the imperative 'send' highlights a further distinction. In some epicleses the imperative *send your spirit* is followed by another imperative *and sanctify* etc.. In othe words, the action is closely linked with the Father although it is effected by the Spirit. In a second pattern of epicleses we have *send your Spirit and may he sanctify* etc.. giving the Spirit a much more direct role.

The biblical antecedents to the phraseology suggest that its original context was that of the acceptance of a sacrifice. The Spirit is sent under the symbol of fire to consume the sacrifice.

### The Holy Spirit as Fire.

In the 73rd Hymn on Faith, St. Ephrem provides us an illustration of the Trinity, the example of the sun. The sun corresponds to the Father, the light of the sun to the Son and the heat to the Spirit. The Holy Spirit as Fire above all consecrates.

In Fire is the symbol of the Spirit  
It is a type of the Holy Spirit  
who is mixed in the baptismal water  
so that it may be for absolution  
and in the bread, that it may be  
an offering (40.10).

The descent of fire in a sacrifice is seen as the sign of its acceptance "When Solomon had ended his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple" (2 Chr 7.1) "And at the time of the offering of the oblation Elijah the prophet came near and said...Answer me, O Lord, Answer me.... that this people may know that thou O Lord art God. Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood. (1Kg 18.36-38) And St.Ephrem in his 10th *Hymn on Faith* has this verse:

13. "Fire came down on Elijah's sacrifice and ate it up  
The fire of love has become our living sacrifice.  
Fire ate up the offering  
in your offering Lord, we have eaten Fire".

It is in this context that one should understand the ephronesis *Anin Moriyo* in the epiclesis of the West Syrian tradition. It is the same *answer me, Lord....* of the prophet Elijah. This ephronesis is peculiar to the West Syrian tradition.

The Holy Spirit as fire, thus, has two aspects; the fire is a sign of acceptance of the sacrifice, and at the same time it also consecrates it. In the case of the coming of the Holy Spirit into the baptismal water and muron the former aspect is of course not applicable, but in the case of the Eucharist both aspects are very much present.

This manner of seeing the action of the Spirit in relation to the Eucharist is found also in the liturgical offices of Sundays following the Pentecost. The Spirit is described in terms of a fire flying over the thronos under the form of a dove and making irruption, at the request of the priest, on the Eucharist, as he had done already for the sacrifice of Elijah.<sup>7</sup> Here is a typical hymn from the office.

7. Friday, Matins of the second week after Pentecost

Behold the priest stands with fear and offers the sacrifice. A hidden fire encircles him... Behold the body and blood are a furnace in which the Spirit is the fire, which if one approaches becomes pure and if one withdraws from it is lost.<sup>8</sup>

### Incarnation and the Eucharist

Although Christ's Baptism and Pentecost are specifically referred to in some of the Eucharistic epicleses, the Annunciation and Nativity are not. Yet Syrian writers are very conscious of the links between the coming of the Holy Spirit upon Mary and the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine. As D.Bar Salibi puts it in his commentary on the Liturgy.

The Body and Blood are called 'mysteris' because they are not what they appear to the physical eye to be for to look at, they are just bread and wine, but properly understood, they are the Body and Blood of God. Just as Jesus appeared to the physical eye to be man, yet he is God, similarly they appear outwardly to be bread and wine, but they are in fact the Body and Blood of the Son, just as happened in the case of the Virgin, even though it was the Spirit who provided the Son with a body it was still the Son who was embodied.....It is the same with the altar, which is the type both of Mary's womb and of the grave the Holy Spirit overshadows it and changes the bread and the wine making them the Body and Blood of the Word who once became flesh in the womb. Although the body is that of the Son, it is given us by the Holy Spirit from the Father.

8. Matins of the IInd Sunday after Pentecost

A little later on he says "The priest's invocation of the Holy Spirit symbolizes Gabriel's annunciation to the Virgin of her conception"

J. Betz contends that the Fathers saw the Eucharist as the making present of the Incarnation. This patristic point of view Betz terms the *Eucharistic Incarnation Principle*. The epiclesis is the liturgical expression of this principle.

S. Salaville also notes this parallel between the activity ascribed to the Holy Spirit in the Incarnation and the activity which the epiclesis ascribes to the Spirit in the Eucharist. He points out that particularly the Syrian texts of the epiclesis employ terms to describe the Spirit's action in the Eucharist which correspond to the terms, the Bible uses to describe the Spirit's activity in the Incarnation.

*Agen*, a term which is hard to translate exactly, has evidently become a technical term for the Spirit's activity from early days in the Syriac speaking Church. It is used to render a number of different Greek Verbs. The term has its background in the P'Shitta Old Testament but never in the context of Holy Spirit. It connotes the idea of casting an influence, giving protection etc. In Exodus 33.22 the term is translated *I will cover you with my hand*, and *I will defend this city* in 2Kgs 19.34. *The Lord of hosts will protect Jerusalem* (Is 31.5).

In the New Testament it translates *overshadow* in the Annunciation message of Lk 1.35, and the same verb again in Acts 5.15. It translates *fall upon* twice used of the Spirit in Acts 10.44 and 11.15 (The Holy Spirit fell on them.....). With subjects other than Spirit *agen* renders *skeno* (indwell) and derivatives in Jn 1,14 (where the Logos is the subject,) in Acts 2.36 and 2 Cor 12.9.

*Agen* is used in the epiclesis in the future tense and as present participle (*magen*). The abstract noun form of the term is also used of the Holy Spirit in the salutation at the beginning of the Anaphora.

The verb *rahep* (Pael) to brood, to hover over is frequently used of the action of the Holy Spirit. It is derived from Genesis 1.2; *The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of waters*; and Deuteronomy 32.11 (like an Eagle that flutters over its young). St. Ephrem commenting on Gen 1.2 says that the action of the Spirit is like a hen brooding over her young. The same term is also used in the diaconal admonition of the epiclesis.

West Syrian anaphoras are usually introduced by *Shadar* (send), while the East Syrian anaphoras by *nise* (come). But *nise* is not limited to East Syrian epicleses, since it is found in the Greek anaphora of Basil and in several West Syrian anaphoras, as well as in certain baptismal epicleses of West Syrian origin. A few West Syrian anaphoras use both *nise* and *shadar* as we have seen earlier.

A number of passages in the Bible speak of the Holy Spirit 'coming' notably in Is 32.15 (LXX), Mk 3.16 and parallels..

*Gshap* (touch) though rarely used (Anaphora of John of Bostra) is very important, as it expresses the direct action of the Spirit. It is also the witness of an early tradition. For, St. Cyril of Jerusalem (d.c.386) says in his V Mystagogical Catechesis:

Next, after sanctifying ourselves by these spiritual songs, we implore the merciful God to send forth his Holy Spirit upon the offerings to make the bread the Body of Christ and the wine the Blood of Christ. For whatever the Holy Spirit touches is hallowed and changed.

*Gmar* (to perfect) *shamli* (to complete) are often used in the epicleses; and *to perfect* is the characteristic action of the Holy Spirit according to the West Syrian Tradition. Thus these two terms are used about the action of the Holy Spirit in the acclamation during the elevation of the mysteries. *Abad* (to make) and *shahlep* (to change) express the transformation effected by the action of the Spirit. The bread and wine are transformed or converted into the Body and Blood of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Moses Bar Kepha also makes use of the Eucharistic Incarnation Principle. In his explanation of the mysteries he says concerning the calling of the Holy Spirit.

It is right that we enquire here concerning the Holy Spirit, why he comes down upon the bread and wine which are set upon the altar. We know that the Son comes down upon the bread and wine and is united to them hypostatically but the Holy Spirit, why does he come down? We say for this reason, as he came down into the womb of the Holy Virgin Mary - according as the angel said. The Holy Spirit shall come etc and made the body which was from the Virgin the body of God the Word, so he comes down upon the bread and wine which are upon the altar and makes them the body and blood of God the Word which was from the Virgin.....<sup>9</sup>

### The Relationship between the Institution Narrative and the Epiclesis.

Within a scholastic framework the *real presence* of Christ in the Eucharist receives its explanation in terms of *transubstantiation*. Briefly transubstantiation as it is understood in scholastic

9. *Two Commentaries* pp 59 - 60.

circles, is the explanation in which the substance of the body and blood of Christ replaces the substance of bread and wine. According to this view, the appearances or accidents of the bread and wine remain and are supported by the substance of Christ's body and blood. As long as one remains in the scholastic transubstantiation context there is a tendency to underline the instantaneous character of the change and to seek to point the precise moment of this change. And this attempt to pinpoint the moment of consecration leads to an 'either or' situation. However to try to answer the question whether it is the institution narrative or the epiclesis which brings out the change is to try to answer the wrong question. The scholastic explanation focuses too much attention on the change of elements. It fails to refer this change sufficiently to the interpersonal, sacramental context of an encounter between Christ and the faithful. And it is only in this context that such a change finds its purpose and meaning.

The Syrian Fathers and Doctors who have always held the Eucharist as the mystery of the body and blood of Christ, recognised the importance of the words of Christ *This is my body, and this is my blood*. It is interesting, however, to note that some of the West Syrian anaphoras either totally lack the words *This is my body* in the institution narrative or replace the verb *is* with another verb *called*.

In any case, epiclesis is not to be thought of as independent of the institution narrative. The consecration cannot be limited to a particular moment in the liturgy. Nor is the location of the epiclesis in relation to the words of institution of decisive importance. In the early liturgies the whole prayer action was thought of as bringing about the reality promised by Christ. A recovery of such an understanding may help to overcome the difficulty concerning the consecration.

The words of Christ determine the sacramental sign. They form the constitutive element of the sacramental sign together with the sacred species. Thus if we say that Christ is present under the species, we can also say that Christ is only present through the permanent validity of the anamnesis, the words of institution pronounced over the bread and wine. The species would not really be sacramental species if they were not being constantly determined by the words of institution, the words of explanation, which are pronounced over them.<sup>10</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas also admitted the role of both the words of Christ and of the Holy Spirit in the conversion of the bread into the body of Christ. For him the form of this sacrament has only the instrumental power (quod cum dicitur sola virtute Spiritus Sancti in Corpus Christi converti, non excluditur virtus instrumentalis, quae est in forma hujus sacramenti).<sup>11</sup> Principal power is the Holy Spirit.

Perhaps the relationship between the words of Christ and the action of the Spirit in the Eucharist is best expressed in a homily falsely attributed to St. Cyril of Alexandria (*Homiliae Diversae*. In mysticam coenam PG 77.1024) In fact it is a homily of his uncle Theophilus of Alexandria.

Deduxit per litteram, perfect per Spiritum, Instituit per figuras, gratias donavit per opus.

Each phrase of the quotation from Theophilus' homily is very expressive. Christ instituted the sacrament through the figures of bread and wine. The words of Christ are explanatory and determine the nature of these symbols. It is the Spirit who perfects the sacrament. The sacramental signs give grace because of the works of Christ.

10. K. Rahner *The Word and the Sacrament, in Theological Investigation IV* 283-84

11. ST III 78, 4-21

They have a permanent value and are efficacious since they proclaim the paschal mystery of Christ until his second coming. This proclamation of the death of the Lord (1 Cor 11.26) is not merely a making known of an earlier event but a solemn declaration and proclamation of something which happens even now. Thus the proclamation is the appellation of the exalted Lord. (O.Casel).

The events themselves are the material foundation for the believers and are quite indispensable. But the true and spiritual understanding is only possible since the time when Christ would be glorified i.e. since he sent the Paraclete to be with us for ever (Jn 14.16, 26). The institution narrative is the indispensable foundation for the Eucharistic memorial. The basic function of the institution narrative is to recall a specific event in saving history, the event of the Last Supper. This provides the basis or reason for what is now taking place. It witnesses to a specific event in saving history for which the community wishes to express its thanks and it acts indirectly as the basis for the Eucharist which is taking place here and now. At the same time, it serves as an assurance that the epiclesis has a historical basis and that it makes sense to pray the epiclesis. Only in the context of the happening of the Last Supper, there is reason to ask God to send the Spirit, to change the bread and wine into the body and blood of the Lord. The assembly prays that God will intervene here and now in its celebration of the Eucharist and realise the promise which Christ once made. It prays with assurance, because, thanks to the institution narrative, it focuses its attention on the Last Supper and the promise Christ made there. However, it is the Spirit that gives the true significance to it. The priest memorialises the words of Christ, but only the Holy Spirit in response to the epiclesis, can realise their *Anamnesis Epiphany*, (P. Evdokimov).