DHARMARAM
VIDYA KSHETRAM

COLLEGE OF THE
Holy Cross

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CATHOLIC CULTURES, INDIAN CULTURES
A WORKSHOP ON RITES, RELIGIOSITY, AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN INDIAN CATHOLICISM

Bengaluru
12-15 January 2015

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VIDYA KSHETRAM

COLLEGE OF THE
Holy Cross

CATHOLIC CULTURES INDIAN CULTURES

A Workshop on Rites, Religiosity, and Cultural Diversity in Indian Catholicism

12-15 January 2015

Organised by

Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram

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College of the Holy Cross, Worcester

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India is a multicultural society and home of the three rites (Roman, Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara) within the Catholic Church. The origin of each of the three rites in India had its unique historical context, 'incarnating' the Christian faith in a particular socio-cultural milieu. This process of inculturation, although within the basic framework of the particular rite, has been taking place integrating elements of the local cultures. As Indian culture is so varied, this inculturation within the same rite also has been varied. The unique combination of three rites within the Catholic Church in India has created a particularly rich and diverse context for Catholic religious life.

This workshop is organized under the auspices of *Asian Horizons,* Dharmaram Journal of Theology, as a collaborative work of the College of the Holy Cross and Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, and will explore "lived Catholicism" in the three rites in India's different cultural contexts. Beginning with a historical overview of the origin and development of each rite and the three constitutive elements of a rite, namely, liturgy, theology and spirituality and administrative structure, the workshop will focus on the perspectives gained from considering the lived experience of ordinary Catholics.

Among the questions to be considered are:

- What makes each rite liturgically unique?
- What practices differ in Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara, and Latin communities? Are there special devotions, feasts, or fasts, distinctive ways of mourning the dead, celebrating marriage or fulfilling obligations to the poor?
- Within each rite, are there variations in practice according to gender, caste, or regional location?
- In what ways do the rites creatively overlap and complement one another?
- How do the rites relate to the experience and cultures of non-Christian Indians?

We plan to have around 50 participants from the three rites. There will be plenary and panel sessions, along with break out groups and poster presentations for more informal discussion. A few literary, art and cultural forms also shall be presented. Presentations will be recorded and posted on the Catholics and Cultures website. Participants will also be invited to revise their presentation for inclusion in the *Journal of Global Catholicism* or *Asian Horizons* and for an edited volume.

We hope that this workshop will help to understand more profoundly: How does the Christian faith lived in the particular socio-cultural context help appreciate more deeply the variety and richness of each of the traditions and the lived faith experience, and how can they enrich each other? How can we help explore an inter-ecclesial consciousness based on the depths of faith and its very openness and complementarities? How can the lived experience of the past and present help these Churches in their way forward?

Organisation: The workshop is organised by Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore (under the auspices of *Asian Horizons, Dharmaram Journal of Theology*) and the College of the Holy Cross, USA. Organising **Committee:** Saju Chackalackal (President, DVK), Thomas Kollamparampil (Dean, Faculty of Theology, DVK), Thomas Landy, Mathew N. Schmalz (College of the Holy Cross, USA), Francis Thonippara, Geo Pallikunnel, Paulachan Kochappilly (DVK), Joseph Varghese Kureethara (Christ University, Bangalore), Shaji George Kochuthara (DVK; Convenor).

Programme

Monday, 12-01-2015

9.00 am	Registration	
09.30 am	**Opening Ceremony**	Welcome: Dr Saju Chackalackal, CMI, President, DVK Inaugural Address: **Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis** (Catholicos of the Syro Malankara Church) Presidential Address: **Archbishop Thomas Menamparampil** Felicitations: Dr Thomas Aykara, Rector, Dharmaram College Concept of the Workshop: Prof. Thomas Landy Dynamics: Shaji George Kochuthara
10.30 am	Keynote 1 Moderator: **Selvaraj Arulanathan**	**Thomas Landy:** The Importance of Studying Lived Catholicism
11.15 am	Tea/Coffee	
11.30 am	Plenary 1 Anthropology, Culture and Faith Moderator: **Philipose Matthai**	**Kuncheria Pathil, CMI:** Faith and Culture: A Theological Perspective **Mathew Schmalz:** Lived Catholicism and the Problem of Culture **Paul Pulikkan:** Indian Culture/s and the Three Catholic Rites in India
1.00 pm	Lunch	
2.30 pm	Keynote 2 Moderator: **Moncy, SDB**	**Francis Thonippara, CMI:** Individual Churches in India – Historical Origin and Development
3.15 pm	Plenary 2 Unique Features of the Eucharistic Liturgy Moderator: **Isaac Arickappalil, CMI**	**Kuriakose Thadathail:** Syro-Malankara Rite **Francis Minj, SJ**: Latin Rite **Pauly Maniyattu**: Syro-Malabar Rite
4.45 pm	Tea/Coffee; Free Time	
6.00 pm	Plenary 3 Popular Devotions Moderator: **Bishop H.L. Anand Jojo**	**Bp. Joseph Kallarangatt:** Syro-Malabar Rite **S. Joseph Lionel**: Latin Rite **Joseph Valliyattu:** Syro-Malankara Rite
7.30 pm	Evening Prayers (Latin Rite)	
8.00 pm	Supper	

Tuesday, 13-01-2015

6.45 am	Eucharistic Celebration (Latin Rite)	
9.00 am	Plenary 4 Family and Marriage and Gender Roles Moderator: **Jenee Peter**	**C. Justin Selvaraj:** Latin Rite **Giby Geevarghese**: Syro-Malankara Rite **Shiji Varghese**: Syro-Malabar Rite **Sonja Thomas:** The Tying of the Ceremonial Wedding Thread – "Ritual" and "Tradition" among the Syro-Malabar Catholics **Baiju Mukalel:** Wedding Celebrations in the Knanaya Tradition
11.00 am	Tea/Coffee Poster Presentations	
11.30 am	Plenary 5 Liturgy of the Hours Moderator: **Thomas Kollamparampil, CMI**	**Philip Vysanethu, OIC:** Syro-Malankara Rite **Jean Mathew, SH:** Syro-Malabar Rite **Moncy, SDB:** Latin Rite
1.00 pm	Lunch	
2.30 pm	Plenary 6 Folk Culture, Folklore and Catholic Identity Moderator: **P.T. Mathew**	**Scaria Zacharia:** Catholic Identity in The Folk Cultural Circuit of Kerala **Jolly Puthussery:** Performing identities a case study of *Moovarasu natakam*
3.30 pm	Tea/Coffee	
3.45 pm	Plenary 7 Death, Mourning and Death Anniversaries **Moderator: A. Maria Arul Raja**	**Joby Kochumuttom, CMI:** Syro-Malabar Rite **Sujata Kujure:** Latin Rite; Tribal
4.45 pm	Free Time	
6.00 pm	Plenary 8 Holy Week and Easter Moderator: **Joseph Valliyattu**	**Geo Pallikunnel:** Syro-Malabar Rite **Philip Chempakassery:** Syro-Malankara Rite
7.30 pm	Evening Prayer (Syro-Malankara)	
8.00 pm	Supper	
8.45 pm	Cultural Programme	

Wednesday, 14-01-2014

6.45 am	Eucharistic Celebration Syro-Malankara Rite	
9.00 am	Plenary 9 Moderator: **Kuncheria Pathil, CMI**	**Bishop H.L. Anand Jojo:** Assimilation of Tribal Practices **Selvaraj Arulnathan, SJ:** Dalit Practices **A. Maria Arul Raja, SJ:** Popular Religious Practices among the Dalit Christians: A Critical Appraisal **Mathew Schmalz:** Dalit Practices
11.00 am	Tea/Coffee Posters	
11.30 am	Plenary 10 Fasting Moderator: **Pauly Maniyattu**	**Joseph Varghese Kureethara, CMI:** Syro-Malabar Rite **Issac Parappallil:** Syro-Malankara Rite **John Moolan:** Liturgical Year: Syro-Malabar Church
1.00 pm	Lunch	
2.30 pm	Plenary 11 Moderator: **Shiji Varghese**	**Jose Chennattussery, CMI:** Food and Celebrations - Syro-Malabar Rite **Aloysius Hemrom, SDB:** Religion of the Garos of Northeast India and Influence of Christianity
3.30 pm	Tea/Coffee	
3.45 pm	Plenary 12 Moderator: **Paulachan Kochappilly, CMI**	**John Moolan:** Christmas and Epiphany **George Menacherry:** Art and Architecture
4.45 pm	Free Time	
6.00 pm	Plenary 13 Church Administration Moderator: **Geo Pallikunnel**	**Jose Chiramel:** Syro-Malabar Rite **Stephen Plathottathil, OIC:** Syro-Malankara Rite **Hrudayaraj Gade**: Popular Devotions – New Developments in Today's Pluralistic India (Challenges And Opportunities)
7.30 pm	Evening Prayer Syro-Malabar Rite	
8.00 pm	Conference Dinner	

Thursday, 15-01-2015

6.45 am	Eucharistic Celebration (Syro-Malabar Rite)	
9.00 am	Plenary 14 Moderator: **Esmeralda Sanchez**	**Jenee Peter:** Ways of Relating with Other Religions **Savio Abreu, SJ:** interaction between the Latin Rite and new Christian movements **P.T. Mathew, SJ:** Lived Catholicism Defies Boundaries – Insights from the Coastal Context
10.30 am	Tea break	
10.45 am	Plenary 15 Moderator: **Thomas Landy**	**Biju K. Chacko, CMI:** *Kolam*: A Symbol of Religious Harmony and Integration **C. Justin Selvaraj:** Gender and Family: A Case Study on Roman Catholic Marriage Practices among the Nadars of Tamil Nadu
12.00 am	Concluding Session	**Thomas Aykara, CMI,** Rector, Dharmaram College **Thomas Kollamparampil, CMI,** Dean of the Faculty of Theology, DVK **Mathew Schmalz,** College of The Holy Cross **Shaji George Kochuthara, CMI & Geo Pallikunnel, CMI,** DVK

Posters

Pauly Maniyatt: Individual Churches: Identity and Openness

John Moolan: 1. Liturgy of the Hours (Divine Praises): The Syro-Malabar Church

2. Sacraments of Initiation: The Syro-Malabar Church

Sebastian Edathikavil: Dress and Ornaments

George Menacherry: 1. Nazraneys: How Incultured are They?

2. How Old are Our Church Buildings?

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RELIVING THOMAS' UNIVERSAL OUTLOOK AND APOSTOLIC DARING

Archbishop Thomas Menamparampil, Jowai

[**Archbishop Emeritus Thomas Menamparampil, SDB,** thirty years a bishop at Dibrugarh and Guwahati Dioceses, has been an active evangelizer. He has made a mark as a peace-negotiator and a prominent leader in civil society. At present he is engaged, among other things, in arousing consciousness about the need for 'Probity in Public life'. Apart from the peace building works, he created Joint Peace Team, a people's platform where various Church denominations and others come together to respond to conflict in the region. He has served as the Chairman of the CBCI Commission for Clergy and Religious, Chairman of the CBCI Commission for Proclamation and Special Secretary to the Asian Synod. He is also a member in the Post-Asian Synodal Council, Rome, Member of Consecrated Life, Rome, and Chairman of FABC Office for Evangelization. His publications include *Never Grow Tired, A Path to Prayer, Thinking Reed, Challenge to Cultures, Thoughts on Evangelization, Cultures: In the Context of Sharing the Gospel.* His latest books are *Becoming agents of Togetherness*, *The Servant Leader* and Towards a Sense of Responsibility. He has also contributed over 150 articles to various journals.]

It is a great privilege for me to have been invited to this Conference, called together by Dharmaram College, to reflect on the complementary nature of various Rites in the life of the Church and our Christian mission to society. On this topic I can only speak like a non-expert, subject to correction. But be sure, I have the best of intentions.

I am a son of the Syro-Malabar Church and am proud to be so. I have never understood this identity as a limiting force but a liberating and empowering energy to constantly reach beyond in order to serve the Universal Church and the wider human society. It was probably in Thomas rather than in anyone else that the command of the Lord "go to all people everywhere" (Mt 28:19) and be witnesses "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8) was realized during the first generation of Christian history. This makes me suggest that the main character traits of his spiritual children (St. Thomas Christians) should be a **universal outlook** and an **irrepressible apostolic eagerness**. 'When Thomas said, 'Let us go and die with him' (Jn 11:16), he meant it. Risk-taking for the Lord in an apostolic venture is the core-charism of Thomas.

The fact that we were able to maintain the unique genius of Thomas only in the manner it was incarnated in the Chaldean tradition was an accident of history. It is true one cannot renounce one's **historic roots,** but at the same time one need not be imprisoned by them either. South India was not part of the Chaldean world, though our little Christian community was closely associated with it. In fact it was kept dependent on this sponsoring Church, not being allowed to develop an indigenous leadership of its own for centuries.

We are infinitely grateful to the Chaldean Christian community through which we were able to insert ourselves into the Universal Church. But at the same time we may ask ourselves whether the **psychology of dependence** it created has prevented us from developing our Indian roots and identity with equal ardour, and whether it clipped our wings us from venturing out on our own and developing an independent Indian identity and a sense of destiny that might have taken us far. Too long we may have acted like settlers from the Middle East (we should refer to that region as West Asia) with excessive Chaldean fervour in order to be able to preserve our Christian identity.

This fact, certainly, needs to be understood in its own context. Sociologists tell us that a minority community living amidst not-so-friendly population tends to become **inward looking and defensive**, until it becomes a part of their character. This was true with regard to most Christian communities in West Asia where they sought to be loyal to the regime in exchange for protection and patronage. This may have been the culture that we borrowed as well, concentrating more on gaining favour with our rulers than on inserting ourselves into the cultural world of the society in which we lived in order to emerge as a dynamic force there. We thought that the only way to preserve our Christian identity was to maintain sturdy relationship with our cultural cousins far away.

In adverse and uncertain circumstances all these are perfectly intelligible. But it is good to recognize the conditionings such historic experiences have left behind on our community, e.g. **over-dependence** on a particular cultural tradition which has its roots in West Asia, a region which even today are caught in ongoing confrontation between self-absorbed (ethnic, tribal, religious and sectarian) communities. Those genes may still be with us.

Historians tell us that in the early history of **Christianity in China,** the Christian faith (the so-called 'Nestorian' version of it) had better chances of wide acceptance than Buddhism. Both were foreign religions, but both were of Asian origins. Buddhism inculturated fast and developed an indigenous leadership. The Christian community remained too Syrian and too long tied to the roots and to their sponsoring communities to become Chinese, and was bypassed, surviving only as a memory. A stele-inscription in X'ian reminds us of the era.

These my reflections are only efforts towards a better self-understanding to enable us to choose the direction we could move in the future. If we have negative memories of incidents related to our early relationship with the Latin Church, we cannot forget the stimulus it gave us at a time when we needed it most and the various forms of assistance we have received ever since. **Healing of memories** can do us a lot of good and open our eyes to many other facts to which we choose to be blind. While we are extremely grateful to our Chaldean association that helped us to preserve our faith during the most difficult periods of our history, indigenous leadership emerged only during the latter period of our association with the Latin Church, which has also opened out new frontiers to us to reach to the "ends of the earth".

By saying this I do not mean to under-estimate the **importance of our identity** which we were able to preserve only through our West Asian association. One's identity is the most precious treasure a community has. Having lived and worked among small ethnic groups in Northeast India, I have seen how even the smallest community fights to death to preserve its identity. As globalization is pressing hard upon cultural diversity, there is a re-assertion selfhood in various forms everywhere in the world, also within our community. At the same time there is a profound longing in everyone to feel one with the rest of the Human Family.

A collective **sense of togetherness** is growing at the world level, in spite of many threats to it. There is an eagerness in the hearts of most people to harmonise their ethnic and national interests, cultural and ethical concerns, moral and religious traditions. Even when we seem to collide over issues, we are only calling for each other's attention and consideration; we are struggling to affirm the complementary nature of our roles in an immature manner, just like a child trying to grab the mother in the wrong fashion. Our common nature itself is complementary and we find our completeness only in each other.

Human problems have accumulated in such a manner in our times, that we need everyone's assistance to take them in hand. Apart from the problems of poverty, growing inequality and injustice, there is also the alarming trend of the **erosion of moral values** and serious **threat to Religious Faith** itself. Young people are not asking which Church they ought to belong to,

but whether they need to belong to any Church at all. It is about the Fundamentals of their Faith that they have hesitations.

We need not wonder. After years of close association with the Jesus, Thomas was not certain which direction Jesus was going to take. He asked, "Lord, we do not know where you are going; so, how can we know how to get there?" (Jn 14:5). He was very particular about obtaining **empirical evidence**, like modern man, before believing anything out of the ordinary, "Unless I see the scars of the nails in his hands and put my finger on those scars and my hand in his side, I will not believe" (Jn 20:25). I do not say our youth are losing their faith, but they are proving themselves children of Thomas. These are times when the energies of all believers and spiritual resources of all Church traditions need to come together to be able to tell the rising generations in a convincing way, 'Put your finger on our common witness to Jesus, stretch out your hand and touch our Faith', "Stop doubting, and believe!" (Jn 20:27).

There is no doubt that a **secular vision** of reality is working its way into the minds of our young people in the Universities, especially of those more gifted and of independent thought or making a headway in secular society. It was exactly this that happened in the West a generation or so ago. And universal education has brought such an outlook to the masses.

An exit out of this difficulty in charismatic zeal, borrowing heavily from Pentecostal fervour, may be helpful, but not when its leaders exaggerate. It can lead to further splintering of the community, as it is happening already. We need the 'sober' faith of our ancestors and **intelligent reasoning** that would convince even the hesitant Thomases of our own times. In an eagerness to help, our **educated laity** are eagerly searching for areas of self-expression. If doors remain closed, they may launch out on their own, driven by charismatic exaggerations or ideological unpredictability. Some form of dialogue will help mutual understanding. The Syro-Malabar Church has an excellent tradition of entrusting weighty responsibilities to the laity and giving them a **respected voice** in affairs.

Today we need to search further too. Time has come for us to press beyond, tap all the **spiritual and intellectual resources** that are available within the Catholic heritage, and take advantage of the religious values of every Christian tradition. This precisely is New Evangelization, of which we are not merely beneficiaries but also protagonists. And we have much to give.

In every era of history, the Holy Spirit has inspired one or other Christian community to address a specific need of the Church and take some new initiative in behalf of the rest of the believing community. May be the world situation of **secularization and inter-religious unease** today is asking the Churches of the Syrian traditions in India with their sturdy faith, to give generously of their untapped resources, while drawing also from other Christian and world traditions. They have in their genes the DNA of several heritages: those of Biblical West Asia, of the Latin tradition with its sense of universal mission, of the Hindu society with its perception of cosmic togetherness and spiritual depth, of the Buddhist sense of equality and eagerness for truth. If each tradition chooses to close in on itself, it shall merely survive as self-absorbed communities like those of West Asia. But if they choose to inter-relate among themselves and draw what is best in other heritages, they will prosper and thrive.

The special gift to the world today from the Syro-Malabar Christian community would be a new and stimulating interpretation of the **spirituality** that kept it alive and vibrant for the last twenty centuries. This reflection on our spirituality should not confine itself only to those theological sources linked with the Syrian Fathers or even inspirations from our canonised saints, but it should include a search for a deeper understanding of the inner world of our community: those **simple convictions,** commitments, loyalties, correctives, relationships and generosities that have been lived out by the tiny group of our ancestors down the centuries.

This study should surely give attention to the wealth of our liturgical traditions, but must go beyond. There is so much of spiritual wealth hidden in the diverse folds of the 'collective unconscious' of the community, at the **unsearched depths** of our subconscious psyche, that needs to be reflected upon, explored, identified, studied, defined, and shared, e.g. with regard to our family values, community bonds, spiritual relationships, ascetical seriousness, role of the laity, respect for other religions, readiness to accommodate to other convictions; at the same time eagerness to share the core values of our faith and search for the common good.

With the world changing fast, even traditional Catholic **spirituality** as formulated in the western classics will need to **re-interpreted** and contextualised today to make it intelligible and meaningful in modern society. If this is true, all the more a spirituality like ours that was more expressed in simple God-search and fierce fidelity. Our spiritual heritage that has remained mute for centuries seeks an utterance. Our younger generations deserve a stirring message.

What is meant to be inspiring should not descend to arguments or self- advertisement, but merely seek to kindle a **spark in the heart** of the readers and searchers for depth in other traditions. In recent years, Catherine Doherty of Madonna House made a bid to interpret the spirituality of the Russian Church to the western world with amazing success. The spirituality of St. Thomas Christians which has sustained a community of believers in the most difficult circumstances during a much longer period history will not be less inspiring.

The precariousness of the situation during much of our history ensured one thing: wealth, prestige or power did not present a temptation. That reduced the chances of internal conflicts. But that situation has greatly changed; the consequence is that there may be several **internal anxieties** today for the community to resolve before we can be credible witnesses of the values we hold out to others. If we had developed the skills of internal dialogue earlier, may be, St. Thomas Christians would have remained one. But it is never too late.

But even with the burdens of history and the anxieties of the present, our community has been achieving much over the years. I consider every achievement an invitation to humility. But it also gives us ground for **self-confidence**. It is this self-confidence that equips us to go beyond our internal interests and take on the challenges that the Universal Church and the human society itself face. Any building up of the inner strength of the community and further development of its collective personality should be oriented to this end, and not to make it inward-looking and 'auto-referential'.

Self-confidence has another advantage. It protects us from any compulsion we feel towards adopting a confrontational attitude in relating with other communities or passing on the Message of the Jesus. It enables us to place our trust in a **'pedagogy of persuasion'**. In an era of cacophonous voices inspired by secular philosophies and aggressive ideologies, a serene and confident voice has every chance of being listened to. This was the approach that Buddha adopted and is generally typical of South Asian cultures. The West Asian prophetic style of denunciation and confrontation, is not mandatory on us. Unlimited self-confidence made Mahatma Gandhi, like Buddha, capable of appealing to the good sense of the other, even an opponent, and influencing them significantly.

Another point. Many among us have sought to respond to the **contemplative bent** of the Indian character by opening *Ashrams* or initiating contemplative societies. To me the challenge is something more profound. All Indians are not inclined to be ruminating world-renouncers, but all have genuine admiration for **personal depth** in whomever they find it. Modern society, having rejected everything but the superficial and the ephemeral, is stunned when they see individuals who believe and show that life is serious; that the abiding values in the hidden folds of our inner personality alone can bring meaning to our life's struggles, that

they alone can confer reliability on our promises, sturdiness on our relationships, and quality and calibre on our society. Humanity is thirsting for values and purposes that endure. It may be a great mission to interpret **Asian depth** to the rest of the World.

We must frankly admit that the Oriental Churches as a whole have preserved their traditional spiritual seriousness, community bonds, ascetical earnestness, family ethos, and faith education styles in these troubled times, while the western Church is intently seeking to devise ways and means to ensure the same results. It is edifying that there is also an intellectual upsurge in the community at various levels, even if it can lead to some strain. The combination of these two thrusts (**spiritual fervour** and **intellectual ardour**) is what I would dare to describe as "worshipping the Father in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:23). It will be only if the Human Family can be led in this manner to discover the face of the Father in its convincing radiance will they be able to exclaim with Thomas "My Lord and my God!" (Jn 20:28) in total self-surrender. That is the final stage to which all human search is destined.

"The Importance of Studying Lived Catholicism"
CATHOLIC CULTURES, INDIAN CULTURES
A WORKSHOP ON RITES, RELIGIOSITY, AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN INDIAN CATHOLICISM

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Before I begin the formal part of my talk, I'd like to express my very deep gratitude to a number of people here today…

Beyond expressing those thanks, my purpose this morning is twofold, to introduce you to Catholics and Cultures, the initiative that has given rise to this gathering, and to talk about the perspective that underlies it, "lived religion" – more precisely, "lived Catholicism." I'm going to weave those two goals together, since lived Catholicism is precisely the vantage point from which Catholics and Cultures hopes to significantly increase our audiences' understanding of Catholicism around the world.

I am sure that when I am done you will see advantages and disadvantages to this perspective. I want to say from the beginning that though I will primarily talk about the lived religion perspective as way to fill a huge gap in the way we understand Catholicism, I'm not looking for it to take over and supplant the other ways – only for it to be in dialogue with them. I hope these next few days will be a fruitful part of that dialogue.

I come from a part of the world (though this is certainly not true only of people from my part of the world) where people have shaped - arguably distorted - their understanding of Catholicism in two ways. First, they think about what Catholicism *is* almost entirely through the lens of what they would *like it to be*. I'm not supplanting those normative claims, but speaking to the value of putting them aside occasionally, to be able to see the world from a different vantage point. If we don't try this from time to time, we miss a lot, and fail to understand something because we don't examine what fails to meet our preconceptions.

Second, even after travels through 16 countries doing this research, I can say that, as I found at home, most Catholics experience the faith through a single cultural lens. They imagine that Catholic life is just like it is in their parish at home, except that Mass is said in a different language, perhaps with guitar music instead of organ music. Some Euro-American Catholics have a glinting understanding that Latin American Catholicism is somewhat different, having had encounters with Mexican and other Latino immigrants, but their knowledge of the diversity in the church is minimal.

In many important ways, of course, Catholics are right about what they imagine about the rest of the world: Catholic life around the world *is* "like" their home parish. But to reduce it only to the ways it is "like" any single culture's Catholic experience is to ignore so much about how people all around the world live and imagine it in a rich diversity of ways.

The College of the Holy Cross, and its McFarland Center for Religion, Ethics and Culture, which I direct, conceived of Catholics and Cultures as a means to help a variety of audiences to understand what it is like to be Catholic in different cultures around the world. We've been working on it for a number of years, but today is a special day, because this conference is the first of what we hope will be many conferences that will explore the themes I will speak more about. It is a prime manifestation of our aim to turn Catholics and Cultures into a global scholarly conversation. I can think of no better partner than the Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, and Fr Shaji George Kochuthara, CMI, to have made this possible.

In a few weeks, back at the College of the Holy Cross, we will launch our new Catholics and Cultures website at a simple-to-remember address, Catholicsandcultures.org. That site will be a primary platform for conveying what we learn to audiences worldwide. The web provides us with extraordinary opportunities to communicate this knowledge, not only because it can reach around the world, but because it can allow us to include photos, videos, and recordings of interviews that allow viewers to see and hear the contours of Catholic life. In a few months, my colleague, Prof. Mathew Schmalz, will publish the first volume of an online journal, designed to bring a more scholarly, in depth understanding of the sort that is not always possible on web pages.

The Catholics and Cultures website now has in-depth information about 12 countries, and in the next six months we will be working at adding entries for 7 more – Argentina, China, France, Ireland, Lebanon, the Philippines, and Uganda. Prof. Esmeralda Sanchez, who is here, is taking the lead to help us to describe the many facets of Filipino religiosity. Any time I scan through the pages already posted, I'm both amazed at the richness of all that is there to be conveyed, and taken aback by how much there still is to understand and articulate. To take but one facet of one example, my interlocutors in Ethiopia have told me how impressed they are with how well the pages on Ethiopia capture Catholic life in that ancient Christian culture. Yet I know how many questions still remain to be explored better, and I know (and acknowledge on the site) that I am still primarily portraying Ethiopia through the lens of *one* of Ethiopia's cultures, the dominant Amharic culture. This is in a country where Oromo people, not Amhara, are actually the largest ethnic group, and there are in fact 80 languages and some 200 dialects. The territory of Ethiopia, especially its southern regions, is comprised of conquered peoples whose histories and cultures are very different from the north. You can see why this project is one that will never be close to complete in my lifetime. But the web, like the journal, is a great resource that allows us to keep building on and editing what we know.

Catholics and Cultures is an attempt to understand and portray what we might call "lived Catholicism," the ways that ordinary Catholics practice their faith in their everyday lives. My shorthand is always to say that we try to provide insight into the question, What is it like to be Catholic in different countries around the globe? It is an exploration of faith and culture, but one understood not for the purpose of proving or developing broad theories or typologies about religion or society. Instead, it seeks to build up any eventual theorizing, whenever that might finally seem appropriate, on the basis of the particularities we see in different contexts.

Having named one thing it is not, it might be easiest to point out in other ways what the site is not, to help clarify what it is. It is not a normative theological enterprise, though it does shed light on implicit, and sometimes explicit, theologies of the lay Catholics it studies. It is not historical, though it often uses history to shed light on a contemporary social situation. It is not a study of church institutions – how they work and what they accomplish – though institutions certainly come into play at times. It is not a study of religious elites, of professional theologians or church leaders and their thought. Nor is it a study that selects out

the intellectually or artistically greatest contributions of a culture, or that is even very interested in distinctions between "high" and "low" art or music.

If you consider how much is published on all the topics mentioned above and how little on lived religion, you begin to see that there is a real gap in the study of lived Catholicism. I cannot tell you how many scholars around the world I've talked to about my hope to engage them in articulating the practices and religious lives of ordinary lay Catholics, only to have them tell me that they didn't really know what lay Catholics thought and believed. This was true of many lay and clerical scholars who had given their lives to the study of Catholicism.

One scholar once told me that he couldn't give me much about lay Catholic practices in his native Korea, but he could give me Durkheimian perspective on Korean Catholicism. I presumed I would learn more about Durkheim than about Korea. A scholar and priest in Africa, a man I respect and who has a Cambridge degree, told me that he really didn't have much idea at all about the daily religious lives of the people he preached to regularly. Another was short on specific cultural and practical detail, but excellent at lumping people into big, psychological typologies.

I can't tell you how many books I've seen that claim to talk about a contemporary Catholic life, but in the end do so only in the ninth of nine chapters, or even the epilogue, after extensive historical exegesis – all of which is interesting, but which puzzles me insofar as it dwarfs the actual attention devoted to the contemporary situation.

Why is there such a gap? I'm not suggesting that we ignore our history, or scripture or theology. But I am curious why we have not given much effort to understanding Catholics' taken-for-granted religious worlds. The fact that they are taken for granted doesn't make them unworthy of study. Yet it is shocking to me how infrequently we do take time to articulate those worlds.

Certainly, for good and ill, the academy values ideas over practice. At least as it has developed in the West, many scholars have now come to recognize a distinctly Protestant bias in what passed for religious studies. It gave short shrift to practice, and highlighted the word, highlighted material found in archives.

European, and sometimes American scholarship can be faulted for having tried to theorize on too grand a level by reducing the particularity of religious life into examples of universals, creating "religion in general." Particular religious examples were of interest insofar as they served larger theoretical concerns.

I used to teach social theory, but I'm now convinced that one of those shortcomings is around theory and the temptation to think that we have done our intellectual work only when we theorize broadly or abstract from the messiness of reality. I'm not naïve enough to think that we can approach the world without being guided by theories or without making sense of reality by abstracting from it. But I am suggesting that so much of what I've seen in sociology and religious studies has been so theory-driven, often to the detriment of communicating the particularities.

I have many hypotheses about why the gap may exist, why attention to lived religion suffered, but it is probably more fruitful in the time I have to turn attention back to the remedy for it.

The boundaries and contours of lived Catholicism

The study of lived Catholicism certainly is not new. It builds on the Weberian tradition of *verstehen,* whereby one tries to understand a phenomenon from within, to understand phenomena from an insider's point of view.

Robert Orsi, a scholar of American Catholic history, has been especially influential in this regard, and certainly influential to me. For Orsi, lived religion has been about allowing the subjects of his work to tell and interpret their own stories.

Nancy Ammerman, a Protestant scholar of religion, has used the term "everyday religion" more than "lived religion," though it conveys a similar idea. "To start from the everyday" she writes, "is to privilege the experience of nonexperts, the people who do not make a living being religious or thinking and writing about religious ideas. That does not mean that 'official' ideas are never important, only that they are most interesting to us once they get used by someone other than a professional."[1]

The study of lived religion requires a definitional openness at the starting point to what religion (and Catholicism) is - a willingness to look for religion wherever and however it is understood by the people we are engaging. In some sense, methodologically, we have to let them set the boundaries, rather than coming in and defining a certain number of practices and beliefs as Catholic, and others not. We have to be comfortable with a bit of fluidity. For me - perhaps easier as a non-theologian or non-clergyman - it entails finding out what people believe, and leaving that boundary-maintenance to others. The alternative for me would be equivalent to stepping into an Indian church as an American and saying something like, "this action I see in church is Catholic, so I study that. But that *prasadam* or those flower garlands that I see over there: that's not Catholic, so I ignore that." I settle on a definition that says, "These baptized persons think of themselves in good faith as Catholic, and regard these actions as part of what's important in their lives, therefore they are what I study. This is what Catholicism looks like in this place, and is what I want to explain." In a certain way, though I know it has shortfalls, that is what "Catholicism" comes to include for me. I must say that I always come away feeling graced for that opportunity. Fortunately, my definition of Catholic was broadened by seeing prasadam and garlands and understanding what they meant to Catholic believers.

Lived religion means recognizing that there are kinds of religiosity - kinds of Catholicism - that are far from my ideal, but very much worth studying and raising to others' attention. To take one example, I don't have a Pentecostalist bone in my body. But I was moved deeply when, a few years ago at a conference on this campus, I slipped away to the Renewal Retreat Center, a short walk from here, and took part in the ways they prayed. I was struck at the ways they drew together American charismatic, traditional European, and traditional and modern Indian elements to develop a way of praying that was extraordinarily powerful. I saw what it meant to thousands of people. This experience yielded later disappointed when, in Ethiopia, I saw that the church worked to keep the charismatic movement small, even as it lost young people to the Protestant Pentecostals.

There are other boundary questions besides the boundaries of what counts as Catholicism. What are the religio-geographic boundaries of any group of people's Catholicism? I am constantly struck to observe how varied those boundaries are. The study of lived Catholicism requires a willingness to look for religious life in places we don't initially expect – in churches and at official religious sites, of course, but also in the streets, at workplaces, even in social media. It requires an eye and ear for the ways religious life expands beyond our assumed boundaries, or where it is kept narrower than our assumed boundaries.

In Denmark, I found dedicated Catholics who, in a very Danish way, clearly saw religion as something not to be brought out very much in public – something for church, yes, but most

[1] Nancy T. Ammerman, ed., *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives* (Oxford, 2007) 5.

authentic when held quietly in the quiet space of one's heart. In India, I need not tell you, I've seen something quite opposite, at least in the south.

One learns to see the geography religious geography of homes. Are religious images and objects primarily for the kitchen or a bedroom, as in many places in Northern Europe and the U.S., or for public spaces like the foyer or the dining area, as I've seen in India?

What is it like to be Catholic in a certain place? What kinds of practices and sensations, sights, smells and sounds add up to the experience?

We can and should bring questions of lived Catholicism to liturgy, asking,

What is lay peoples' experience of liturgy? How does it differ from one rite to another, one cultural and social context to another? Does it differ by gender? (This may seem like an American question, but it certainly becomes real when I look at churches around the world and almost inevitably see so many more women than men). What kinds of actions - kneeling, standing, sitting, being somber, being ebullient, count as religiously "authentic?" I can tell you that my contrasting experiences in Berlin, in Jordan, in India and in Jamaica, to take four examples, show me a great deal about the variety of answers to those questions.

We can look not only how a funeral liturgy is religious, but how the whole process around it, the mundane interactions, small rituals and informal memorials, the messages in condolences, the events before and after, shape and reveal a religious worldview.

We can examine what Catholics in particular cultures believe about how to raise children. How to teach them to pray, yes, but how to discipline them and love them, how much to protect them and how much to let them make their own decisions. Catholics in more secularized places may not think that these are religious questions, people in other places they may think they are, but in different ways. This is how we find out the boundaries of religion. Catholic Danes I interviewed thought it a moral violation of conscience to push their children about religious commitment. Religion was authentic when it was a wholly uncoerced, free calling. Young Indians told me that such laxity was not by any means their lot in life.

Comparative Catholicism

As you can see already from the comparisons I'm making, one thing that we might say I am doing here is, in a sense, "comparative Catholicisms." Lived Catholicism gets even more interesting, I think, when it is comparative. Indeed, the lack of opportunities to look at lived Catholicism comparatively may be one reason why many of us have not seen it as purposeful to write about the taken for granted worlds of lay Catholics in our own cultures. At least in the U.S., I sometimes shy away from that phrase because it strikes fear in many people who, even if they might have their own particular culturally inflected practices and ideals about Catholicism, want very much to know that there is only one Catholicism. I'll leave it to philosophers and theologians to explain how there are many variations in one faith, but I think we all know that this is true, that it would least of all surprise anyone who teaches in Rome at a Pontifical University.

From an American and European perspective, I can say without hesitation that far too much writing about contemporary Catholic life has derived from one-country scenarios that fall apart when considered on a cross-cultural basis. I was a student of secularization theory – indeed, one of my mentors was its famous advocate, Peter Berger – but like Berger I began to see the shortcomings of the theory. It makes sense in a few contexts, but falls apart comparatively. It makes sense only if you ignore to huge counter-examples like India and China, and only if you imagine that "modernization" worldwide will always look like it has in

Northern Europe or the U.S. But even in the U.S. it's not entirely clear that the theory makes sense.

The more I engage in comparative Catholic research, the better I have been prepared to notice interesting things about Catholicism in new places. A few examples:

- Recently I was in Berlin interviewing Catholics who were talking about the church tax – a tax the German government charges to all registered Catholics and Lutherans, and passes along to the churches proportionately. A number of people argued that the church tax was a barrier for many believers. A whole conversation has been going on among lay people about it in Germany, proposing linkages and outcomes based only on the German example. Everyone I spoke to, though, was struck when I mentioned that just 450 km away, in Copenhagen, Denmark, 80% of Danes, though very few are religious, pay the church tax. Each had to step back to reconsider some basic assumptions, just given the fact that it did not hold true at a place of relatively similar cultural background not so far away.

- When I look at the saints now, I may be able to say that trust in saints is a broadly important, though not universal characteristic of Catholics worldwide, but it has become even more important to me to look comparatively at who the saints are who are important to people, and what people's relationship to the saints is. In Lebanon, a strikingly glitzy society if I've ever seen one, the only saints who count seem to be, paradoxically, those who were superheroes at worldly self-abnegation. In Ethiopia, angels, who serve as messengers to God, are the saints who are most commonly revered. In Italy, saints are often intermediaries and patrons with particular purposes, persons who can achieve miracles. In the U.S. and many parts of northern Europe, they are mostly regarded as role models, not miracle workers.

- In parts of the world, such as Spain, one encounters huge numbers of Catholics who don't attend Sunday Mass very often, but who throw great energy into a feast.

- In some places I tend to encounter people who think it essential to be married in the church, even if they don't attend often. Reciprocally, in other places, people could attend fairly regularly, but wish they could be married on a beach.

I think that the key question one has to be careful about in any comparative exercise is, Compared to whom? I certainly aim not to normativize American Catholicism, which might be my own cultural trap - to not develop a program that always explains how other Catholic practices are consonant with, or differ from the U.S. In Berlin, I wanted to capture a bit of what Berlin Catholicism looks like to Filipino, Ethiopian, Ghanaian and Ugandan Catholics. One-to-one comparisons are of course helpful, but are enriched much more when they are part of a large tapestry.

Why not "popular religion"?

The study of lived religion asks that we treat laity "as actors in their own right,"[2] more than as believers who have only gotten the faith part right, who have primarily been recipients of what religious elites have handed down to them. Popular religion, helpful as it has been in focusing attention on the laity, too often seems to fail in this regard. It is often the category into which we place the religious practices that take place somewhere just outside the bounds of orthodoxy, or without the approval of religious authorities.[3]

Ronald Kassimir, a scholar of African Catholicism, notes, "As an analytical construct, popular religion has three basic variants: (1) popular religion as belonging to a particular social group,

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[2] David D. Hall, ed., *Lived Religion in America: toward a history of practice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997, p. viii.

[3] See Nancy T. Ammerman, "Finding Religion in Everyday Life," Sociology of Religion, 2014, 75:2, 190.

or the dominated classes; (2) popular religion as deviations from a canonical set of beliefs, symbols and practices; and (3) popular religion as a rejection of the authority of designated religious specialists and the institution they represent."[4] Variant 1 privileges religion as something that really belongs to the privileged class that the others are weighed against. Variant 3 reduces religious practice to something that it may or may not be, and I suspect, often does it injustice.

The great patristic historian, Peter Brown, helps us to understand the problem with variant 2; "'Popular religion'" he writes, "is presented as in some ways a diminution, a misconception, or a contamination of 'unpopular religion.'" Whether it is presented, bluntly, as 'popular superstition' or categorized as 'lower forms of belief,' it is assumed that 'popular religion exhibits modes of thinking and worshipping that are best intelligible in terms of failure to be something else."[5]

Robert Orsi notes that for detractors, "popular religion means all those crazy things that people do and all the crazy ideas they have outside the structures of an organized and properly ordered church."[6]

Lived religion, indeed lived Catholicism, is intended to help us to overcome those problems, except as they are salient for the people we study. It aims not only to pull back from the "less than" implications, but also to move more seamlessly to examine how a people's practice and lives on both sides of orthodoxy boundaries fit together holistically, in a particular cultural context.

So why study Lived Catholicism?

I've talked about what lived Catholicism is. But really, given all the commitments and goals you may have, why study lived religion? I can tell you about my own intense intellectual excitement, about the doors it has opened to me, and about the ways that I hope it will radically deepen my students' interest in what Catholicism it. I recognize that many of you work in explicitly theological contexts, mostly as clergy, so I'd like to tailor my comments with that in mind, knowing that you have more to navigate vis-à-vis some of these boundary issues than I do.

1. Smell the sheep

Pope Francis has said that he seeks bishops who have a bit of the "smell of the sheep," who understand ordinary Catholics' lives and suffering and hopes because they have been there with them. It's been my experience among those in the academy, certainly among those in the U.S., that the smell of the sheep is too often kept very far off, often by some who think they know how the sheep *ought* to smell.

I know firsthand examples of scholars who were deeply uncomfortable with varieties of Catholic practice that did not fit their own intellectual criteria for what Catholicism is "really" about. The discomfort, in those cases, was generally more emotional than intellectual. For a few it was the ticket to membership in an intellectual elite, the need to prove that faith is perfectly rational, not encumbered by any of the things that Protestant elites in the U.S. had scorned as sub-standard.

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[4] Ronald Kassimir, "The Politics of Popular Catholicism in Uganda" in *East African Expressions of Christianity* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999).

[5] See Peter Brown, *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) p. 19.

[6] Robert A. Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street: Faith and Community in Italian Harlem, 1880-1950,* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985 p. xiv.

When Robert Orsi began to study early 20th century parish life in Italian Harlem,[7] or the 20th century U.S. cult of St. Jude, I can tell you that a lot of the devotions he examined were treated as embarrassing, at best, by many Catholic intellectuals. This was a generation who had built up its own social status by turning their back on devotions that had no place in American Protestant culture, and were declining in importance for American Catholics after Vatican II. But Orsi showed that the devotions were not simply the superstition or passivity that scholars had bought into believing they were. He showed how they were sources of moral agency, how they transformed and empowered women in difficult circumstances. He undermined many cultural stereotypes and restored agency to the Catholics he studied in a way that was hard not to admire. I suspect that there are parallel kinds of work to be done in India, to understand and explain to elites how some forms of Catholic practice may well be underestimated and misunderstood.

2. For theologians, another way of plumbing the tradition

I suspect that many of you will agree that most of the most exciting work in theology – the work that separates theology from catechesis, has to do with plumbing the work of earlier theologians and the *magisterium* for fruitful insights into the mystery of God, God's relationship to us, and our intended relationship with one another. A good deal of that work is an act of recovery, but also it is about interpretation, and occasionally, if we are fortunate, really new insights. In general, though, it is a cumulative tradition of learning from those around us.

The laity, even in ways that may seem improbable at first, surely have insight in their belief and practice that will help enhance our understanding of the tradition and its next frontiers.

3. *Understanding yields pastoral insight*

I would propose that the purpose of studying lived Catholicism is not so much to discover what people are doing that might need gentle correction, but to discover what does work from a pastoral perspective, and why religious change happens as it does from time to time.

In the U.S., many of us have completely missed the rise of charismatic Catholicism in Latin America. Theologians and public commentators comment (and shape American Catholics' understanding of the Catholic world) at times as if Latin America were a contest between Opus Dei members and former Sandinistas in Base Christian Communities. Both groups are real, but they are not even the primary story anymore. The story is much more complex, but I would argue that the primary story is not only the rise of Pentecostal churches there, but the rise of charismatic Catholicism.[8]

The questions that arise for me, knowing this, are different than the ones usually on the American stage. I've started to tell audiences, "The church chose the poor, and the poor chose the Pentecostals." It's a bit too pithy, but it does embody a truth. *Why* did this happen? What were we missing along the way? What needs do the Pentecostals address? How does charismatic Catholicism meet real needs that others have ignored? While I have no doubt Pope Francis has thought of these questions, my sense is that many clergy in Latin America have been as slow to address it as the Americans have.

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[7] Orsi, *The Madonna of 115th Street* and Robert A. Orsi, *Thank You St . Jude: Women's Devotion to the Patron Saint of Helpless Causes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).

[8] See Edward L. Cleary, *The Rise of Charismatic Catholicism in Latin America,* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011).

4. *Finding life and richness in practice*

I have spent my career working to help faculty in the U.S. understand the richness of the Catholic intellectual tradition. Still, I worry at times that the faith as it is presented in scholarly settings really can be too intellectualized, represented in ways that drain it of its religious power. Though I am a great advocate of Vatican II, I worry that some of what happened at Vatican II and afterwards did not take account of that. Looking at ordinary practice, while I often clearly see a rationality behind it, also helps me capture the non-rational side of faith, and hold both sides in better balance.

A final word on culture

Catholics and Cultures seeks to understand how religious life is shaped by the cultural contexts where people live. By looking at culture, I don't mean to ignore structural and political forces that shape religious life, since I take it that each of these factors interacts with culture and shapes culture. I'm not sure whether lived religion sets us up well to be cultural critics. This is a way that I worry that lived religion can fall short. Those who study lived Catholicism are not there so much to judge others' cultures as to understand them. That understanding is an act of empathy. They may often end up being vulnerable to the charge of not being adequately critical.

We always have to acknowledge that culture embodies contradictions, multiple possibilities held in tension, and that when we try to explore culture through the study of lived religion we often run the risk of expressing culture as people wish it to be, rather than as it is. Still, I am convinced that if we listen enough, we will always begin to see the contradictions.

I do not take culture as static, or even determinative. We know that cultures shift in surprising ways over time, and that other aspects of culture prove surprisingly resilient. Most scholars have been rather inept at predicting how this will happen in the future, even if we are sometimes quick to offer explanations about why past change happened. What I propose, to borrow a phrase from Ammerman, is to look at some of the "ways in which particular cultures and histories provide the materials out of which everyday religiosities and secularities emerge."[9]

That culture "provides materials," rather than somehow determines our actions, is very helpful. It certainly at times a shaper, but is perhaps best understood, I think, as a "tool kit,"[10] Tamil Catholics and Ugandan Catholics each have different tool kits from which they can work, but they still have choices about what to make with their tools.

There is a challenge to pairing culture with the study of lived religion, and it boils down to agency. Most of the time we look at culture, I think, we are interested in finding out how a culture acts upon us in shaping our expectations, practices and beliefs. We certainly gain a great deal of insight from that. Lived religion, on the other hand, is often particularly helpful when it treats its subjects really as subjects – when it uncovers how they are active agents shaping a religious world, particularly in the areas of their own purview – home, family, etc., but even in the places that are the purview of others, as in sacramental or ecclesial contexts. I hope that the research we carry out helps to highlight some of that agency.

Conclusion

I've hesitated more than a few times while writing this, thinking that I may be suggesting to you ideas that have needed to be re-prioritized in an American context, but are taken for

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[9] Ammerman, *Everyday Religion*, 6.
[10] Ann Swidler, "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." *American Sociological Review*, 51:273-86.

granted in the Indian context. I know that lived Catholicism is not an entirely new concept in India, having seen, for example, Rowena Robinson's *Conversion, Continuity and Change: Lived Christianity in Southern Goa.*[11] I also realize that I am speaking in a country whose own Christian history has been radically impacted by some missionaries' (and perhaps Indian Christians') belief that diversity of practice is a problem to be solved. So please forgive me for any ways that I might seem to have been carrying coals to Newcastle.

I know too, that while Catholics and Cultures' purpose in co-sponsoring this conference is to learn more from a *lay* vantage point about the local cultural particularities and rich differences in practice in the three churches represent in India, there are also benefits to having speakers here who will talk about the lives and practice of clergy and religious. I'm very grateful for any occasion that it provides to bring together scholars and leaders from the Syro-Malankara, Syro-Malabar and Latin rite churches.

What also continues to excite me is the thought that this conference, as we disseminate its papers, will be an occasion for helping others in the rest of the world to learn about lived Catholicism of India, and about its very rich diversity across the cultures that make up India and the churches that comprise the Catholic church. I take hope in the aspiration that it will be of help to all of you and the people of God who you serve, helping you to understand this variety better, and to build on it as a strength.

[11] (New Delhi: Sage, 1994).

CULTURE AND FAITH
A THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

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Introduction

In this short paper, first, I try to clarify the terms of culture, religion, and faith. Then I move to their mutual relationship and show that they depend on each other for their existence and survival. I also summarize how early Church positively encountered various peoples and cultures with the result of the formation of many different types of Churches in their own socio-cultural settings. Indeed, Colonial Christianity was the great exception. Finally, I raise certain issues and questions for discussion. I conclude with a critical question on the cultural paradox of Indian Churches.

1. Culture

Recent times witness to a profusion of literature and researches on Culture and Religion and their complex relationship. It is generally agreed that cultures need religion for their depth, renewal and survival and religions depend on cultures for their concrete historical existence and continuity. Culture and religion depend on each other. Today there is a lot of talk about culture. Cultural discourses, cultural analysis and cross-cultural studies have emerged as a very significant area in philosophy, literature and theology. There are hundreds of definitions and descriptions on culture from the part of various human sciences, such as, anthropology, ethnology, sociology, philosophy, phenomenology and so on. I don't want to refer to those definitions.

I would like to mention two different approaches to culture: The first approach focuses on the external cultural world of human creations, created by humans, analyses, classifies, and studies them. According to it, "Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as member of a society".[1] Here the focus is on the external cultural world, the products of human creations and activities and their manifestations. One often compares and contrasts the different cultural worlds and classifies them, some as superior and others as inferior or 'not developed' etc. It is a notion of culture as the deposit or accumulation of knowledge or meaning produced by society, or as a body of beliefs and values shared by all members of a group or religious community or nation. But today we are aware that no culture can be compared to another culture or classify them as 'inferior' or 'superior'.

The second approach to culture comes mainly from the contemporary post-modernist thought. This approach has been highlighted by linguistic philosophy. The linguistic signs mediate to us not merely the external world, but more especially our own self to ourselves. Culture is not merely the knowledge accumulated from the external world, but it is the dynamic process by

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[1] Edward Burnette Tylor, *Primitive Culture,* 1871, p. 21.

which meaning is continuously created or constructed by human beings and thus their own identities. Thus culture is the very matrix of human life. The post-modernistic understanding of culture has both problems as well as opportunities to theology. It questions the epistemological and theological 'realism'. However, its emphasis on the local culture and local narratives over against meta-narratives, social and cultural pluralism, multiple identities and smaller group identities rather than unified identity, popular and hybrid cultures etc seem to be important for our liturgical and faith celebrations.

2. Religion and Faith

Human person is said to be *homo religiosus*. The prediction of the nineteenth century philosophers of the Positivistic School that modern science will replace religion and the 'scientific man' will outgrow his/her "religious" needs has been proved to be false today by all empirical evidence. On the contrary, what we see today is the 'coming back' or return of religion and the renaissance and revival in all world religions, and new religious movements are born almost every day especially in the most scientifically and technologically advanced nations. Religion may be understood and defined in several ways. It is the human 'sense of the sacred', the aspiration for 'transcendence', the belief in a 'Supreme Being', experience of a *mysterium tremendum*, experience of 'Absolute Dependence' etc. etc. The 'religious experience' of humankind assumed visible and institutional expressions in the different historical religions, often initiated by some sages, gurus and prophets. Visible religions are generally constituted by three basic elements, creed, code and cult. All the World Religions were born in particular historical and socio-cultural milieu and conditioned by them, though they manifested a universal orientation. When they cross their geographical and cultural borders and meet other peoples and cultures, spontaneously they tend to become diversified and within them several denominations emerge.

The invisible spiritual core of every religion may be called 'faith'. Faith is a universal human phenomenon. Every human person has some sort of faith, whether he/she is aware of it or not. Human person is a free and spiritual being who realizes himself/herself by one's own decisions and actions in history. It is human experience that no finite object can really or ultimately satisfy human quest. In every decision and action every human person in the quest for final self-realization or ultimate salvation tends to the infinite and transcendent, whatever way he/she may conceive it. This transcendental object or supreme value or ultimate meaning to which a person clings to and which guides and inspires one's whole life and action, and for which he/she has an absolute commitment, can be called "faith".

The Christian faith is "faith in Jesus Christ" that in him God has fully manifested and spoken definitively in history. In Jesus not only God revealed himself, but also in him God has revealed what a human person and humanity really is. According to Christianity, in Jesus God revealed his plan of human salvation and the way to establish the "Kingdom of God", i.e. liberation here on earth and eternal salvation hereafter. Christian faith is the total response and commitment of the whole person to God as revealed in Jesus Christ. It is not merely the intellectual acceptance of some truths revealed by God or taught by Christ. All the same, faith has its rational, cognitive, ethical, mystical and emotional and other elements, which are expressed in various ways, in creeds, beliefs, dogmas, rites and rituals, moral behavior and codes of conduct etc.

3. Relation between Culture and Faith

What are the main theological approaches to culture, or approaches on the relationship between faith and culture? Richard Niebuhr distinguished and identified five typically different

approaches to the relationship between Christ and culture: (1) Christ against culture, (2) Christ of culture, (3) Christ above culture, (4) Christ and culture in paradox, (5) Christ the transformer of culture. He tried to show how these five approaches are exemplified in the various periods of the history of Christianity.[2] A turning away from the world and its culture (first approach) was the tendency of the Apocalyptic Christianity of the early period. A totally this-worldly Christianity or secularized Christianity (second approach) is seen in the trends of 'Liberal Christianity' or 'Culture Protestantism'. The third approach tries to combine the Gospel/faith with the good elements of culture. It is the attempt for a synthesis, as done by the Greek Fathers and the Scholastic theologians. According to the fourth approach, as God is totally the Other, no perfect synthesis is possible between Gospel and culture which is a human creation. They can be held together only in paradox. According to Niebuhr, this tendency is seen in classical Protestantism. The fifth approach, Christ (Gospel) the transformer of culture, is the general approach of mainline Christianity, which calls for change of human history and culture by Christ/Gospel. Of course, we know that these different approaches often existed side by side and in different combinations in the history of the Church and in the traditional missionary approaches. My purpose here is not to elaborate the views of Niebuhr. I try to use this typology in outlining the relationship between culture and faith.

During the Colonial period, Western Christianity, both Catholic and Protestant, took a very negative approach towards other cultures and religions in their encounter and conquest of the people of Asia, Africa and South America. They forcefully imposed upon these continents their own types of Christianity with their western dominant culture. In Goa all the Hindu temples were destroyed by the Portuguese authorities in 1540, and public celebrations of Hindu rites and festivals were banned under the pain of life-sentence. In 1684 the Viceroy of Goa issued a decree banning the natives to use their language and to learn Portuguese. The Synod of Diamper in Kerala suppressed many of the local customs of the St Thomas Christians. The Chinese local rites like ceremonial homage to ancestors, using Chinese words with reference to God, change in marriage ritual adapted to their culture etc were condemned by Pope Clement XI in 1704.[3] On the other hand, in modern times, we have witnessed in the West a submission to the unhealthy trends in Western culture, trends of a completely secular Christianity, a mere Christian humanism and hedonism which compromised some of the basic tenets of the Gospel. Denial of Transcendence and the craving for a purely earthly paradise on earth, complete submission to consumerism and extreme individualism without any spirit of self-sacrifice and readiness to take up the cross of Christ is a betrayal of Christian faith.

We have to affirm both culture and faith, and they are related. Faith informs, inspires and orientates culture. Culture embodies faith, concretizes faith. One needs the other. Faith without culture will remain vague and abstract. Culture without the inner depth of faith will not survive, will not have its soul and will vanish in the long run. Although the human person and the culture, he creates, are part of God's creation, culture is a human creation and it shares human sinfulness and weakness. Christian faith in its encounter with culture has a task of transforming it with the supreme values of love, freedom, justice, equality, peace, unity and harmony. All cultures have to remain open to other cultures, and they have to initiate a process of give and take, a process of unending osmosis. Only by this ongoing and continuous process of relationality, communion among all peoples can be created.

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[2] H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture,* 1956.

[3] Joseph Prasad Pinto, *Inculturation through Basic Communities* Bangalore: ATC, 1985, pp. 58-59.,

4. Early Church's Encounter with Other Cultures

Christianity has a very rich experience of positively interacting with cultures with the result of a wide variety of Churches existing today. New Testament period was one of intense missionary activity and meeting with other cultures. The apostles, evangelists and the early Christians were fully aware that the Gospel message was for all peoples and cultures and therefore they interpreted and communicated it differently in different socio-cultural settings and the people responded to it differently, and the result was a variety of Christian communities and the rich diversity of New Testament literature itself.

Christianity gradually but successfully detached itself from Judaism (by Council of Jerusalem, as seen in Acts 15) and Hebrew culture and inserted itself into the life of other peoples and cultures. In the first century itself it spread form Palestine to the surrounding Mediterranean world - Asia Minor, Antioch, Greece, Alexandria, Rome, Syria and to some distant lands like India. Antioch, Alexandria and Rome gradually emerged as the great Christian centers. From Antioch Christianity spread to Edessa and to the whole of Persia where we find a flourishing Syrian Church in the fourth century. From Alexandria Christianity spread to Egypt, Ethiopia and whole of North Africa where we find very powerful Churches in the third and fourth centuries. From Rome Christianity reached to the different parts of Gaul, Spain and in the neighboring regions in the second and third centuries. It went to Great Britain and Ireland during the fifth century. Form Asia Minor (Cappadocia) Christianity came to Armenia already in the third century. Under the patronage of Rome, most of the Germanic tribes of central and western Europe were converted during the 5th, 6th and 7th centuries. In the fourth century, Constantinople was founded as the Second Rome and gradually it emerged as a great Christian centre, the capital of the Christian East and from there, Christianity in its Orthodox type was taken to all over the Eastern Europe including Russia during 8th, 9th and 10th centuries with a wide variety of Churches.

This period in general witnesses to the emergence of different individual/local Churches, which were fully in tune with the cultural surroundings. The Christian worship, its prayers, sacraments, liturgy, devotions, festivals and other external elements came from various cultures, although they were transformed by giving them new meanings.[4] Liturgy of the Word , the style of the Eucharistic prayers, the canonical hours, fasts, feasts like Passover and Pentecost etc, and above all the whole of the 'Old Testament' heritage came from Jewish cultural heritage. Exorcisms, imposition of hands, anointing, incense, candles, prostrations, kissing the altar, facing the East (from the non-Christian 'Sun-cult') , litanies, "Sacramentum," "Consecratio", liturgical dress, Epiphany (visit of the emperor), Nativity (Natalis- birth of Sun God in Rome), feast days of martyrs and saints and the veneration of their relics, Churches in the style of 'Basilicas'(Roman Courts) etc, have their origins in the pre-Christian Greco-Roman culture. Wherever the Church went, all the good things in the local culture were assumed and transformed. By the end of this period we see the clear emergence and consolidation of the different liturgical Families or Rites - Antiochaean, Alexandrian, Byzantine, Chaldean, Armenian, Roman and their different branches. They are the epitome and the living testimony of a total inculturation of the early Churches.

During this period the Christian communities without any scruple continued the social customs of the place and culture unless they were conspicuously sinful, inhuman or unchristian. The epistle to Diognetus, written by an anonymous Christian writer in the second century, states: "The Christians do not set themselves apart from other men either by their vocabulary or their language

[4] See, Julian Saldana, *Inculturation,* Bombay: St. Paul Publication, 1987, pp. 25 – 30.

or their clothes; they conform to local usage as regards food and way of life".[5] Christians retained their names from the place and culture, and today's so-called "Christian names" are from the pre-Christian cultures and many of them were the names of pagan gods and goddesses.

In social and cultural customs the St.Thomas Christians of Kerala were not different from their Hindu neighbors. They continued the customs of wearing a tuft of hair on the head, boring lobes of ears and wearing *Kadukkan*, tying of *Thali* or *Minnu* as central to the marriage ritual, *Jatakarma*, rituals at death as those of Hindus, common festivals of *Onam* and *Vishu* giving *Prasada* in the Church, building of Churches like Hindu temples etc. Here it may be remembered that Pope Gregory the Great in 601 wrote to Augustine of Canterbury and his monks, who were sent to evangelize Britain, that they should not destroy the pagan temples, but convert them for Christian worship and even not to stop the sacrifices of oxen as it could be done in honor of the true God and for their food in a spirit of thanksgiving.[6]

In theological thinking, this period, especially the Patristic period, represents a high level of inculturation in dialogue with Greco-Roman intellectual world. The so-called Christian theologies of Trinity, Christology, Grace and so on were built upon the philosophical foundations of the Greek thought both Aristotelian and Platonic. The Logos philosophy of the Greeks became the Christian theology of Logos. The voluminous and rich patristic writings and the works of the great Ecumenical Councils of the fourth and fifth centuries are a perennial witness to this inculturated theology of the early centuries. In fact, the development of Christian dogma was the result of this theological inculturation.

The ministerial and organizational structures of the Church too came from the structures of the society of its times. Presbyters (Elders) of the Jewish synagogue communities and "episcopoi" of the Greek civil administration became the sacred ministers of the Church. The administrative divisions of the Church into Dioceses, Provinces, Parishes and primatial authoritative structures, such as, Metropolitans, Patriarchs etc, and the system of Provincial Synods and Ecumenical Councils and so on were modeled after the Roman political administrative system.

While concluding the brief review of this dialogue between faith and culture in Christianity, we must underline that everything in cultures was not assumed or accepted in the name of inculturation. There was constant caution and vigilance that the identity of the Christian faith was not lost or compromised. Idolatry, divination and many superstitions of the pagans and unethical practices like gladiatorial combats were all outright condemned and rejected. Above all, the central faith of Christianity that Jesus Christ is "fully God and fully man" was protected at all costs fighting tooth and nail against numerous heresies like Gnosticism, Ebionitism, Arianism, Manichaeanism and so on. Finally we must also admit that some of the things assumed from other cultures, in fact, led to a certain decadence and distortions in the Church which still negatively affect the Church very much. The Jewish sacerdotalism and ritualism, the Roman legalism, the Greek and Gnostic dualism, the imperial, monarchical papacy and episcopacy copied from the Roman political model, the Manichaean allergy to matter and sex etc, are still very much alive in the Church suffocating its authentic spirit.

5. Some Issues and Questions

Before concluding my paper, I would like just to mention some issues and questions related to the topic of our symposium:

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[5] Quoted in Julian Saldana, *op.cit.*, p. 28.
[6] J. Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith,* Bangalore: TPI, 1973, pp. 283 – 89.

i. In the situation of three Catholic Individual Churches in India existing side by side, there is tremendous need of better mutual communication, catechesis and inter-ritual Eucharistic celebrations for better mutual understanding and communion. How can we encourage and promote such inter-ritual concelebrations?

ii. In the context of Globalization and cross-cultural exposures, transformations and mutations are taking place rapidly in all cultures and it demands relevant changes in all liturgies and rites. Identity shall not be understood as static and unchangeable, but as a dynamic process of growth and creative fidelity by healthy inter-relationship and multiple belongingness.

iii. How do we rediscover, re-articulate and re-live our Christian faith and identity in the midst of the dynamic cultural diversity of India? Our Christian faith will become alive and dynamic only when it positively relates with the diverse cultures of people, especially those of the marginalized, Dalits and Tribals. It calls for flexibility, openness, improvisation and diversification in the liturgy of each Rite as called by local cultures. This demands legitimate autonomy and freedom for all Individual Churches for creative liturgies and new missionary praxis.

iv. In the ecumenical context of India the Catholic Churches should initiate serious and sincere efforts to move towards intercommunion with all the Oriental Orthodox Churches in India with whom we do not have any outstanding serious doctrinal issue except the question of Papal Primacy. Papal Primacy is today exercised in a different way in the Oriental Catholic Churches when compared to its exercise in the Latin Churches. This may be, *mutatis mutandis,* acceptable to the Oriental Orthodox Churches. Communion between the Catholic Churches and the Oriental Orthodox Churches will give a strong stimulus to further communion with the other Churches in India.

v. Christian faith has a task of transforming all cultures, national as well as local. Christianity has been existing in this country since two millennia. What are its major contributions in India towards cultural transformation in the different areas, social, political, economic, religious, cultural, educational etc.?

Conclusion

As I conclude this short paper on Culture and Faith, as a responsible Indian Christian theologian, let me raise a critical question to the three Catholic Rites and to this Workshop: The three Catholic Rites/Individual Churches in India have in fact no deep 'Indian' cultural roots. All the three Rites as they are today reached India from outside at different periods of history, Chaldean Rite from Persia, Antiochean Rite from Antioch, Latin Rite from the Western Roman Church. All of them more or less remained the same, resisting all changes and maintaining their historical identities. All the efforts, attempts and movements to "Indianize" them by individuals and groups were suppressed by the ecclesiastical authorities at different times. The ancient Church of St Thomas in India rooted in the social and cultural ethos of Malabar lost its authentic historical identity during the Chaldean and Latin periods. The renewal of the Syro-Malabar liturgy made after Vatican II was only an attempt to partially restore the ancient Chaldean liturgy, and not an attempt to rediscover the Tradition of St Thomas Christians.

Therefore, when this scholarly workshop investigates the cultural elements and roots of the liturgies and devotions of these three Individual Churches, it has to go deeper into the social, religio-cultural and historical roots of these three Rites. We have to distinguish clearly the

different cultural layers of the three Rites, such as, Dravidian cultural elements of ancient South India, elements from St Thomas Tradition, Jewish social and cultural elements of Palestine, Greco-Roman cultural elements, Syrian, Chaldean and Antiochean cultural elements, Western Roman/Latin cultural elements, and various Indian cultural elements. Along with this, we have also to deliberate on the methodology to be used to distinguish the various layers of these cultural elements. Do we use the tool of any scientific methodology, such as, historical critical method, or methods of cultural analysis, or methods for textual and ritual studies or methods of cross-cultural studies etc.? I hope that the organizers of this symposium have a plan and clarity on the methodology of this Workshop and they will provide us the necessary guidelines. Thank you.

LIVED CATHOLICISM AND THE PROBLEM OF CULTURE

Mathew N. Schmalz

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I am very grateful to be here with all of you today. I would especially like to thank Shaji and everyone at Dharmaram for being so welcoming to all of us and giving us the opportunity to talk about important issues surrounding the three Catholic rites in India and how they reflect the richness and diversity of Catholicism as it is lived by Indians themselves.

It is the issue of culture that I would like to speak about in this talk. How culture is understood and defined. It is an important question because many of the papers presented at this workshop will inevitably confront this question in one way or another. What do we mean when we talk about culture? Is there a specifically Catholic way of talking about culture and if so how does that relate to anthropological understandings of culture? Most fundamentally, what can we learn about lived Catholicism

Culture has been a problem for Catholicism. We can see this most acutely in India. First, there is legacy of colonialism, in which certain customs associated with European Catholicism—like eating meat or drinking wine—deeply offended Indian sensibility. Second, there is the legacy and continuing reality of caste and how different caste cultures shape and reshape Catholic religious expression. For example, Roberto DeNobili argued against European influence precisely by trying to insert himself and Catholicism into Brahmanical hierarchy by proclaiming the Bible as the fifth flawless Veda and donning the ochre robe of the samnyasi. Third, culture is linked to being cultured in an elitist and explicitly evaluative context. Indeed, the English word culture derives from discussions of what it was to be a cultured person. Likewise, the Hindi term for culture, Samskriti, itself refers refinement. To be cultured then, is to belong to a particular demarcated group that is distinguished by its comparison to other groups.

I would like to explore these issues in relation to the various description and implied notions of culture of a single act that is prominent among Dalit Catholics of the Roman Rite in North India.

This act is footwashing as depicted here [SHOW SLIDE].

This woman is named Victoria and she and her husband Phillip live in a small village abutting a diocesan Catholic mission in Eastern Uttar Pradesh, near the Ganges river that divides Uttar Pradesh from Bihar.

Victoria was baptized Catholic when her father converted to Catholicism and became a catechist, when Capuchin missionaries came to the district in the late 1940s and remained through the 1950s.

Victoria and her husband both work at the mission's Hindi medium school. But perhaps Victoria is most well know for her brave, though ultimately unsuccessful candidacy for Block Pramukh

back in the 1990s. During that campaign her identity as a Catholic Christian became an issue since as we all know, Dalit Christians are denied reserved positions and other legal remedies available to other scheduled castes. For this reason, Victoria, Philip and other Dalit Catholics in the village maintain a dual identity—they are Dalit in the eyes of the law and Catholic Christians in the eyes of the Church.

This dual identity gives Dalit Catholics a kind of tactical mobility when it comes to dealing with the surrounding culture. On one hand, they reject traditionally occupations such as tanning and midwifery, which marked them as belonging to scheduled castes. On the other hand, divination and healing—often called under the collective rubric of ojaiti---are practiced.

Footwashing is one of those practices that has been retained. Usually, when a priest—or other honored male guest—arrives at a house. The wife of the family brings out a jug of water and a stainless steel plate.

The guest takes off his sandals or slippers and the woman in the family pours water over the feet, cleans the dirt away, and then massages the lower leg of the guest, before discarding the water by throwing it outside of the living compound.

The point is, however, that there are a variety of ways to interpret this seemingly simple act. And those interpretations imply differing understandings of culture—or more specifically, how culture is constructed.

I remember when my feet were washed for the first time. I was a young graduate student and I felt that it was inappropriate for me to present myself in such a way. But when Victoria washed my feet she simply assured me, oh you're tired and have come a long way.

While I smiled, I did not necessarily think that Victoria's initial explanation somehow was exhausted what the practice meant or could mean.

But in some ways, Victoria's initial explanation was attempting to bridge a cultural divide. She was talking in terms of what she understood to be universal human needs: for refreshment for cleanliness, and was approaching me in that way. In this sense she was emphasizing how our own physicality or own materiality is something that bonds us together as human beings. In this sense, culture is built upon basic human material needs—those needs might vary from location to location, but there are also basic, irreducible needs that everyone has by virtue of being human.

By contrast, the priest beside me, gave another interpretation. This was an act that established the Christian identity of this relatively young Catholic community. After all, footwashing is one act that Christ did for his apostles and with the admonition, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. [15] For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you."

In this view, culture has a particular spiritual quality as the locus of certain values. Hence, there is a Hindu culture, a Muslim culture and a Christian culture. Culture not only marks specific kinds of values, but it expresses an identity and identity that is distinguished and distinguishable from that of others. Culture then becomes a kind of theological construct in which the spirit of a particular people, a particular religious group finds expression.

But there are other ways to understand the act of footwashing, ways that rely more upon anthropological understandings of human expression. It is in the Gospel of John that records Christ's admonition to his disciples to wash each other's feet. Jesus goes on to say "Most

assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him."

Looking at footwashing, what we see is an expression of servitude, or hierarchy, of culture as a network of power relations. Most Dalit Catholics in Victoria's village were landless laborers. When the landowners would come to inspect the fields, the landowners would expect their feet to be washed. Now this practice has been transferred—transferred to a Catholic context that also is shaped by a variety of hierarchies. The first hierarchical aspect comes in the distinction between priests and laity. The second hierarchical aspect comes in how gender distinctions are ordered. In both cases, what is revealed is how the Catholic church has inserted itself into a particular cultural context and has displaced the original patron—the landowners—with a patronage system of its own. The mission provides employment for Catholics, it intervenes with local political leaders. In times past, it also distributed food and clothes. Given this background, we could say that a hierarchical relationship of patronage is affirmed through such acts. The language draws upon a particularly Indian idiom, which is transactional. Water becomes the vehicle for a transmission of substances—the Dalits not just symbolically, but actively take the pollution of the priests on themselves. In articulating, or accepting that status, they in turn receive protection and sustenance that is contingent upon their subordinate status. Culture thus is power and cultural expression are best understood as veiled articulations of power that replicate social distinctions and categories.

This is the problem of culture when it comes to lived Catholicism—what vision of culture is operative, what do we mean when we say that Indian Catholicism is Indian. The difficulty is compounded by the implicit valuations of certain kind of cultural expressions.

For example, the Dalits Catholics in this part of Uttar Pradesh attend the mission's Hindi medium school. The diocese does maintain English medium schools, but only the wealthy in cities have access to them. Dalit children are often trained in North Indian classical dance. The whole impetus behind this seems to be to "inculturate" Dalit Catholics in a very specific way—make them "good North Indians" in other words. There thus is an implicit valuation of what existing Dalit culture is like and what Dalits are capable of—for example, they can only learn Hindi and not English.

When culture becomes equated with civilization, or with some sort of essential spirit, we run the risk of overlooking the lived reality of those who lives we seek to understand. When it comes to footwashing, romantic Christian notions of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples, come up against the hard realities of the material context in which Dalit Christians live. Catholicism does not bring with it some sort of separate cultural sensibilities. Instead, Catholicism exists as something that can be contextually deployed on a variety of different registers. For example, it makes sense that Dalit Catholics give multiple explanations for footwashing, after all they themselves are trapped within an exceedingly complex network of relationships that they need to negotiate. Their relationship with me was one such relationship, their relationship with priests is another such relationship, and their relationship with the landowners is yet another such relationship. What is most helpful, then, is moving away from culture broadly understood, and looking at particular expressions of agency within material contexts. Culture is something that is created in and through human effort, and talking about culture in terms of abstract, essentialized characterizations, such as Indian or Catholic often does a kind of violence to the collective work of actual human beings, like Victoria, who take an act full of cultural symbolism and make it work in different registers of value and power.

INDIAN CULTURES, INCULTURATION AND THREE INDIVIDUAL CHURCHES IN INDIA

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India is a mosaic of cultures and the mutual interaction among these cultures, and their vibrant (sometimes uncomfortable) coexistence has been part of the Indian history. At the outset, we may note that there are different definitions for culture. The Second Vatican Council, in its pastoral constitution GS, gives a whole chapter – "The proper development of Culture" (II part, II chap.) on the topic. They seem to maintain the "classic" and "modern" notions of culture.[1] Classic culture "refers to all those things which go to the refining and developing of man's diverse mental and physical endowments" (GS 53). Culture here could be understood as those elements symbolizing the highest achievements in art, music, literature, and technology in a society. The council further clarifies the modern concept of culture: "Culture necessarily has historical and social overtones, and the word "culture' often carries with it sociological and ethnological connotations; in this sense one can speak about a plurality of cultures". This is evidently what we mean by culture in the sociological and anthropological sense.

Any discussion of culture in the context of the churches in India necessitates a delineation of the term 'Rite'. 'Rite' is used both in the senses as church and as the cultural and historical expression of the patrimony of each church. In this paper, we use the term mostly in the first sense. The Catholic Church is a communion of 23 churches and increasingly the equal rank and responsibilities of the churches have been stressed in the post-conciliar times. The Council has clearly acknowledged the place of pluriformity of the different churches in the Catholic communion. "The Holy Catholic Church, which is the Mystical Body of Christ, is made up of the faithful who are organically united in the Holy Spirit by the same faith, the same sacraments and the same government. They combine into different groups, which are held together by their hierarchy and so form Particular Churches or Rites" (OE 2). LG 23 acknowledges that these different churches while they safeguard the unity of faith and the unique divine structure of the

1 R. Schreiter, Culture and Inculturation in the Church, *New Theology Review*, (Feb 2005), 17-26

Universal Church, have their own discipline, enjoy their own liturgical usage and inherit a theological and spiritual patrimony. The canon law and the papal documents have invariably upheld this idea. Like the charisms of the different religious congregations, each church has got a charism with regard to its liturgy, theology, spirituality and discipline.[2] CCEO defines Individual rite as "the liturgical, theological, spiritual and disciplinary patrimony, culture and circumstances of history of a distinct people, by which its own manner of living the faith is manifested in each Church sui juris".

The church has underlined that it must breathe with two lungs, eastern and western. The letter of Congregation of catholic education in 1987 says that the theologian through such mutual interaction will enrich himself from the experience of others but will return to his own roots. The oriental heritage belongs to the catholic patrimony and it is the mutual benefit of all to learn from the cultural expression of the faith of the different churches both eastern and western.[3]

The three churches of India have to engage with the world that surrounds them. "At all times, the Church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the gospel" (GS 4). Council's call for reading the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the gospel has laid the foundation for what was called a decade later "Inculturation".[4] Inculturation is much more than a comfortable acceptance of some cultural symbols, or an artificial, sometimes insensitive adoption of the some particular[s] features of a particular culture.

Inculturation, Interculturality, and a dialoguing process

Inculturation implies an ongoing transformation of both a local church and the local culture to which it seeks to relate.[5] In his work *Truth and Toleration* Joseph Ratzinger has stated that the encounter between the Church and other cultures is a process of transformation. According to him, it is like 'God's action of breaking into the human world and in response to this man's breaking out toward God'. [6] He argues that instead of the term "inculturation", a better term would be "interculturality".

For "inculturation" presupposes that, as it were, a culturally naked faith is transferred into a culture that is indifferent from the religious point of view, so that two agents that were hitherto alien to each other meet and now engage in a synthesis together. But this description is first of all artificial and unreal, because there is no such thing as a culture-free faith and because – outside of modern technical civilization – there is no such thing as religion-free culture. .... Only if it is true that all cultures are potentially universal and have an inner capacity to be open to others can interculturality lead to new and fruitful forms.[7]

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[2] A. Nariculam, *Church and Liturgy, Towards an Understanding of Catholic Worship*, Alwaye: St Thomas Academy for Research, 2014, p. 21.
[3] A. Nariculam, *Church and Liturgy,* 21-22.
[4] R. Schreiter, Culture and Inculturation, p.19
[5] PULIKKAN, P and COLLINS, P. (eds.), *The Church and Culture in India, Inculturation: Theory and Praxis*, Delhi: ISPCK, 2010, *Introduction* by P. Pulikkan and P. Collins, pp. xiii-xx.
[6] J. Ratzinger, *Truth and Toleration: Christian Belief and World Religions*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004, p. 199.
[7] J. Ratzinger, *Truth and Toleration* p. 64.

Thus he goes on to argue that 'mere pluralism of religions' needs to be transformed into a much more dynamic 'plurality'.[8] This notion of interculturality and the dialoguing nature of the culture are also underlined by the theologians today. For example, George Newlands in *The Transformative Imagination* argues that there is a need to move beyond multiculturalism and its inherent relativism to a level of 'participation, reciprocity and dialogue' which represents a new conceptuality of intercultural theology.[9] Raimondo Panikkar[10] thinks that inculturation is a form of a true encounter between different religious traditions, different cultural perspectives and practices. This is based on the recognition that each human person is created in the image and likeness of God, and by extension that each human culture is potentially a bearer of the divine. In this encounter, cultures and the persons living in these cultures are transformed. Inter-religious dialogue and encounter, underlining the processes of inculturation facilitates the emergence of new human community, which is the work of grace, as well as the work of human person who responds to that grace. Michael Amaladoss[11] also thinks that a real inculturation of the Good News would result in a community of love and sharing, which facilitates the reconciling and re-uniting all things in God.

A greater Purpose of interculturality: Theosis

From this perspective, the task and processes of inculturation are neither peripheral nor optional for the Church. The inter-relationship of Christ, Gospel and Church to culture is central to the realization of *God's Kingdom* in the world, the realization of the *missio dei*. The full realization of culture of the Reign or Kingdom of God, can be regarded as participation in the communion of the Trinity, - the Fathers of the Eastern churches call it deification or *Theosis*.[12] This understanding of the destiny of the human person and the human cultures into deification –is by no means simply restricted to Eastern Orthodoxy. Participation in the divine nature is a key theme in the writings not only of Maximos the Confessor,[13] but also of Thomas Aquinas[14] and Martin Luther.[15]

Thus, inculturation could be understood in terms of its transforming or transfiguring[16] effects for human cultures, inter-religious understanding and encounter, and thus human community; it may also widely understood as God creating and redeeming the cosmos (*Missio dei*), which may be designated in terms of *Theosis*. In other words, Christian vision of culture and inculturation is that Christ taking form in culture and in that process transforming it. This Christomorphic understanding of inculturation asks us for discernment of the various elements of different cultures and a realistic evaluation of the inherent good of these cultures.

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[8] J. Ratzinger, *Truth and Toleration* p. 83.

[9] G. Newlands, *The Transformative Imagination: Rethinking Intercultural theology*, Aldershot: Aschgate, 2004, p. 12. As Bede Griffiths argues that dialogue and inculturation would result in a new human community (*sangha*) in which justice, sharing, love and peace are its marks. *Introduction* by P. Pulikkan and P. Collins, xv.

[10] R. Panikkar, *The Unknown Christ of Hinduism*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1964, 1981.

[11] M. Amaladoss, *Beyond Inculturation: Can the Many be One?* Delhi: Vidyajyoti Education and Welfare Society/ISPCK, 1998.

[12] See 2 Peter 1.3-4.

[13] E.g. Maximos the Confessor, *Mystagogia*, MPG 24: 704D – 705A. *Introduction* by P. Pulikkan and P. Collins, xv.

[14] E.g. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II. Qu. 62 –1 resp.

[15] E.g. Martin Luther, *Dictata super psalterium*, 1513-1515.

[16] Icons of the Transfiguration of Christ are often seen as referring to the divinization of human nature in Eastern Orthodox Tradition.

The duty of the three churches

It is true that the concept of inculturation does evolve according to the changing cultural and social contexts. The nature of what constitutes culture also continues to change. [17] However, amidst all the cultural shifts and changes, it is the duty of each sui juris church in India to seek a genuine Theosis, a transformation of the human environment by being intercultural, being open to the others. For this each church needs to read the signs of the times. Michael Amaladoss [18] feels that in this reading of the signs of the times, the churches need to hear the voice of the poor, place trust in local communities and in the *sensus fidelium*.

To develop our discussion further, the following points shall also be noted.

i. Each church has to keep its identity; especially in the elements that distinguish the churches from one another: liturgy, theology, spirituality and canon law.

ii. Churches have to jointly witness and promote this reading of the signs of times together, for a better appreciation of the society, different cultural elements, environment, religious heritage of India etc., putting the human person in the centre.

iii. A meaningful symbiosis between the specific Latin/ Syro Malabar/ Syro Malankara cultural identity (received from each one's liturgy, theology, spirituality and canon law) and what is outside of them in the Indian society must be encouraged. A mutual fecundation of these cultural elements and a creative discernment of the same will facilitate a better encounter of gospel and culture in India.

iv. Accordingly, from this encounter, churches will also enrich themselves with regard to their liturgy, theology, spirituality and canon law.

[17] R. Schreiter, Culture and Inculturation, 22.
[18] M. M. Amaldoss, *Beyond Inculturation: Can the Many be One?* Delhi: Vidyajyoti Education and Welfare Society/ISPCK, 1998.

CATHOLIC CHURCHES IN INDIA

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Introduction

The greatest contribution of Second Vatican Council in the field of ecclesiology is the new understanding of Church as communion of churches. Catholic Church is the communion of 23 *sui juris* or individual churches. The universal Church finds its fuller expression in the individual churches. They are historically, liturgically and administratively different. India is blessed with the active presence of three individual churches, i.e. Syro-Malabar, Syro-Malankara and Latin churches. I shall briefly explain the origin and growth of these three churches and the challenges they face today.

The Syro-Malabar Church

St Thomas Christians trace their origin back to Apostle Thomas and traditionally they believe that their forefathers received the Christian faith through the preaching of Apostle Thomas who following the trade routes, landed at Kodungallur,(Cranganore, Muziris, Muchiris), an important port in the West Coast of India in 52 . We do not have a detailed history of the Christian presence in the early centuries except a few testimonies. However, the oral tradition which is handed over from generation to generation, is very vibrant and lively and is associated with places, families and celebrations.

St Thomas Christians came into relations with the Persian Church or the East Syrian Church. This relationship made the St Thomas Christians share the liturgical, spiritual and other ecclesiastical traditions of the East Syrian Church. At the same time these Indian Christians developed an identity and individuality of their own in church administration and socio-cultural and ascetic – spiritual life. There are authors who claim that the East Syrian relationship was the result of the Persian migration in 345 C.E. under the leadership of an enterprising merchant t by name Thomas of Cana together with 72 families and a bishop. The descendents of Thomas of Cana are an ethnic, endogamous community and are popularly known as *Southists* or *Thekkumbhaghar* and the descendents of Apostle Thomas are called *Northists* or *Vadakkumbhaghar.*

The head of the St Thomas Christians had the title *'The Metropolitan and Gate of All India'.* The Archbishops who were coming from Persia were the spiritual leaders of the community. However, the effective administration of the Church was in the hands of the Archdeacon, who was a native priest, traditionally from the Pakalomatam family. He was known as the *Jathikkukarthavian*, the head of the community and his title was the Archdeacon of All India. From these titles of the Archbishop and the Archdeacon, we presume that although the St Thomas Christians had their strong habitation in Malabar, a narrow strip of land from Kanyakumari in the South and Gokarnam in the North, these Christians spread throughout India. The Archdeacon carried out the administration through general, regional and local church Assemblies called *yogams*. Their socio-cultural life was fully indigenous and their worship was indianised. The total of their Christian life may be summarised in the famous expression: the '*Law of Thomas'* or '*Thomayude Margam'* or ' *Mar Thoma Margam'*.

With the arrival of the Western missionaries, the Christians came into contact with the Western world. The first relationship of the native Christians with the Western missionaries was very cordial and slowly the Western missionaries started observing differences in liturgical, ecclesial and social practices. The presence of the Persian bishops, although recognised by the Pope, further deteriorated the relationship. To Romanise the Indian Church Dom Alexis Menezez, the Archbishop of Goa, convened the Synod of Udayamperur in June 1599 and the St Thomas Christians were brought under the *Padroado* jurisdiction, cutting off all relations with the Persian Church. Francis Ros, S.J. was appointed as the Archbishop.

Dissatisfied with the loss of their individuality and identity, the St Thomas Christians continued their efforts to obtain bishops who knew Syriac language. Finally there arrived Archbishop Atallaha and Archdecaon Thomas Parampil made elaborate arrangements to receive him. However, ignoring the repeated requests of the leaders of the St Thomas Christians, Archbishop Francis Garcia, S.J. ordered Atallaha to be taken to Goa. The frustrated Christians under the leadership of Archdeacon Thomas Parampil took an oath by saying that they no longer obey the Jesuits. This is known in history as the Coonan Cross Oath which took place at Mattanchery on 3 January 1653. Eventually this led to a division in the community and those who accepted the Antiochian obedience came to be known as Jacobites or *Puthenkuttukar*. Those who remained faithful to the Roman obedience are known as *Pazhayakuttukar* or the present day Syro-Malabar Church. The Carmelite missionaries were sent by Rome to bring unity in the Church. However, the Dutch occupied Kochi on 6 January 1663 and they did not allow any foreign Catholic missionaries. Therefore, the Carmelite missionaries consecrated one Chandy Parampil in 1663 and he ruled till his death in 1687.

In the light of the Amsterdam Decree of 1698 the Carmelite missionaries were allowed to work in Malabar and thus we have the official beginning of the Propaganda missionary system in Malabar. The Catholic Thomas Christians were under *Padroado* and Propaganda jurisdictions. Two native priests, Frs. Joseph Cariattil and Thomas Paremmakkal, made a journey to Europe, Rome and Lisbon and in 1782 Joseph Cariattil was made the Archbishop of Kodungallur. However, before assuming his duty as the Archbishop, he died in Goa on September 10, 1786. The struggle for native bishops continued under the leadership of Thomas Paremmakkal. In the 19th century with a few exceptions, Carmelites had jurisdiction over the St Thomas Christians. With the establishment of the CMI Congregation, the members of the Congregation took great interest in obtaining native bishops.

After continuous petitions, the Pope made a ritual separation in 1887 with the establishment of two Vicariates exclusively for the Syrian Christians, Trichur and Kottayam. In 1896 Trichur, Ernakulam and Changanacherry Vicariates were established and native bishops were appointed. In 1911 Kottayam diocese was established exclusively for the Southists. In 1923 the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy was re-established and with the re-establishment of the Hierarchy the growth of the Church is great. In 1962 the Chanda Mission was entrusted to the Syro-Malabar Church and it is the first mission of the Syro-Malabar Church outside the proper territory. In December 1992 the Syro-Malabar Church was raised to the status of a Major Archiepiscopal Church. To meet the pastoral needs of the migrants Kalyan, Faridabad,Chicago and Melbourne dioceses were established.

Today the Syro-Malabar Church is having 31 dioceses and 53 bishops with more than four million Catholics. There are thousands of men and women religious and diocesan priests who are actively involved in the life of the Church both in India and outside India. With full pride and confident one can say that the Syro-Malabar Church is the most vibrant Church in the Catholic communion, both in ecclesial life and in the field of mission work.

The Syro-Malankara Church

The story of the Syro-Malankara Church is the same story of the Syro-Malabar Church till 1653. With the Coonan Cross Oath the one Church of the St Thomas Christians was split into two. Even after the communion with the Syrian- Jacobite Church of Antioch, efforts have en made to regain communion with the Holy See of Rome. The reunion efforts of Mar Dionysius I is worth mentioning. The influence of the Anglican missionaries from the beginning of the 19th century added disturbances to the Jacobite Church. Fr. P.T. Varghese (later Archbishop Mar Ivanios) took special care to bring unity in the Church. Moved by the Holy Spirit Fr. P.T. Varghese became more and more convinced of the need of spiritual awakening to give lasting solutions to the problems of the Church. He founded the Order of the Imitation of the Christ (OIC, Bethany Ashram) in 1919. In 1925 he founded the community of the Sisters of the Imitation of Christ (SIC). In the same year Fr. P.T. Varghese was consecrated with the name Geevarghese Mar Ivanios as the Bishop of Bethany. The Episcopal Synod held 1926 at Parumala authorised Mar Ivanios to make necessary correspondence with Rome regarding communion and he earnestly followed the mandate of the Synod. In 1928 Mar Theophilos of Bethany and Mar Gregorios of Pampady were consecrated as bishops.

After prolonged negotiations, with the approval of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, Mar Ivanios, Mar Theophilos, his suffragan, along with a few members of the Bethany Ashram and a lay person made their profession of faith before Bishop Aloysius Maria Benziger OCD of the diocese of Kollam and entered into full communion with the Catholic Church on 20 September 1930. As the Reunion gained momentum, Pope Pius XI established the Syro-Malanakara Hierarchy on 11 June 1932. In it the Holy Father erected the Archieparchy of Trivandrum as the Metropolitan See with the Eparchy of Thiruvalla as its suffragan.

Archbishop Mar Ivanios himself initiated the ministry of evangelizing, beginning at Marthandom. Later, with the blessings of Archbishop Mar Ivanios, Msgr. Joseph Kuzhinjalil founded the Missionary Congregation of the Daughters of Mary (DM)in 1938 at Marthandom in Kanyakumari District.

Under the able leadership of committed spiritual leaders and with collaboration of the faithful and priests and religious, the Malankara Catholic Church began to flourish in its various dimensions throughout the South India, Persian Gulf, North America and European countries. His Excellency Paulose Mar Philoxenos, the Metropolitan of the Malabar Independent Syrian Church, Thozhiyoor, reunited with the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church on 28 August 1977, and was appointed Episcopal Vicar of the Archdiocese of Trivandrum. For the formation of its own clergy, the Church started St. Mary's Malankara Major Seminary at Pattom on 29 June 1983 and afterwards it was shifted to Nalanchira, Trivandrum.

To coordinate the pastoral care of the migrants in the extraterritorial regions in India an Ecclesiastical Coordinator was appointed in 1996. In 2007 an Apostolic Visitor was appointed for the Syro-Malankara Catholics in the extraterritorial regions in India. In 2001 an Apostolic Visitor was appointed to coordinate the pastoral ministry of the migrant Malankara Catholics in North America and Europe and in 2010 an Exarchy was erected in the United States of America for the Syro-Malabnakara Major Archiepiscopal Church. On 10 February 2005, His Holiness Pope John Paul II raised Malankara Catholic Church to the status of a Major Archiepiscopal Church and appointed the Metropolitan Archbishop as Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. This was the crowning event of all the ecclesial communion endeavours since 1653. With this, the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church obtained a Synodal hierarchical structure, with the Major Archbishop as the " father and head

"of the Church exercising Patriarchal powers with the Synod of bishops. In accordance with the provisions of Canon Law and following the Syro-Antiochene tradition, the major Archbishop is the "Catholicos" of the Syro-Malnakara Catholic Church.

At present there are 14 bishops including the Major Archbishop His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis with more than 400000 faithful. The missionary presence of the members of this Church all over the world powerfully proclaims the universality of the Catholic Church.

Observation

The Church in India before the arrival of the Portuguese missionaries was an Indian Church having deeply rooted indigenous customs and practices. The Church was an integral part of the Indian society of those days sharing some of the social practices of Hindu society. We do not claim an ideal situation as some of the practices like untouchability, child marriage, slavery, were common. The local rulers were benevolent towards this Christian community and in certain places the rulers invited the Christians to their kingdom and the churches were built with the support of them. The social and religious harmony and the mutual recognition and appreciation are models for contemporary inter-religious dialogue. One of the factors of the Roman Church after the Edict of Milan was triumphalism, which was unknown to the Thomas Christians, which might have positively helped them to have peaceful co-existence and prevented them from being aggressive evangelizers or discouraged them to follow the colonial policy of *Conquesta* or conquering for Christ. The strong and deep-rooted consciousness of being an apostolic Church and Christian faith, a gift to be preserved and to be handed over from generation to generation, helped these Christians to preserve their faith at odd situations. However, an ideal Christian world, free from all types of non-Christian practices, was not a reality. The Church in Europe too was not an exception.

The Latin Church

The Latin Church in India is a late comer and the first references to the Latin missionaries in India were John of Monte Corvino and Nicholas of Pistoia, a Franciscan and a Dominican respectively. Their presence was mainly in Mylapore around 1291. Jordan Catalani of Severac, a Dominican, together with four Fanciscans, landed in Thana in 1321 and they extended their mission work to Sopara and Broach. Later Jordan was made the bishop of Kollam. Papal Delegate John Marignolli was in Kollam between 1348 and 1349 and he speaks about the Latin church in Kollam and the presence of the St Thomas Christians. This was the end of the medieval Latin Church mission in India. When, after a century and half, the Portuguese arrived, there was no trace of Latin Christian communities in India.

The arrival of the Portuguese ship at Kappad, near Kozhikode, in 1498 under the captaincy of Vasco de Gama, was a turning point in the history of the St Thomas Christians and the Latin Church in India. The Popes had granted Royal Patronage or *Padroado* to the Portuguese and Spanish Crowns to preach the Gospel in the East and in the West respectively. Under this Royal Patronage the diocese of Goa was established in 1534 and Goa became an Archdiocese with the establishment of the diocese of Kochi in 1557 and in 1606 the diocese of Mylapore was established. *Conquesta* or conquering for Christ was the policy followed by the *Padroado* authorities. Forced conversions were common and *Lusitanization* or making everything Portuguese, even food habits, dress, names, etc . was the order of the day. To perpetuate their presence in the conquered territories, the *Padroado* authorities encouraged inter-racial marriages. The attitude of the missionaries towards the native religions, customs and practices was one of contempt. Thus Christianity was branded as a foreign religion.

In 1622 Pope Gregory XV created the Congregation for the Propagation of Faith and made use of the missionary energies of the various religious orders in spreading the Gospel. The decline of the colonial power weakened the functioning of *Padroado*. The jurisdictional conflicts between *Padroado* and *Propaganda* were regular features of the history of Indian Christianity from now onwards. Besides the clashes of interests of *Padroado* and Propaganda, the presence of the Protestant Dutch colonial power and rivalry between the members of the various religious orders also hampered the missionary activities. However, the mission reached the interior regions of India mainly due to the individual initiatives. The more important of the interior missions was that of Madurai, begun by Robert de Nobili, S.J. in 1606. The significance of the de Nobili mission was that it proved a marked departure from the standard Portuguese style of proclaiming the absoluteness of Christianity with scant respect for local religions and cultures. Robert de Nobili adopted many of the local customs and practices and he may be described as the first missionary who tried for an inculturated Christian religion. It is also worth mentioning the Jesuit mission in the Mughal Court at the invitation of Akabar under the leadership of Antony Monserrate during the years of 1579 and 1583, may be the first official attempt for an inter-religious dialogue.

The suppression of the Society of Jesus and the invasions of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan adversely affected the mission work. In this difficult situation the work of the members of the Paris Foreign Mission Society (M.E.P.), especially in South India, is praiseworthy. Abbe Dubois, one of the members of M.E. P. followed the mission methodology of Robert de Nobili at Srirangapatanam area. *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies* was authored by him.

The political situation in India changed at the end of the 18th century and the British were now in a position to extend their hegemony over the rest of India. The presence of Catholic soldiers and military chaplains and catholic schools in cities indirectly paved the way for strong Catholic presence. The inability of the *Padroado* authorities to adequately cater to the pastoral needs of the Christians led Propaganda to establish Vicariates Apostolic in India. The tension between *Padroado* and Propaganda authorities forced Pope Gregory XVI to suppress the *Padroado* in 1838. The gradual establishment of the Indian Latin Hierarchy in 1886 was facilitated with the increase in the number of the native clergy. The historic decision in this regard was taken by the Pondicherry synod of 1844. The Papal Seminary at Kandy was established in 1894 by Pope Leo XIII.

Another feature of the history of the Latin Church in India in the later part of the 19th century was the growth of the Church among the Adivasi population, centred around Ranchi. It was thanks to the mission work of the Belgian Jesuits and especially the unique missionary contributions of Fr. Constant Lievens. His approach could be considered socio-economico-religious. The education provided by the missionaries to the new converts helped them to break the social barriers and to come up in the mainstream of the society.

The 20th century saw further growth and consolidation of the Latin Church. Special mention must be made of the pioneering missionary endeavours of the German Salvatorians in the North East. This mission was successfully continued by the Salesians beginning from 1922 under the able leadership of Louis Mathias. The missionaries introduced the Gospel to the natives without causing much disturbance to the native customs and practices.

The work of organization and consolidation kept pace with the numerical increase. In 1944 the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) was formed and in 1948 the Internunciature of India was established. In 1988 the Conference of Catholic Bishop of India (CCBI), an association of the Latin bishops of the Latin Church in India, was formed. Today there are

about 1,20,00000 Latin Catholics in India with 131 ecclesiastical units forming 25 ecclesiastical provinces with 177 bishops.

The process of Indianization of the Church also kept pace with the numerical increase. The members of the hierarchy at the time of its establishment in 1886 were all foreigners. But with the nomination of Bishop Roche of Tuticorin in 1924, it has increasingly indigenized and today all the members of the hierarchy are Indians.

Observation

It is true that only with the arrival of the Western missionaries Christianity spread to the remote areas of India and coastal areas. The encounter of the Roman Catholicism of the Latin Rite in India is having different phases. The 16th century *Conquesta* model was more aggressive type, aiming at mass conversions based on the conviction that there is no salvation outside the Roman Catholic Church. The missionaries were also from the Protestant Reformation background and products of the Council of Trent. The result was forced conversions with no respect for local religions, customs and practices. There existed also rivalry between Catholics and Protestants in the following centuries.

In the 17th and 18th centuries we notice the arrival of more enlightened missionaries, with a few exceptions, who had respect for local religious customs and practices, who took keen interest to learn the Indian languages, including Sanskrit and who contributed substantially to the local languages and cultures through their writings and researches. During the 19th and 20th centuries we observe the penetration of the missionaries in the tribal and *Adivasi* belts of Chotanagpur and North East India. Together with the conversion work, these missionaries worked for the holistic growth of the nation, by popularising education, literature in local languages, cooperative credit societies, etc. The Dalits who embraced Catholic faith have yet to get due recognition in the Church appointments, administration, etc.

Conclusion

The three individual Churches in India tell the story of the encounter of the Word of God in the Indian soil under different circumstances. The pre-Portuguese history presents a Church which was very much rooted in the Indian soil. However, the story of the Western method of evangelisation was aggressive and planting a Church imported from Europe. The success story of the mission work in Chottanagpur and North East is the result of appreciating and adopting tribal culture and local practices. The great challenge before the Indian Churches is to make known to the pluralistic Indian society the translatability of the Gospel to different cultures and give witness to the all inclusive character of the Gospel. Another great challenge is to grow into a living organism by absorbing the changes in its environment and harmoniously coping with changes.

EUCHARISTIC LITURGY IN THE LATIN CATHOLIC TRADITION WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE CHURCH IN CHOTANAGPUR

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Gathering and Singing

Gathering at a designated place – church or elsewhere – for the Eucharist is important. Individuals and groups move in procession to gather *with* the believing community at a *place* of celebration. The gathering of the assembly demonstrates togetherness, purposefulness, and prayerfulness. Each individual participates in the faith and life of the believing community by joining the gathering (Acts 2:42-47). Gathering is led or arranged by the combined leadership of the catechist, *Catholic Sabha* and *Mahila Sangh* and the youth so that the gathering remains a praying community. This gathering transcends ethnic, social, linguistic and cultural boundaries and this gets expressed in a variety of gestures, customs and musical rhythms. Gathering plays a significant role in the community to celebrate the sacrament. As sacrament, it contains liturgical actions of the assembly; the church gathered together and hence requires full and active participation of all.[1] In this gathering all members of the community become sacrament to one another.

Prayer carries cultural and anthropological elements. An entrance dance with varied cultural symbols prepares the faithful for the Eucharist. As the dance approaches near the altar the women wash the hands of the priests and plant a *teeka* on their foreheads. Washing of hands and smearing a *teeka* are signs of welcome and also demonstrate a cross fertilization of cultures.

Liturgically, the faithful may not be aware of their Latin heritage because the religious communities preferably use English and parishes and mass centres use Hindi or other local languages for liturgy. Interestingly, hymns in local languages were used only for para-liturgical celebrations in the early years of the mission in Chotanagpur. Debate arose among missionaries to do away with the Western tunes in favour of the native tunes. Opinions varied among missionaries. In 1931 Fr. Pieter Schill, SJ invited the missionaries to discard the European tunes in favour of the native hymns including *bhajans* and the *Adivasi* hymns. But Fr. C. Bleses had opposed such a move with a caveat that the *Adivasi* melodies almost always involves dance and hence were not useful for prayer! Borrowing music from other cultural

[1] Paul Bernier, *Eucharist: Celebrating Its Rhythm in Our Lives* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1993), 18; also *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 14.

communities would be unwelcome.[2] However, *Adivasi* hymns were allowed only at low Masses.[3] However, these restrictions proved a blessing: Christians composed hymns in local languages, melodies of which were useful for prayer. This gave birth to a new type of music – a fusion of European and *Adivasi* rhythm – and it has become so popular that people may not be aware of their turbulent origins! Today, Eucharistic celebrations use hymns in local languages with ease even while the liturgy is in English or Hindi. *Adivasi* musical instruments now are helpful in prayer and worship.

From the Vatican II sessions, Archbishop Pius Kerketta, SJ directed his clergymen to start Masses with local music in 1964. Fr Peter Paul Van Nuffel, SJ composed music for the Common of the Mass with *Adivasi* melody, widely used in the Hindi speaking regions in North India.[4] Fr. Philip Ekka helped in indigenizing the liturgy according to the local customs. Today, the communities sing hymns in Oraon, Mundari, Kharia, Ho and Santali with great ease and devotion. More innovations are coming as the new members join the church from different communities.

Some of the modern hymns composed and marketed by many people, however, lack spiritual depth and sound theology. Globalization is slowly changing the contour of the liturgical music in some urban parishes with a fusion of *Adivasi* and *Adhunik* rhythm. It would not be an exaggeration to note that today *Adivasi* music and melodies survive among the *Adivasi* Christians. If there is a future of *Adivasi* music, the church seems to be the best patron at the moment, so it seems to me.

The gathered community also realizes its *creatureliness* in need of God's mercy. Hence, there is a time of *metanoia*, a time to acknowledge one's sinfulness. Sinfulness is always *communal*, not a strictly privatized act and attitude of an individual. Sprinkling of the Holy water by the priest at this time symbolizes personal and communal purification. This point is very much stressed in the liturgy. Then, the community sings the Gloria, a practice borrowed from the Byzantine Morning Prayer but commonly used since the eighth century.[5]

Narrating the Story of Salvation

In solemn liturgies a Bible Procession takes place after the collect prayer. They are filled with rich symbols – seed, fruits, vine, plough, basket, birds, community, and many others. The Bible is enthroned on the ambo, garlanded and incensed. Then the lector seeks the blessing of the main celebrant and reads (narrates) the first reading. The second reader follows similar pattern.

Proclamation of the word of God forms another chance to relook at the history of the mystery fulfilled in Jesus through his life, teachings, praxis, passion, death and resurrection. In the local communities quite many people see it as story-telling rather than proclamation. Story contains the message of salvation. They are prophetic because they stir the hearts of the participants by correcting, educating, and inviting people to begin a new way of life (2 Tim 3:16). Ultimately, the convergence of the meaning of life and the meaning of the Gospel demands faith and forms our conscience[6] and demands conversion; hence the Eucharist is *prophetic*.

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[2] C. Bleses, "Native Songs" in *Our Field* (Kurseong: St Mary's College, October 1931), 184-186.
[3] Jos De Cuyper, "Origin and Development of Liturgical Chant in North India: An Example of Inculturation in the Liturgy" in *Sevartham* vol. 23 (Ranchi: St Albert's College, 1998), 93.
[4] Patna region has its own melody for North India's Hindi region.
[5] John F. Baldovin, *Bread for Life, Cup of Salvation: Understanding the Mass* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), 74-75.
[6] Bernard Cooke, *Sacraments and Sacramentality* (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1983), 162-164.

Praying Community

Before the creed comes the prayer of the faithful. It helps the faithful to participate *with* their prayers and needs. Intercessions indicate that the liturgy is celebrated in communion with the participating and scattered communities on earth and beyond. The Prayer of the Faithful forms part of the liturgy when the whole community offers prayers for the universal church, emperor and the government, the local congregation, and special benefactors and persons in special need since the early days.[7] With this prayer the whole community prays for one another and hence shows that it is a praying community. The creed is sung, again a sense of joyous proclamation of their faith. The homily that follows connects the *Scriptures* and the *celebration* and the *daily living*.

Sharing Community

The offertory is an important occasion for the church. Every cooking is united with the altar. The *Adivasis* set aside some rice for the offertory whenever they cook. When they come on Sunday for the Eucharist, they bring the same cooking-rice as part of their sharing with the church: it is called *mutha sirni*. It is from the labour of one's hands and from the field. In some places a person appointed to gather the *sirni* rice collects and brings them in the name of the locality. It implies that every cooking is connected to the Eucharistic celebration with the community of believers. On the Sunday Eucharist this rice forms part of the Eucharistic offertory procession. Again, on solemn occasions, the offertory procession is accompanied by singing and dancing. Fruits, vegetables and even the goat are offered to the bishop during the Eucharist. A dancing procession carrying the gifts to the altar serves as the since being the agrarian community, many varieties of other offerings might be on the altar. They are truly the gifts of the earth – or the fruits of the earth.

The Eucharistic prayers contain thanksgiving, acclamation, the institution narrative, the memorial/offering (*anamnesis*), petition (*epiclesis*) for the transformation of gifts, intercessions and finally with the great Amen. Occasionally, an *aarati*, a classical Indian custom, is done to praise the greatness of God. This practice shows an innovative ways of praising God.

Nurturing or Communing

Eucharist is intended to show us what happens in every meal: union with the Creator of all gifts.[8] Although a mystery the Eucharist is understood as meal, sacrifice, memorial, and other things. Eating implies, always eating *with* – eating with the living members, the ancestors and the saints. Anthropologists teach us that commensality is the root of all *Adivasi* meals and community meals are common in the *Adivasi* traditions. The Catholic tradition of sharing communion only with the communion-worthy persons gets new meaning here. The community gets nurtured by common faith, meal and the Word of God. In most places the communion is given on the hand, a practice started since the time of Tertullian (c.160 – c.225) when the priest gave communion placed on hand[9] and the congregants sipped the wine through a small tube.[10]

Missioning

The final act of the Eucharistic liturgy is the sending out. The priest reminds the people that the Eucharist just does not end there but it is – *Ite missa est*! The community moves out to

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[7] Joseph Martos, *Doors to the Sacred* (London: SCM Press, 1978), 251.
[8] Anselm Grün, *The Seven Sacraments* translated by John Cummins (Bombay: St Paul's Publications, 2003), 55.
[9] Victor Saxter in Willy Rordorf et al, translated by Mathew J. O'Connell, The Eucharist of the Early Christians (New York: Pueblo Publishing Company, 1978), 140
[10] Joseph Martos, *Doors to the Sacred* (London: SCM Press, 1981), 253.

live in love and to bear witness to Christ. On many occasions a dancing procession leads the celebrants out of the church. Now the community go out replenished and live by the values they have celebrated. Much more can be said about the liturgy. But in order to understand how they shape the life of the people also depends on the meaning people give and celebrate the Eucharist. For the *Adivasis*, it is gathering with, praying, singing and dancing with, offering with and communing with the community for a common mission.

People just do not depart the church premises soon after the Eucharistic celebration. Each group or association – *Catholic Sabha*, *Mahila Sangh*, Youth and other groups conducts its meeting. Those meetings are at the service of the faith and life of the community and therefore can be seen as continuation the result of missioning!

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE SYRO-MALABAR EUCHARISTIC LITURGY

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Introduction

The St. Thomas Christians of India shared one and the same liturgy of the East Syriac Church of Mesopotamia at least since the fourth century. The continuous relation between these two ecclesial traditions paved the way for the borrowing of the East Syriac liturgical tradition by the Thomas Christians. It does not mean that the liturgy of Malabar was a copy of the Mesopotamian liturgy. The East Syriac liturgy was adapted by the Thomas Christians to the Indian cultural context. Thus we find many Indian cultural elements incorporated into the liturgy of the Church in Malabar. In this paper we shall identify some of the important features of the East Syriac Qurbana in general and the Syro-Malabar Qurbana in particular.

1. Celebration of the Paschal Mystery in the Sacred Space

The liturgical space of the Syro-Malabar tradition is unique both from the liturgical and theological perspacetives. There is no doubt that in the East Syriac tradition, the symbolic understanding of the sanctuary as heaven, haykla as earth, central bema as the earthly Jerusalem, and šqaqona as the way to heaven, has contributed in a substantial way to the specific Eucharistic theology of this tradition. The Anonymous Author of the ninth century *Exposition of the Offices* emphasises the movements in the liturgy from the earthly space represented by the haykla, to the heavenly space represented by *madbha*. According to the Author of the *Exposition*, the drawing of the veils of the sanctuary symbolizes the opening of heaven.[1] Haykla, the place of the faithful, is the symbol of the whole earth.[2] The theological significance of the central bema lies in the fact that the Word of God accomplished his 'leitourgia' or ministry among the people. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (Jn 1.14). According to the Anonymous Author,

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[1] Cf. *Expositio II*, 10.

[2] *Expositio I*, 92. Cf. YOUSIF, "Divine Liturgy", 189.

šqaqona the passage between bema and sanctuary, is the way leading from Jerusalem to Paradise and from Paradise to heaven.[3]

The liturgical space becomes the meeting place of heaven and earth. The important processions in the East Syriac liturgy between sanctuary and bema, are celebrations of the salvific movements between heaven and earth. The procession from sanctuary to bema represents the mystery of the incarnation.[4] The descent of the Word to the world is beautifully manifested in the Gospel procession.

Accessus ad altare (access to the altar) is the movement from bema to the altar. In the Syriac tradition the very title of the celebration of Eucharist is related to the movement towards the sanctuary. The Syriac word *Qurawa* was used as title for the Eucharistic celebration.[5] The Syriac word Qurawa comes from the root *Qreb* meaning to 'come near' or 'draw nigh'. Approaching the altar was given great symbolic meaning in the Eastern traditions since the sanctuary was understood as the symbol of heaven, and the altar as the heavenly throne. Going into the sanctuary had the simple symbolic meaning of ascent to heaven. The celebration of the entry into the sanctuary is the anticipation of the eschatological entry into heaven.

2. Jewish Christian Features of the East Syriac Qurbana

Among the various liturgical traditions of the Church, it is the East Syriac tradition which preserves most of the Jewish Christian traits in the Eucharistic celebration. The fact of making lavish use of the psalms in Qurbana is a typical example for this. Recital of the psalms commemorates the Old Testament waiting for the coming of Christ.

There are clear Jewish styles in the prayers of the Qurbana. In the preface dialogue God is addressed as God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The use of the expression 'name of God' found in the anaphora is a typical Jewish feature. The reference to the priesthood of Aaron in the prayers of incensing is of much significance. The East Syriac anaphora of Addai and Mari is substantially influenced by the Jewish prayers like Birkat Ha-Mazon, Shema and Tefillah.[6]

3. Stress on the Commemoration of the Paschal Mystery

One of the most striking features of the East Syriac Qurbana is that it stresses very much the commemoration of the mystery of Christ through the prayers, gestures and even through the liturgical space.

3.1. Eucharist as the Commemoration (*Uhdana*) of the Mystery of God and the Commemoration (*Dukhrana*) of the Mystery of the Church

The preferred title for the Eucharistic celebration in the East Syriac tradition is 'raze.[7] The term 'raze as the title of the Eucharistic celebration underlines the fact that the Eucharist is the celebration of the mystery of Christ. According to St. Ephrem, in Eucharist we partake in the

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[3] *Expositio I*, 92.

[4] Cf. *Expositio II*, 9.

[5] Dionysius Bar Salibi, *Commentary on the Eucharist*, trans., Baby Varghese, *Moran Etho* 10, Kottayam 1998, 5.

[6] S. Jammo, "The Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari: A Study of Structure and Historical Background", *Orientalia christiana periodica* 68 (2002) 35.

[7] Raza (mystery) or Raze is an important appellation of the East Syrian eucharistic liturgy. The Chaldeans use the plural form of the word raza, meaning mysteries.

entire historical and eternal reality of Christ. Eucharist is nothing less than the entire eschatological mystery of Christ taking place here and now in history.[8] Since the term 'raza is concerned about the celebration or commemoration of the mystery, it is closely associated with the term 'anamnesis' (commemoration or memorial). The Syriac terms for memorial are 'uhdana and dukhrana'. The East Syriac Taksa insists on the use of the term *uhdana* while referring to the remembrance of the mystery of Christ, and *dukhrana* while referring to the remembrance of the members of the Church.[9] '*Uhdana* of the paschal mystery is the central concern of the liturgy. The commentators too share the same concern. According to Theodore, we celebrate the death of our Lord through the awe-inspiring service of the mysteries.[10] According to the 17th Homily on the Mysteries attributed to Narsai, the Church depicts the glorious mysteries mystically.[11] The *uhdana* of the mystery of Christ is often accompanied by the *dukhrana* of the mystery of the Church. Along with the mystery of Christ, we remember the mystery of the Church and of its human members. The invariable part of the onitha d'raze, karozutha of the deacon after the Creed, the Dyptichs, the fourth kušapa, and the fourth g'hanta make commemoration of the mystery of the Church. Thus the Qurbana presents the mystery of the Church along with the mystery of Christ.

3.2. Eucharistic Celebration as the Karozutha of Paschal Mystery

The East Syrian liturgy commemorates the paschal mystery through various levels of karozutha or proclamation. Even though the whole liturgy is proclamation of the mystery of salvation, certain elements in liturgy are specially called proclamation (karozutha). In the East Syriac tradition the Liturgy of the Word is the most important occasion of the karozutha. We may observe five levels of karozuthas in the East Syriac Qurbana: 1. Karozutha of the Old Testament: Readings of Law and Prophets who proclaim the mystery of Christ through figures and symbols. 2. Karozutha of the Apostle (Epistle especially of Apostle Paul) 3. Karozutha of the evangelist (eg. *karozutha d Mathai*). 4. Karozutha made by the priest (homily). 5. The Karozutha of the faithful led by the deacon. All the karozuthas have one and the same content, that is the mystery of Christ. That has been always the content of the Apostolic preaching.

3.3. Repeated Commemoration of the Paschal Mystery in the Qurbana

Within a celebration of the East Syriac Eucharist we may see consecutive repetitions of the memorial of the paschal mystery. In fact the 'Glory to God in the highest' at the very beginning of the celebration[12] may be considered as a summary expression for the entire Christ event. The rite of introduction and the liturgy of Word together commemorate the entire mystery of Christ. The whole liturgy of the Word may be seen as commemorating the mystery of the passion, death and resurrection.

The preparation for the Qudaša (anaphora) has a full commemoration of the paschal mystery. According to the commentators, the preparation of the mysteries on the beth gazzas and their

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[8] E. Beck, "Die Eucharistie bei Ephräm", *OC* 38 (1954) 54.

[9] *Ordo Mysteriorum: Cum Prima Sanctificatione Id est Sanctificatio Beatorum Apostolorum Mar (Domini) Addaï et Mar (Domini) Mari Praeceptorum Orientis. Iuxta Usum Ecclesiae Syrorum Orientalium Malabaris*, Editio Typica, Rome 2003, pp.29, 30, 31,37,39,40.

[10] Theodore, *Eucharist*, 103.

[11] *HomMyst* 1.

[12] *Raza*, 1.

transfer to the altar along with the onitha d' raze, placing on the altar and covering with veil (šošapa) and finally removing the veil, symbolize the passion, death and resurrection.[13] Then the Qudaša (anaphora) has a full commemoration of the paschal mystery. Epiclesis, the culmination of the Qudaša commemorates the resurrection.[14] Again the rite of fraction and consignation repeats the commemoration of the passion, death and resurrection.[15] Once again the whole paschal mystery is commemorated in the rite of Communion. According to Narsai, receiving Communion in hands (in the form of the Cross) symbolizes participation in the death and resurrection of the Lord.[16]

4. Stress on the Qudaša (Sanctification) in the Eucharistic Celebration

The preferred East Syriac term for anaphora is Qudaša[17] which means sanctification, consecration, or hallowing. The term Qudaša as it is employed in the East Syriac liturgy has both the anabatic (ascending) and katabatic (descending) dimensions. In the anabatic dimension this term means rendering praise (*tešbohta*) and thanksgiving (*tawditha*). Thus it is much similar to the term *eucharistia*. It means the Qudaša or sanctification or hallowing of God. The term Qudaša, in the katabatic dimension, means consecration of persons and objects.

4.1. Eucharist as Qudaša of God (*Eucharistia*)

The earliest form of the anaphora of the Church is praise and thanksgiving to God the creator and the redeemer. Justin sees the content of the *eucharistia* as thanksgiving for creation and redemption.[18] The East Syriac anaphoras frequently use terms like *šabbah* (to praise), *tešbohta* (praise, glorification),[19] *awdi* (to confess), *tawditha* (thanksgiving).[20] The frequent occurrence of these terms points to the general character of the anaphoras as prayers of praise and thanksgiving.

Theodore emphasises the aspect of thanksgiving in his commentary on Eucharist. There is commemoration of the economy accomplished in Christ. Thanks are rendered on account of this economy.[21]

4.1.1. Heaven and Earth Joined in the Qudaša of God

Eucharistic liturgy is a celebration of the earthly choir together with the heavenly choir. The earthly and heavenly Churches come together in praising and thanking God. There are numerous elements in the Syro-Malabar Eucharistic liturgy showing us that liturgy is truly the meeting of the earthly and the heavenly. The initial 'Glory to God in the highest', the qanona of the Lord's prayer, prayer before the *onitha d' Qanke*, *trisagion*, *onitha d' raze*, *sanctus*, the diaconal

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[13] Maniyattu, *Heaven on Earth*, 232-238.

[14] Maniyattu, *Heaven on Earth*, 246-254.

[15] Theodore, *Eucharist*, 105; *HomMyst* 23; Gabriel Qatraya, "Interpretation", 99.

[16] *HomMyst* 28.

[17] R. Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, tom. 1-2, Oxford 1879-1901, 3500-3503.

[18] Cf. Justin, *Apologia* I. 5

[19] Payne Smith, *Thesaurus*, 4023-4025.

[20] Payne Smith, *Thesaurus*, 1550-1553. Cf. Vadakkel, *Anaphora of Mar Theodore*, 133-134.

[21] Theodore, *Commentary of Theodore of Mopsuestia on the Lord's Prayer and on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist*, A. Mingana, ed. & trans., WS 6, Cambridge 1933, 99-103.

admonition before the fourth *kušapa* in AM, and *onitha* of fraction, are all examples of liturgical elements illustrating the joining of the earthly choir with the heavenly hosts (Is 6.3) in praising God. Praise and thanksgiving in the anaphoras are joined to that of the heavenly assembly. It is clear in the expression: "And with these heavenly hosts we give you thanks, O Lord, and we bless God the Word."[22] The ninth century Anonymous Author of the *Exposition of the Offices* interprets the *sanctus* as the praise of the earthly Church joining the heavenly Church: "...but in that manner today we, angels and men, become a single holy Church, and in Christ we have been made one flock; as the heavenly apostle says, he wished that we too may be brought together in harmony, and thus like the watchers [angels] we may praise him with their praises."[23]

4.2. Qudaša of the Mysteries as Means for the Qudaša of the Assembly

The term Qudaša, in the katabatic dimension means sanctification or consecration, of the mysteries and of the assembly. This sanctification primarily refers to the change of bread and wine into body and blood of Christ. Then it means the sanctification of the assembly. The sanctification is attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit.[24] In the Syriac tradition, the Holy Spirit is the *Ruha d-Qudasha* or the Spirit of sanctity. Thus the Spirit is specially remembered as the one who causes the sanctification. To understand the relevance of the sanctification in the East Syrian Qurbana it is enough to see the epiclesis of the anaphoras.

In AM there is clear mention of the sanctification of the offering. However, the sanctification of the offering is oriented to the sanctification of the assembly. "And dwell in this Qurbana of your servants and bless it and sanctify it that it may be to us, O My Lord, unto the pardon of debts, remission of sins..." (Raza 45). The epiclesis in the Anaphora of Theodore (AT)[25] elaborates and clarifies the theme as in AM. However, the invocation is made first for the assembly. Thus the sanctification of the assembly is more emphasised than in AM. As regards the sanctification of the offering and that of the assembly, the epiclesis of the Anaphora of Nestorius (AN) is similar to that of AT.[26] But AN adds a new factor in the sanctification of the assembly, namely the aspect of becoming one in love and peace; one body and one spirit, as envisaged by the Christian vocation.

The emphasis on the sanctification of the assembly is remarkable in the East Syriac liturgy. The eucharistic celebration, according to the East Syriac tradition, ought to be a Qudaša for the Christian assembly. Qudaša as eucharistia finds its true meaning in the Qudaša of the assembly. The sanctification of the assembly as the goal of the celebration is all the more strong in the epiclesis of AM. This epiclesis is recognized as a communion epiclesis.[27] The stress is on the change of the assembly. The sanctification of the mysteries is presented as a means for the sanctification of the assembly. Perhaps, due to the influence of the Latin theology, the

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[22] *Raza*, 39. Cf. the Ešaya text ET: Spinks, *Prayers from the East*, 4. Cf. also Paul & Mooken, *Liturgy*, 33.

[23] *Expositio II (=Anonymi auctoris expositio officiorum ecclesiae Georgio Arbelensi vulgo adscripta. Accedit Abrahae Bar Lipheh interpretatio officiorum*, R.H. Connolly, ed. & trans., CSCO, series secunda, syri 91-92, Roma 1913-1915.) 54; Syr. text, 57.

[24] P. Yousif, "The Divine Liturgy According to the Rite of the Assyro-Chaldean Church", in J. Madey, ed., *The Eucharistic Liturgy in the Christian East*, Kottayam-Paderborn 1982, 224.

[25] Vadakkel, *Anaphora of Mar Theodore*, 90-91.

[26] Naduthadam, *Anaphore de Nestorius*, 269. Cf. also Paul & Mooken, *Liturgy*, 108.

[27] Jozef Lamberts, " 'May Your Holy Spirit, Lord, Come..'.Some Reflections on the Epiclesis", ETJ 2 (1998) 112-113.

Malayalam translation for the Syro-Malabar Church has reduced the primary importance given to the sanctification of the assembly. According to the Malayalam text, the invocation of the Spirit is made for two things. First for the sanctification of the mysteries, then for the sanctification of the assembly, both having equal importance. The original text means that the sanctification of the mysteries should become the means for the sanctification of the assembly. Such an intrinsic relation between these two types of sanctification is ignored in the Malayalam translation.

According to St. Ephrem, Eucharist transforms man and enables him to reach Paradise. Man is enabled to fly over the clouds and reach Paradise.[28] "Whoever eats of the bread of the Heavenly One will become heavenly without doubt."[29]

5. Emphasis on the Spiritual Preparation

The East Syriac tradition stresses the spiritual preparation for the important parts of the Qurbana like Liturgy of Word, Anaphora and Communion. The emphasis on the spiritual preparation is due to the concern for making liturgy a true experience for the faithful. The faithful are spiritually prepared through various instructions and rituals. There is an equal stress on the spiritual preparation of the celebrant. The special rite of prostration on bema is to be seen in this perspective.

The study of the history of the Eucharistic celebration in the East Syriac tradition tells us that the rite of introduction developed as a preparation for the Liturgy of the Word. Within the Liturgy of the Word the aspect of spiritual preparation is duly emphasised. The trisagion is an invitation to have proper spiritual disposition for hearing the Word of God. The turgama before epistle and the turgama before gospel are earnest exhortation for spiritual preparation. The spiritual preparation for the anaphora has elements like dismissal of the unworthy, prostration on the bema, lavabo (washing of hands), prayer at the door of the sanctuary, creed, karozutha of the deacon and procession of entry with prayer.

At the end of the Liturgy of Word three groups of people are dismissed from the Eucharistic assembly: the non-baptized, the non-signed and those who do not receive the mysteries. Those who are unworthy of the Eucharist (e.g. those who are in the situation of grave sins and without repentance; those who will not and cannot receive communion) are intended in the dismissal rite. Through the rite of dismissal the liturgical assembly prepares itself as the community of the baptized and signed, those worthy to partake of the mysteries. The rite of prostrations on the bema express the unworthiness of the celebrant to consecrate. In the East Syriac Qurbana the Creed is presented as a very important element of spiritual preparation for the anaphora. According to Abdišo, he who does not have the true faith is unworthy of the mysteries.

East Syriac Qurbana provides for an authentic preparation for the holy Communion. The rite of husaya (absolution) constitutes the most important spiritual preparation for the Communion. In each Qurbana the entire assembly prepares for the Communion. All are invited to be purified from all sins. Repentance is the most essential condition for encountering the Lord and entering into Communion with him.

6. Unique Features of the Rite of Communion

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[28] Hymns on the Unleavened Bread 17,8-9.

[29]. Hymns on Nativity 4,103; cf. also 3,16; 5,21. For details refer P. Maniyattu, *Heaven on Earth*, Rome 1995, 262-263.

East Syriac Qurbana views the Eucharistic Communion both as a vertical and horizontal communion, that is, communion with God and communion with fellow beings. The Communion of the celebrating priest is remarkably unique in the East Syriac tradition. The celebrant is not permitted to take Communion for himself. He has to receive it from a con-celebrant or from a deacon. Insisting on the practice of receiving Communion from another person, it is emphatically declared that we encounter Jesus Christ through the mediation of our fellow beings. Another important feature of the rite of Communion is that the holy body is received in stretched hand in the form of cross. The body of Christ is received on the 'cross' formed by the palms, reminds us of the fact that Eucharistic Communion is participation in the death of Christ. The holy Communion is distributed to the people at the door of the sanctuary. In fact, in the rite of Communion there is the meeting of two processions. The celebrant and the ministers, representing the heavenly choir come down to the door of the sanctuary. The faithful come to the door of the sanctuary, expressing their search and longing for the Lord.

6.1. Eucharist as the Anticipation of the Heavenly Banquet

Eucharistic Communion is the pledge of eternal life.[30] There are numerous prayers in the Qurbana stressing the effect of Communion as immortality. The epiclesis (*Raza*, 45), the 'onitha during the fraction and consignation (*Raza*, 47-48), the prayers accompanying the consignation (*Raza*, 48-49), the karozutha of fraternal charity (*Raza*, 50-51), the formula of receiving Communion (*Raza*, 54,56), the tešbohta, the thanksgiving prayers and the huttama (*Raza*, 57-62) show Eucharist as the food of immortality. Theodore discusses at length the theme of the Eucharist as the food of immortality.[31] The expression 'bread of life'[32] in the hymns of Ephrem stresses this aspect of the eucharistic Communion. It enables us to transcend the space-time and attain the immortal and imperishable existence, by hope.[33] Ephrem says: "Whoever eats of the bread of the Heavenly One will become heavenly without doubt."[34] Qatraya speaks of Communion as the guarantee of our future immortality.[35]

7. Typical Features of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana

Though the general title for the Eucharistic celebration in the East Syriac tradition was Raze, the Syro-Malabar tradition developed a special form of Eucharistic celebration which is known as Raza. At present the most solemn form of celebration is known as Raza.

The *puqdankon* found at the beginning of the Qurbana is a typical Malabar feature. It is already found in the East Syriac tradition, in the Liturgy of Hours and the Funeral rite. The general interpretation given is that the priest reminds the people of the fact that we celebrate Qurbana according to the command given by Christ. There was a different interpretation of *puqdankon* as a reflection of the early custom of St. Thomas Christians asking the permission of the assembly before any important social action. Both these interpretations seem to be incomplete. It cannot be understood as referring exclusively to the command of Christ regarding Eucharistic celebration.

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[30] Cf. Kumpuckal, *Post-Anaphoral Part*, 256-261.

[31] Cf. Theodore, *Eucharist*, 74,82,103,108,109,112,117,119.

[32] Cf. *HVirg* 31.14; 35.12; *HAzy* 17.13.

[33] Cf. Theodore, *Eucharist*, 112.

[34] *HNat* 4.103. Cf. also *HNat* 3.16; 5.21.

[35] Cf. Gabriel Qatraya, "Interpretation", 102. Cf. also Abraham Bar Lipah, "Interpretatio", 165.

It is recited also in the Liturgy of Hours and Funeral liturgy. In the other interpretation of 'asking permission', it becomes irrelevant when *puqdankon* is recited at the end of the Liturgy of Hours and Funeral Liturgy. There is no sense in asking permission for a celebration when it is finished. The concern of *puqdankon* seems to be the 'the command of Christ' which is nothing but the command to love (Jn 13: 34,35). It is quite meaningful that in the liturgy the people are reminded of the command of Christ to love.

The rite of prostrations on bema, as it is found in the Syro-Malabar Raza is a unique feature of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana. This rite might have become prevalent in the Malabar liturgy only from the 15th cent. The priest prostrates twelve times on the veil spread out in the middle of the church, expressing his unworthiness to celebrate the holy Mysteries. The *onitha* sung at this time makes explicit reference to *accessus ad altare* and consecration through the invoking of the Holy Spirit. It reminds the priest of his holy duty at the altar, namely the consecration. The present gesture of the celebrant blessing the veil may be a substitute of the original blessing given to the people.

Another typical Malabar feature of liturgy is the *kaikasturi*, the Indianised version of the rite of the kiss of peace. Peace of Christ transmitted from the celebrating priest to the people through the deacon is indeed the fragrance of the love of Christ. *Kaikasturi* was seen as an essential element in the Eucharist and Liturgy of Hours.

The preparation and presentation of the Eucharistic bread and wine was significantly different in the Malabar tradition. Like most of the Oriental Churches the St. Thomas Christians used fermented bread for the Qurbana. There was an interesting custom of letting down the bread on a lotus leaf from above the sanctuary during the preparation of the mysteries in the Qurbana. It would proclaim the fact that Eucharist is bread from heaven. Presenting the Eucharistic bread on lotus leaf was a typical Indian custom. As regards the wine used, it was prepared from dried grapes by putting them in water and then pressing juice from them.[36] In fact, the 'Eucharistic wine' was not at all an alcoholic drink. This choice of the Eucharistic matter was very well in agreement with the Indian ethos.

Conclusion

The East Syriac Qurbana, because of its Semitic features, stands out among the various Eucharistic traditions of the Church. East Syriac tradition preserves some important rituals and prayers which contribute in a substantial way to a profound understanding of the Eucharist. The universal Church esteems very much such elements preserved in the East Syriac tradition. The fact that the Anaphora of Addai and Mari is known as '*gemma orientale*' is an example for such an appreciation of the East Syriac Eucharistic tradition in the Christian world. The Syro-Malabar tradition, while preserving the East Syriac Eucharistic heritage, maintains some typical elements well-suited to the Indian ethos.

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[36] Mundadan, *History of Christianity in India*, 200-201.

CULTURE AND POPULAR DEVOTIONS IN THE ROMAN RITE

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Last month, as I was walking from the Main Basilica at Vailankanni to Our Lady's Tank, I noticed many devotees crawling on their knees towards the site of Mary's first apparition at Vailankanni. The devotees of Mary do this to seek Divine Mercy through the powerful intercession of Mary, who was addressed by Angel Gabriel as "full of Grace" (Lk 1:28). When the pilgrims reach Vailankanni they pray for their various spiritual and temporal needs. This practice of asking the Blessed Virgin Mary to answer our prayers and petitions is not something new but such practice goes back to the time of Saints Justin the Martyr (100-165 AD), Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 202), and Ambrose of Milan (340-397 AD). In one of the most common and popular Marian prayers, namely the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we address Mary with various titles and exhort her powerful intercession for us by the traditional response, "pray for us." In the Litany, one of the Marian advocations is "Refuge of Sinners" (*Refugium Pecatorum*).

Similarly in my parish at Padregudi in the Diocese of Thanjavur there is a popular devotion to St. James the Apostle and brother of Jesus based on the Spanish tradition which reports that through the intercession of St. James, the Spaniards were saved from the violent attack of Turks in 844 AD. The missionaries introduced this popular devotion in this village in the 18th century. Today the pilgrims from Padregudi and around the locality come to this shrine for candle light procession on the first Tuesday of every month and celebrate the annual feast on 25th July. By participating in the candle light procession around the church the devotees believe that through the powerful intercession of St. James they are protected from all attacks by the devil. They believe that that their family members are protected from every sickness. They believe that their crop and cattle are also protected by this saint. This devotion is very much absorbed into the local culture and they fondly call St. James as Padaimirati Santhiagappar i.e. St. James Matamoros. Similar devotions to St. Jude are found Maharastra and Utter Pradesh.

There are numerous such devotions intertwined with our Indian culture from North to South and East to the West. Therefore in this brief presentation I would like to draw your attention to the tradition of popular devotion in the Catholic church particularly in the Roman rite.

1. Among the Early Christians

At the outset we need to acknowledge that in the Christian Tradition the relationship between Liturgy and popular piety has been experienced down through the centuries. The Apostolic and

post-apostolic periods witnessed a profound fusion of the cultic realities which are now called Liturgy and popular piety. Christ alone (cf. Col 2,16) was the most important cultic reality for the earliest Christian communities along with his life-giving word (cf. *John 6,63*), his commandment of reciprocal charity (cf. *John, 13,34)*, and the ritual actions which he commanded in his memory (cf. *1 Cor 11,24-26*). Everything else was of secondary importance. However, the signs of personal piety are already to be found among the first generation of Christians. Until the second century, expressions of popular piety spontaneously came together in the Liturgy. As the Directory on the Popular Piety and Liturgy rightfully acknowledges, the cult of martyrs, which was of great importance for the local Churches, preserves traces of popular usages connected with the memory of the dead. Some of the earliest forms of veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary also reflect popular piety; among them the *Sub tuum praesidium* and the Marian iconography of the catacombs of St. Priscilla in Rome deserve mention here. While always most vigilant with regard to interior conditions and the prerequisites for a dignified celebration of the sacred mysteries (cf. *1 Cor* 11, 17-32), the Church has never hesitated in incorporating into the liturgical rites forms drawn from individual, domestic and community piety. In this period, Liturgy and popular piety, either conceptually or pastorally, did not oppose each other. Both concurred harmoniously in celebrating the one mystery of Christ, considered as a whole, and in sustaining the supernatural and moral life of the disciples of the Lord.[1] During the fourth century, the local Churches, guided by clear pastoral and evangelizing principles, did not hesitate to absorb into the Liturgy certain purified solemn and festive cultic elements deriving from the pagan world. These were regarded as capable of moving the minds and imaginations of the people who felt drawn towards them. Such forms, now placed at the service of the mystery of worship, were seen as neither contrary to the Gospel nor to the purity of true Christian worship.

2. The Papal Recognition

When we attempt to trace popular devotion in the Christian tradition we cannot ignore the pontificate of the great pastor and liturgist Pope St. Gregory VII (590-604), since it is regarded as an exemplary reference point for any fruitful relationship between the Liturgy and popular piety. The pope organized processions, stations and rogations through which he undertook a major liturgical reform which sought to offer the Roman people structures which resonated with popular sensibilities while, at the same time, remaining securely based on the celebration of the divine mysteries. Interestingly, he gave wise directives to ensure that the conversion of new nations did not happen without regard for their own cultural traditions. Indeed, the Liturgy itself could be enriched by new legitimate cultic expressions and the noble expressions of artistic genius harmonized with more humble popular sensibilities.

3. The Dualism Between Liturgy and Popular Piety

Subsequent the pontificate of Gregory, i.e., the period between the seventh and the fifteenth century, the Church witnessed a decisive differentiation between Liturgy and popular piety. This difference gradually became more pronounced, ending eventually in a dualism of celebration. Parallel with the Liturgy, celebrated in Latin, a communitarian popular piety celebrated in the vernacular emerged. A careful examination of the history informs us that the following may be counted among the reasons for the development of this dualism:

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[1] Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of Sacraments, *Directory on Popular Piety and Liturgy* (2001), Vatican.

i. the idea that the Liturgy was the competence of clerics since the laity were no more than spectators at the Liturgy;

ii. lack of a sufficient knowledge of the Scriptures on the part, not only of the laity, but of many clerics and religious, made access to an understanding of the structure and symbolic language of the Liturgy difficult;

iii. the diffusion of apocryphal literature containing many stories of miracles and episodic anecdotes, on the other hand, had a significant influence on iconography which, touching the imagination of the faithful, naturally attracted their attention;

iv. the practical absence of any form of homiletic preaching, the disappearance of mystagogical preaching, and poor catechetical formation, rendered the celebration of the Liturgy closed to the understanding and active participation of the faithful who turned to alternative cultic times and forms.

4. Devotions Closer to Culture

During the Middle ages many spiritual movements and associations of different ecclesiastical and juridical form emerged. Their life and activities had notable consequences for the relationship between Liturgy and popular piety. The new religious orders of evangelical and apostolic life, devoted their efforts to preaching and adopted simpler liturgical forms in comparison to those found in the monasteries. These liturgical forms were often close to the people and to their expressive forms. On the other hand, they also developed and promoted pious exercises that encapsulated their charism, and diffused them among the people. For example the Jesuits spread the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the Franciscans promoted devotion to St. Antony. Although such devotions closer to the local culture helped to spread the Christian faith in newly evangelized nations they also reflect lack of proper catechesis on the Sacred Mysteries. In popular piety, because of the lack of adequate catechesis, deviations and exaggerations threatened the correct expressions of Christian worship.

During late fifteenth century the *devotio moderna* was popular with many great spiritual masters and was widespread among clerics and cultivated laymen. It promoted the development of meditative and affective pious exercises based principally on the humanity of Christ - the myteries of his infancy, his hidden life, his Passion and death. However, the primacy accorded to contemplation, the importance attributed to subjectivity and a certain ascetical pragmatism exalting human endeavor ensured that Liturgy no longer appeared as the primary source of the Christian life in the eyes of men and women advanced in the spiritual life.

5. Attempts to Unite Culture With Devotion

During the post-Tridentine era which was marked with rigid uniformity in liturgical matters, the Liturgy retained a Roman character and hence remained, at least partially, extraneous to indigenous culture. The question of inculturation was practically never raised, partly because of the fear of negative consequence for the faith. In this respect, however, mention must be made of the efforts of Matteo Rici in relation to the question of the Chinese rites, and those of Roberto de' Nobili, St. John De Britto and Veeramamunivar on the question of the Indian rites. On the other hand, popular piety was subject to the danger of religious syncretism, especially where evangelization was not deeply rooted. It became more autonomous and mature: it was not limited to reproducing the pious practices promoted by the missionaries, rather it created other forms of pious exercises that reflected the character of the local culture.

6. Quest For Deeper Meaning

The nineteenth century witnessed an emergence of Liturgical Movement triggering renewal within the Church. This was preceded by the development of a vigorous ecclesiology which saw the Church not only in terms of a hierarchical society but also as the People of God and as a worshipping community. Besides the revival of ecclesiology, mention must also be made of the flowering of biblical and patristic studies, as well as the ecclesial and ecumenical concerns of men such as Antonio Rosmini (+1855) and John Henry Newman (+1890). The history of the revival of liturgical worship reserves a special place for Dom Prosper Guéranger (+ 1875), who restored the monastic life in France. His conception of the Liturgy is permeated by a love for the Church and for tradition. The Roman Rite, he maintained in his writings on Liturgy, was indispensable for unity and, hence, he opposed uncontrolled forms of liturgical expressions. The liturgical renewal which he promoted has the distinct advantage of not having been an academic movement. Rather, it aimed at making the Liturgy an expression of worship in which the entire people of God participated. The revival of the Liturgy was not the sole activity of the nineteenth century. Independently of that revival, popular piety experienced significant growth. The revival of liturgical song coincided with the development of many popular hymns, the widespread use of liturgical aids such as bilingual missals for the use of the faithful, and a proliferation of devotional booklets. The nineteenth century experienced a phenomenon of crucial significance: expressions of local cult arising from popular initiatives and often associated with events such as miracles and apparitions. Gradually, these received official approval as well as the favour and protection of the ecclesial authorities, and were eventually assumed into the Liturgy. Several Marian sanctuaries and centers of pilgrimages, and of Eucharistic and penitential Liturgies as well as Marian centers associated with popular piety are all emblematic of this phenomenon.

7. More Clarity

During the twentieth century, St. Pope Pius X (1903-1914) proposed bringing the Liturgy closer to the people, thereby "popularizing" it. He maintained that the faithful assimilated the "true Christian spirit" by drawing from its "primary and indenspensable source, which is active participation in the most holy mysteries and from the solemn public prayer of the Church." In this way, St. Pope Pius X gave authoritative recognition to the objective superiority of the Liturgy over all other forms of piety; dispelled any confusion between Liturgy and popular piety, indirectly clarified the distinction between both and opened the way for a proper understanding of the relationship that must obtain between them. A thorough examination of the history informs us that these forms of popular piety, which were often approved and recommended by the Church, had sustained the spiritual life of the faithful and produced unequalled spiritual fruits. Popular piety had made a significant contribution to safeguarding and preserving the faith, and to the diffusion of the Christian message. Thus, Pope Pius XII, in his encyclical *Mediator Dei* of 21 November 1947, with which he assumed leadership of the liturgical movement, issued a defense of pious exercises which, to a certain extent, had become synonymous with Catholic piety in recent centuries. Following the same trajectory The Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* of the Second Vatican Council finally emphasized the validity of popular piety. The Council defined, in proper terms, the relationship between the Liturgy and popular piety, by declaring the unquestionable primacy of the Sacred Liturgy and the subordination to it of pious exercises.

8. Inculturation and Popular Piety

In our brief historical analysis we understand that popular piety is naturally marked by historical and cultural factors. The sheer variety of its expressions is an indicator of that fact. It reflects

forms of popular piety that have arisen and been accepted in many particular Churches throughout the ages, and are a sure sign of the extent to which the faith has taken root in the hearts of particular peoples, and of its influence on the daily lives of the faithful. Indeed, "popular piety is the first and most fundamental form of the faith's "inculturation", and should be continually guided and oriented by the Liturgy, which, in its turn, nourishes the faith though the heart."

9. The Task Ahead

The encounter between the innovative dynamism of the Gospel message, and the various elements of a given culture, is affirmed in popular piety particularly in Indian context. The Marian devotions and devotions to saints are still means to sustain and nourish the Catholic faith in India. However, the acknowledgement of the special role that popular piety played in Indian Church does not relieve us from our most important responsibility today to catechize the Catholic faithful and clergy about the deeper meaning of the Sacred Mysteries we celebrate in Liturgy. That is, the need for Liturgical Catechesis is necessary not only for laity but also for priests, religious and leaders of the Church in India.

DEVOTIONS TO BL. VIRGIN MARY AND THE SAINTS IN THE SYRO-MALANKARA TRADITION: SOME SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

Fr. Joseph Valliyattu

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Any theological or sociological evaluation of the pious devotions exercised within the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church (SMCC) is bound to be extremely complex because of the historical situation of this particular Church. This Church retains the historical consciousness of having been united with the older Catholic tradition of the land, of being part of a larger Syrian tradition. Then there is the gradual introduction of the West Syrian Liturgy (WSL), which began in 1665 but became a collective ecclesial choice only in 1836, when the so called *Puthenkoor* tradition affirmed its identity as Jacobite in order to prevent the overwhelming influence of the Anglican reformist trends. Then there is the historical moment of Reunion in 1930, after which, in order to identify itself with the larger Catholic tradition, this community appropriated a considerable number of pious practices shared by either or both of the other Catholic Churches in India. Accordingly the popular pious practices in the SMCC can be grouped into three: those that are shared with the older Syrian Catholic group—like the so called *adimavakkal* and *pidippanam*, those that are particular to the WSL tradition and, those that have been (re)introduced after the Reunion—like the Holy Rosary[1]. For obvious reasons, this paper concerns only with the first two of these groups and principally, only with the second.

Within the WSL tradition, pious practices are rather strictly regulated by the principles of the Liturgy, and this particular rigor may be historically attributed both to the factional context (during the miaphysite controversies) in which the Liturgical tradition itself consolidated and the 'defensive' context in which it was appropriated by the *Puthenkoor* Christianity. The 'defensive', anti-reformist, reaction within the 'Jacobite' church included insertion of the Office of the Virgin, the Saints and of the Departed into the very climactic moment of the Mass and the addition of a *Hail Mary* to the combination of doxology and *Our Father* that introduces every common prayer (known as *khaumo*). The separation from the reformists was gradual and painful. The litigations came to an end only in the last decade of the 19th century. Consequently devotion to the Virgin and the Saints and festivities related to them became a mark of identity for the then Jacobite community (The Orthodox Church separated from this 'Jacobite Church' on disciplinal issues during the years 1910-12; and the SMCC reunited from the latter faction in 1930; both

[1]Publishing the Prayer-book for the households in 1942, Mar Ivanios instructs the parish priests to encourage families to recite the Rosary together. Cf. Prabheesh George, ed., *JagarookanaayaAjapalakan*, Collection of Pastoral Letters of Servant of God Mar Ivanios, (Pattom, 2012), 130.

incidents did not involve changes in confession and practice). At the same time the Church became wary of any practice contrary to the spirit of the liturgical tradition espoused in the Synod of Mavelikara.

This rare combination of enthusiasm and restraint has resulted in a unique approach to pious exercises. Considering the tumultuous atmosphere in the Church in the 19th century, it is surprising that an ample collection of daily prayers and pious devotions appropriated largely from Syriac and formulated in Malayalam (and translated again to Syriac for Patriarchal approval) was published for common use with Patriarchal approval in 1910.[2]Enthusiasm for daily life in presence and protection of the Lord is clearly seen in this book: prayers for all imaginable occasions of the day to day life are added; three sets of devotions to the Blessed Mother (one of them for the sick) and other prayers to the saints are added in this collection. Formalizing pious devotions using sources of anancient liturgy has one obvious risk and that is very evident in this collection. Liturgical prayer, and its language, has a soteriological motive—it looks beyond this world and sets its eyes on the eschatological redemption. Pious devotions, it is widely noted, are generally motivated by the more practical concerns of everyday life. People seek protection from dangers, help in adversity and facility in life's pursuits through them. The liturgical language used in the aforementioned collection generallytries to reorient the attention of the faithful to higher spiritual ideals and that may be the reason why they are not very 'popular' even now.[3]

Devotion to the Blessed Virgin

Devotion to the Mother of God is so deep embedded in the Liturgical tradition that no common celebration is possible without commemorating her. Except during the Holy Week, the introductory doxology (*khaumo*) of common prayers—both of the liturgy and of the personal devotions—include the recital of the Hail Mary. And all formal services end with the Office of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints. Many stanzas of the Liturgy of the hours are, structurally, dedicated to the Mother of God.

The SMCC has adapted the common Catholic devotions to the Blessed Virgin with varying degree of enthusiasm. The Holy Rosary, including occasional public Rosary processions, are part of the piety. But usually there is no particular emphasis on Marian apparitions. The veneration is based almost entirely on her role in the Mystery of Salvation and the litanies and hymns that are used in the devotions proper to the traditions are meditations on the history of salvation. (They do not incorporate emotive and aesthetic images and titles as those used in the *LitaniaeLauretanae*.) Many of the later definitions of the Catholic Mariology can be demonstrated compatible to the Mariological doctrine embedded in WSL, a famous example of which is the long letter Mar Ivanios wrote to Pope Pious XII in 1946 as a response to the forthcoming proclamation of the Dogma of Assumption.[4]But they do not play any important role in the popular pieties proper to the tradition. The corona of the Rosary and the Scapular are worn by the faithful only occasionally; but such use is predominant in the South.

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[2]Published by with the approval of Patriarch Abdalla in 1910, this book is still in use and is the primary source of the Common Prayer-book in use in the SMCC today: *Malanakara Orthodox KristianikaludePrarthanakramam*, (Kottayam: 1992)

[3]The Prayer-book of 1910, for example included a prayer to the Saints where the faithful prays to attain remission of sins through the power of God that resided in the Saints. There is no space for a particular intention from day to day life. See, 1992 edition, 430.

[4]Margarett Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, (Kattanom, 2002 edition) Appendix I, 174-9.

The unique spirit of Marian devotions within the *Puthenkoor* tradition is epitomized in the celebration of the 8 days fast and the Feast of the Birth of the Virgin on 8th September. This particular celebration is marked by all the elements that are common to veneration of saints within the Malankara tradition. (Many of them are shared with other traditions, of course) 1) Spiritual preparation for the feast through additional prayers in the daily household prayers and fasting 2) Pilgrimage 3) Special Veneration of Icons and Relics 4) Processions 5) Agapes and Use, distribution and preservation of ritually offered food items 6) Liturgical celebration as a climactic moment.

It can be noted that the celebration of *Ettunompuperunnal* at Manarcadu Church, transcends the limits of denominations and even faiths. In those days this shrine the custody of the Jacobites becomes the focal point of Syrian Christian life in central Travancore: both *puthenkoor* and *pazhayakoor*; both Catholics and Jacobites. Eminent sociologist Susan Viswanathan has observed that this particular feast and observances attached to it give cathartic space to the feminine within the normally male dominated social structures of the Puthenkoor Christianity.[5]It can also be added that the rituals such as offering of children for protection (*adimavaykkal*) and offering of figurines of body organs made in precious metals, asking healing for their afflictions are not common with any other saint in the Malanakra tradition. Her motherly love and tender care is what people seek in these devotions.[6]

Common Elements in Popular Devotion to the Saints

1) *Purification of the Everyday Life*: Traditionally, commemoration of the Saints including the Bl. Virgin involves purification of the everyday and the commonplace, including the households. Thisinvolves ritual bathing and cleaning of premises but the more important elements are additional daily prayers and fasting. Such customs were observed in connection with the traditional pilgrimage to Mylapore and the observance of *dhukhrana* (Commemoration i.e., of St. Thomas) in the month of July. From a sociological perspective, arrangement of households play a key part in facilitating mobility, which is important during the pilgrimage season, both ritually and socially—Pilgrims cannot eat unclean food or enter unclean premises in the wider Indian traditions. Spiritual observances like *Sliha* Fast (13 days prior to 29 July) 8-days Fast, 15-days Fast (prior to *Shunoyo*, Feast of Assumption) and 3-days Fast—all related to commemoration of Saints—help to remind the faithful about sanctification of time through prayers and purification of self through various ascetical practices.

2) *Pilgrimage*: Syrian Christians of Malabar were known to make pilgrimage to Mylapore and bring soil from the tomb of the Apostle which was claimed to have miraculous power to heal and protect. After the 18th century the place enjoyed by Mylapore as the place of commemoration of the Apostle gradually shifted to Malayattur and pilgrimage during July season was substituted with the observance of the First Sunday after the Easter (Puthunjayar). For the commemoration of saints of the common Syriac tradition – Bl Virgin Mary, the Apostles and St George are the most important—the blending of denominational boundaries can be observed. We mentioned the feast of Manarcadu Church earlier. Likewise the Syro Malabar shrines of Edapally and

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[5]*The Christians of Kerala*: *History, Belief and Ritual among the Yakoba*, (Madras:1993), 218.

[6] There is no big point in arguing that Marian devotion is strongly rooted in Kerala because of the Hindu belief in the Goddess, kali for example. (Francis X. Clooney has done that in a famous book, *Divine Mother, Blessed Mother*). The tender care and perpetual availability as mediator which we find in the idea of Mary in Christian traditions has no similarity with any idea of the Goddess in Kerala.

Edathuva, the major shrines of St George, are frequented by pilgrims from all Syrian Christian denominations.

One particular aspect about the *Puthankoor* concept of pilgrimage is the popular participation by means of hospitality. In many cases (Manjanikara, Parumala, and tomb of Mar Ivanios at Patttom SMCC Cathedral) pilgrims walk their way to the destination and the other faithful offer them hospitality on the way. Here is the re-invention of the virtue of hospitality which was one of the cornerstones of Christian classical culture.

3) *Veneration of Icons and Relics*: The historical complexity of the ecclesial heritage certainly mean that both the Syrian Catholic communities have not reached a proper identity in Iconography and architecture. Generally both Churches encourage pictures than statues, but statues are not prohibited. This may be one case were the 'popular' weighs against the 'liturgical', since in some cases some statues are immensely popular—even among the Puthenkoor Christians who normally do not venerate them. The statue of St.George of Edathuva which is believed to come from Edapally, one of the earliest Syrian Churches in the shared tradition, is an example.

Apart from the tomb and relics of St Thomas, and the famous relic from the sash (*arappatta*) of Our Lady brought to Manarcad by the Patriarch ZakkaIwas in 2004, veneration of relics in the JacobitePuthenkoor tradition is almost limited to the tombs of departed prelates. Parumala and Manjanikkara have become centers of annual pilgrimage. In the SMCC, a steady growth is observed in the participation in pilgrimage to the tomb of Mar Ivanios in the month of July. Sociologically such veneration can be seen as means to strengthen factional identity and belongingness. Historically distribution of relics was an important means through which imperial cities promoted their claims to primacy. Within the factional situation of the Kerala Church, comparable mechanisms are subtly at work behind the pilgrimages.

4) *Processions*: Processions play an important part in the celebration of saints everywhere. Solemn liturgical processions and processions of Canonical feasts are regulated by rigid liturgical rules. They are governed by silence, however festive the air feels to be. On the contrary processions related to saints happen in the liturgical 'outside': the cacophony of fringe elements are played aloud there. It is not by accident that these processions remain the most inculturated aspect of Christian living.

It has been traditionally observed that the only thing that distinguished a Christian public procession from a Hindu one is the use of the Cross.[7] Hindu communities and families often participate in the procession or sponsor paraphernalia for it. Temple customs are often copied without changing form or content. *Vecchoottu* which is normally part of the feasts of St George is a good example. The annual *chempedupp* during the Chandanappally*perunaal* starts from the courtyard of traditional Hindu family who sponsor the material every year.

It is not limited to religious elements.The public place prepares itself for the procession, often utilizing the marketing possibility of the event. The marginalized and the socially outcaste use

[7]Fr. Podipara notes this. Cf.Dr. Thomas Kalayil ed., Collected Works of Placid Podipara CMI, Vol II,(Mannanam: 2007), 487. For a more sociological and contemporaty analysis, see Matthias Frenz, "The Virgin and her 'Relations'" in Knut A. Jacobsen ed., South Asian Religions on Display (London:2008), 90 ff. In p.92 we read: "Regarding their claims to public space, handling of sacred objects, direction, processional sequence, and timing, Christian and Hindu practices resemble each other quite closely."

the din for their favour: some establishing temporary business, some displaying their disabilities in order to evoke charity. Such manifestations reach religious dimensions in cases of *badhathullal* (when people are apparently taken by spirits) which is attested in Manarcadu and in the shrines of St. George.

Other elements are even subtler. Within the Christian community itself there is a silent, temporary, change. For the moment, the hierarchical leadership recedes into the background and a new functional leadership takes charge. The socially and economically marginalized suddenly find their place in the mainstream. Everyone's presence, effort and penny is appreciated. But no revolutions yet. Look closely into the procession, you will see a leadership emerging. Especially in established Christian communities, these processions almost decide who will be at the helm of the affairs in the coming months.

Thus processions and the festive air they bring up create a large cathartic space in which the fringe elements are given a chance to show up and eventually settle into their respective roles (only rarely better than the previous ones). They play a huge role in profiling the local community's relationship with other communities and in stabilizing community cohesion. The 'outside' created (and controlled) by the image of the saint is a principal constituent of this process. The effigy of the saint, carried in the procession, consolidates the sense of local and communal identity of the community.

It is impossible to ignore the religious dimensions of the spectacle. The WSL places great emphasis on the aspect of eschatological communion with the saints which is the reliable source of spiritual stability and protection. The procession as the manifestation of this communion brings prosperity and safety to the land. The proclamation of victory of the good over the evil forces tormenting the land is proclaimed through highlighting numerous golden crosses, which form either a figure head or the central part of the procession. The ancient Syrian custom of the priest accompanying the procession carrying a small cross[8] which is venerated and kissed by the onlookers is retained only in the Malankara tradition now.

5) *Agapes and Ritual Food*: How agapes and ritual foods are part of celebrations of saints and how such customs are adaptations from pre-Christian customs of the land need no elaboration. The *Chempedupp* ceremony in relation to the festival of St George at Chandanappalli, functions exactly as the temple ritual with the same name functions. The half-baked rice from the *chemp* (a large brazen vessel taken in procession) is distributed among the faithful and the outsiders; it will be dried and kept at their homes and consumed during the year by men and cattle who are afflicted by any illness.

Vachoott is at the same time both an *agape* and a ritual meal. It is a ritual meal, especially because, they are served at the commemoration of saints that are considered *chattahams*(festive remembrance of ancestors). In the early Syrian Christian tradition the feast of St Thomas also was considered *Chattham*.[9] Remembering the saints as ancestors and sharing the banquet in their honor is a measure of building community cohesion—they mark a social inside and outside. This dimension is particularly visible in the case of the saints of the post-1910 period. Patriarch Elias III who is entombed in Manjanikkara after the division is a saint for the Patriarch faction while he was a known enemy to the leaders of the other party—the so-called Metran faction. So

[8]Placid Podipara TOCD, "Kerala SabhayudeVyakthithvam" in Dr. Thomas Kalayil ed., Collected Works of Placid Podipara CMI, Vol II,(Mannanam: 2007), 668 records that the custom was dropped in the Syro Malabar Church.
[9]Susan Viswanathan records her experiences in this regard at some length in *The Christians of Kerala*, 244-5.

people from the Metran faction will not participate in the commemoration of Mar Elias, nor will they offer hospitality for the pilgrims of the other side. In the case of St Geevarghese of Parumala who died just before the years of division, there is greater mutual acceptance. All the same, outsiders are welcome to the *chattham*, if they present themselves as guests.

6) *The Liturgical Climax*: The hierarchical leadership, as we have indicated, is largely invisible during this progression. On the climactic moment, they will appear in full splendor, most often officiating a High Mass and delivering a concluding message in which people will be reminded to search for spiritual gains than looking for mundane, short term well-being. The sociological and the cathartic recede into background and the theological drama of salvation takes the central stage. (Of course in a paper on theology of these celebrations, that could have been the central part of the argument.) Even in household devotions, such a control is achieved through the mandatory use of fixed text and formulae—as those embodied in the 1910 collection we mentioned.

Conclusion

One might have noticed that of the six elements explained above, the first three are more on the personal and household side and the last three happen in a space created temporarily in and around a sanctuary or a parish. The first three—fasting and prayer, pilgrimage and veneration of icons—can be accomplished at various times of the year as the individual or families prefer, though some basic frame work is decided by the community. The last three basically need a community set up and they play a higher role in creating and consolidating communal identity and cohesion. God is loving but also just: he creates and preserves, but also punishes and is largely unaffected by what happens among the humans. The presence of a more accessible mediator gives the cathartic space for individual and communities to settle into their proper roles in relation to the community and to find sustenance in their search for the redeeming grace of God.

KINSHIP AND MARRIAGE: A CASE STUDY ON LATIN CATHOLIC MARRIAGE RITESOF TAMIL NADU

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Introduction

Marriage is one of the social institutions. It creates a new institution called family. One of the primary functions of the family is to produce and reproduce persons, biologically and socially. Family is a basic unit in the society; A set of people related by blood, marriage (or some other agreed-upon relationship), or adoption who share the primary responsibility for reproduction and caring for members of society.[1]It produces number of customs and laws in the society. It is also having some functional roles to maintain/ run their own family and some regulation to the society. Basically family is divided into two type; one, nuclear family and another one, joint family. Whether it is nuclear family or joint/ extended family, folk is having the crucial function in the family because, of all types of customs are producing by the folk. According to Levi-Strauss, incest and taboo create endogamy and exogamy marriage divisions. So, in folklore, studying about kinship, family and marriage is to help to create a folk history with understanding of social structure about particular group of people. So, it is very much important that kinship studies aim is not only collecting the terminology, it has also to speak about the cultural meaning of the kinship.[2] Thus, this article gives a broad outline of Latin marriage rite in Tamil Nadu.

Latin Catholics in Tamil Nadu

Christianity in India is believed to be 2000 years old. Thecolonial age brought a large number of Portuguese, Dutch, British and Italian Christians to Tamil Nadu. Priests accompanied them not only to minister the colonizers but also to spread the Christian faith among the millions of non-Christians in Tamil Nadu.The arrival of Portuguese missionaries, a small section of the local people known as Paravas became Christians in 1536-1537 in Kanniyakumari district. [3] Vadakkankulam village is situated in the southern Tirunelveli region in this village a Shanar (now they are known as Nadars) woman known as SandaiNadathi who came to be revered as the actual founder of the village.[4]A history of the Christian missions in southern India would fill many pages. It is to be noted that in other parts of Tamil Nadu Christian population are found

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[1] Richard T. Schaefer. *Sociology: A Brief introduction.* DePaul University. pp. 291.

[2]Vatuk, Sylvia. 1983. "Forms of Address in the north Indian Family: an exploration of the cultural meaning of kin terms in Concept of Person: Kinship, Caste and Marriage in India". In AkosOstor, Lina Rfuzzetti and Steve Barnett (Eds.). Delhi: Oxford University Press. pp. 58.

[3]http://www.kottardiocese.org/History.aspx

[4]Bayly, Susan; *Saint, Goddess and Kings*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pg.406

among various castes sects such as Vanniyar, Vellalas, Kallars, Praiyars, Pallars, Gounders. Studying religion is more crucial to understand the society through where changes occur regularly. So to say religion has the nature to associate the community with their native thoughts. In that sense, this article emphasizes on Christianity especially Latin catholic marriage practices from the various regions of Tamil Nadu. Basically practices have been covered as follows; southern Tamil Nadu (Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi districts), central part of Tamil Nadu (Madurai, Ramanathapuram, Sivagangai, Theni, Dindigul, Trichy, Tanjore and Nagapattinam districts), western part of Tamil Nadu (Coimbatore, Nilagiri, Salem and Tharumapuri districts) and northern Tamil Nadu (Vellore, Cuddalore and Chennai districts). As the southern Tamil Nadu (Kottar diocese, Thoothukudi diocese and Palayamkottai diocese) has more Latin Christian population, most of the data have been taken for the discussion from the south. The following list shows about the Latin catholic spreading out in Tamil Nadu.

Diocese Name	Denomination	Diocese Name	Denomination
Chingleput	Latin Rite	Ootacamund	Latin Rite
Coimbatore	Latin Rite	Palayamkottai	Latin Rite
Dindigul	Latin Rite	Ramanathapuram	Syro Malabar Rite
Kottar	Latin Rite	Sivagangai	Latin Rite
Kumbakonam	Latin Rite	Thanjavur	Latin Rite
Madras-Mylapore	Latin Rite	Thoothukudi	Latin Rite
Madurai	Latin Rite	Thukkalai	Syro Malabar Rite
Marthandam	Syro Malankara Rite	Tiruvhirappalli	Latin Rite
Ootacamund	Latin Rite	Vellore	Latin Rite

However this article has been divided as follows:

Introduction
Latin catholic Christians in Tamil Nadu
Kinship terminology
Marriage as a Ritual
Prescription, Preference and Practice
Church role in Marriage
Conclusion

Kinship Terminology

Collecting folk terms of kinship is not only meant for terminology study, it is also identified as to make an understanding of a community or region in terms of their marriageable and non-marriageable in wider. Gathered folk terms of kinship have been mentioned in table with the analytical category.

Referents	Folk terms of Kinship
FFFF	*Muppattan (Uravathan)*
FFF	*Poottan*
FF	*Thatha/Pattaiya*
F	*Appa/Ayya*
FM	*Pattiyamma/Valathamma*
FeB	*Periyappa*
FyB	*Sithappa*

M	*Amma*
MeZ	*Periyamma*
MyZ	*Sithi/Chinnamma*
MB	*Mama/Muraimaman/Thaimaman*
FZ	*Athai/Mami*
HM/WM	*Athai/Mami*
eB	*Annan*
eZ	*Akka*
yB	*Thambi*
yZ	*Thankachi*
MBeS	*Atthan/Machan*
MBeD	*Manini/Anni*
MByS	*Machinan*
MByD	*Kozhunthiya*
eZH/yZH, WeB/WyB	*Atthan/Machinan/Mappillai (ms)*
yZH, HyB, MByS, FZyS	*Kozhunthan (ws)*
WeZ/WyZ, eBW/yBW	*Nangaiah/Kozhunthiyal (ms)*
HeZ, HyZ, HeBW/HyBW	*Nathanar/Orpadiyal/Sambanthi (ws)*
SWF/SWM, DHF/DHM	*Sambanthi*
S	*Makan*
D	*Makal*
DH/ZS (ms), BS (ws)	*Marumakan*
SW/ZD (ms), BD (ws), BSW (ms), ZSW (ws)	*Marumakal*
SS, DS	*Peran*
SD, DD	*Pethi*
SSS	*Kolluperan*
SSD	*Kollupethi*
SSSS	*Elluperani (uravathaan)*
SSSD	*Ellupethi (uravathaan)*

The above seen folk terms of kinship are almost usedamong Latin Catholics in all regions of Tamil Nadu. Though there are small different in calling and addressing terms, the ethnic term/folk term of kinship are found with many commonalities after all the comparison of terminologies.

Prescription, Preference and Practice

System of Kinship behavior is differed from one another region and community.In general, among the Latin catholic Christians, three marriageable relations are found. They are eZD

marriage, FZD marriage, MBD marriage. Getting married with close relatives or cross cousin is prohibited by the church law. Although it is prohibited, there are many cases in various parts of Tamil Nadu that getting married with cross cousin or close relatives (especially eZD). And another recent phenomenon is that getting married with another denomination groom/bride.While seeking and arranging bride/groom for marriage, the religious denomination is also decided by giving priority with both families.

Marriage is a Ritual process

This section on marriage practices approach it as a ritual process as in the following. They are 1.**Selection and confirmation**(a. Seeking bride/groom b.Poovaithal (adorning flowers) c.Betrothal) 2.**Feast to bride/groom by the relatives** (Making the bride and groom to be ready for the marriage (physically)) 3.**Second Confirmation**(a. Bride Wealth (ParisamPoduthal) b.NaazhiVeedu (Confirmation)) 4.**Blessing Ceremony**(a. Worship at family god b.Ancestor tomb c.Maternal uncle ritual d.Elder's blessing e.Anantharam (agantes' blessings)) 5.**Marriage**(a.Recieving groom and the relatives (ethirmalaisanthanam) b.AlanthuSelai (Vaadavilakku) c.Tali) 6.**Transition and Transformation**(a.First food to couple (milk and plantain) b.Aarathi (waving lighted camphor) c.Food given by groom's mother to the couple (Milk and plantain)) 7.**Honouring the agnates and affines**(a.Madippalakaram (Mothers-in-law) b.Dowry (gifts to groom) c.Surul (to agnates and affines)) 8.**Strengthening new Affinal and existing agnates relationships**(a.Oil ritual b.Second Visit to bride/groom place (known as Maruveedu) c.Seeing the kitchen/mothers-in-law meeting d.Feast to couple) 9.**New family** (in the community/society)

Seeking bride and groom

Seeking bride and groom starts from relatives or through marriage broker. But cities like Chennai, Coimbatore and Madurai bride and bridegroom seeking event places in matrimonial which come in various print media and online matrimonial services. They are divided into caste as well as religion for example the denomination for matrimonial are given as follows: Adventist, Anglican / Episcopal, Apostolic, Assyrian, Assembly Of God (AG), Baptist, Born Again, Brethren, Calvinist, Catholic, Church Of God, Church Of South India (CSI), Church Of Christ, Congregational, Evangelical, Jacobite, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jewish, Latin Catholic, Latter Day Saints, Lutheran, Malankara, Marthoma, Melkite, Mennonite, Methodist, Moravian, Orthodox, Pentecostal, Protestant, Presbyterian, Seventhday Adventist, Syro Malabar, Syrian Catholic.

Betrothal

On the day of betrothal bride family and groom family gather at bride's house. Groom will come with many gifts for bride along with his relatives. Once he reaches to bride's home he is received by bride's father. As soon as they enter into bride's house, now groom's sister makes bride to be ready for the betrothal function. Both maternal uncles (of bride and groom) are invited and honoured in the function by giving the place for conducting the betrothal. Priest takes the role for conducting in catholic formalities.

Feast to bride/groom

After the date of marriage is fixed, there are some pre-marriage ceremonies such as *MukoorthaNelAvippu* (preparing new paddy for the purpose), *AyanamKodukkal* (in Kanniyakumari district)/*AsanamKoduthal* (Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli districts). In

general*Ayanam* or *AsanamKoduthal* is a function conducted as 'serving rice to other'. It is taken place before to one month or fifteen days of marriage. There after bride/groom will be honored by close relatives (*Aruvakkar* or *Uravinmurai*) feast.

Asanam Koduthal

It is a feast which would happen before the day of wedding. It is known as different names in region to region such as *soruvaippu* (in Kanniyakumari district), *muhoortham* (Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi).[5] All relatives are invited to attend this feast by groom/ bride families. The main intention of this feast is that to gather all relatives to groom or bride's house before the day of marriage. Previously, people were used to gather in their relatives places and they have shared their works in marriage. This is also considered as the privilege of the relatives especially for agnates.[6]

Pezha Petti Edutthal

This customary practice goes to one of the groom's sisters. She will bring Gold (taali), Sari, and Cloths for bride in a box (it could be suitcase or any other bag). To decorate bride, to call bride to church for getting married,groom's sister role is important and shehas the right to do it. She has to be along with groom till the marriage finishes. The role of groom's sister is known as *pezhapettikari/ponpooti. Pezha petti* is a small box which is used to carry the wedding chain (Tali or Mangal sutra), Sari, etc.The sister of groom, with other respectable ladies, takes the container called *Pezha Petti*, proceeds to the inner house and offers bracelets,[7] other gold ornaments, a Sari (it is also known Kodi-Chelai).

Tholathaan

*Tholathaan*is known as an honorary position in marriage. This privilege goes to one of the groom's sister's husbands. As the *pezhapetti*privilegegoes to groom's sister, her husband takes this role of *Tholathan.* Now he will be accompanying with groom till tali tying event. After thathe leaves from groom. As the mother stays aside, the groom is led to the site by his brother in-law (*Thozhathaan*).

Tali

It is an ornament, which bridegroom ties on the neck of bride at wedding. It consists of a circular piece of gold, fastened by either a gold string or a string of cotton dyed yellow with turmeric. The Hindus engrave on it the proboscis and pendant their religious symbols. This is crucial thing for marriage. The history of tali is "early day when people started to tie tali that time people used to tie tali in palm leaf. They made the palm leaf in such a way like dollar shape to tie it. Then it was changed into yellow color thread along with turmeric. Then it has beenchangedin the form of metal like gold, due to gold ornaments arrival and diamonds arrival. Now it has changed as primary one for married.It is to be noted that if groom ties tali for above nine *pavun* (it may be calculated as 36 grams) that would show his status. According to goldsmith woman's caste as well religion can easily be identified on seeing the *tali* (wedlock) and design/symbol used in it. Latin catholic Christians wear tali in which the image of the Holy Spirit or cross is there at centre.

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[5]AmuthaThereslin (37), Meenakshinathapuram of Nanguneri Taluk in Tirunelveli district
[6]MariyaChandran (52), Rajavoor in Kanniyakumari district
[7] Mr. PonnuSamy (67), Eetthavilai in Kanniyakumari District.

VeeduKanuthal

Couple is sent to groom's house in evening on the day of wedding. While couple is sent it is the customary that bride has to take some vegetables, some grocery things for cooking. In those days, at night in groom house dry fish curry will be servedwhich is supposed to be made by bride.[8] Then it has to be servedto groom and all the agnates of groom. Now bride's family visits to groom's place so, the whole event of going to groom's place by bride family known as *VeeduKanuthal*. Though the practice of *VeeduKanuthal* there is in marriage, it is not to be seen the offering of dry fish curry to groom's agnates.[9]

Agnate Surul(MakkamuraiSurul)

It is nothing but groom's brothers (blood relatives), it could be his father's sons, father's elder and younger brothers' sons. For this *Surul*(circle) system groom has to give respect to his blood relatives. That is why he is giving some gift during the marriage celebration in order to give respect to his consanguine relatives. It may be given in the form of cash/ornaments/gold. It should be given by groom or groom's family. As it is observed as one of customary practices in marriage, the practice of agnate *surul*is practiced.

Affine Surul(MarumakkamuraiSurul – son-in-law Surul)

This *surul* is given to bride's MBS and FZS, bride's ZH they have the rights to get this *surul*. At the same time groom, he has the rights to get this *surul* from bride's family. Bride's MZ and bride's FBW have to give this *surul* to groom as their son-in-law kin bond. As giving gift can be seen in all marriages over TamilNadu, especially, in south TamilNadu it is observed as making solidarity among relatives by honoring them in public. It can be divided into two categories. First family receives from the relatives, whom they have already given to someone, it is called *Moi.*[10] Second one is within the family, who conducts the marriage (bride/groom family) they will share some gift to their agnates and the boys (they are called *Murai Mappillai*) who have customary right to marry bride girl.This practice is known as *surul.*[11]*Moi* can be given in all life cycle ceremonies in family. But *surul* can be seen only in marriages.

The primary functions of *Surul*

- Representation of the relatives
- Recognition for the relatives in the public sphere
- To show their family agnates and affine relatives in the public
- It is a time to get reunited in the family
- Bride has to know those who are the agnates, affine relatives of groom and vice versa.
- In order to consolidate their relatives they do rituals/ceremonies irrespective of relatives are called in a particular place

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[8] Mr. Ramachandran (59), Udangudi of Thoothukudi district
[9]M.V.Anatha Kumar (79), Nattathi in Thoothukudi district
[10]*Moi,* it is a Tamil word referring to the gifting procedure during the family functions. This *MOI* practice can be seen in common in all life cycle ceremonies of one family.
[11] It is also a kind of gifting procedure. But it can be observed only in marriage. It is a practice which is happening between bride and groom families.

- Though the agnate's disharmony is with the groom's family, groom has to give the *surul* share to his agnates. In order to show their solidarity and as it considers as their right, it is mandatory giving the share to agnates of groom.
- It is the emblematic of honoring to agnates of groom's family

Maternal uncle in the family

Maternal uncle is called *thaimama/nallappan* he is also given the next position to father.[12]Mostof the southern districts among the Latin catholic Christians do not get married with maternal uncle. Whereas in other parts of Tamil Nadu it is observed that marrying eZD is often in their culture. When child is born, mother will give it to her elder brother to hold the child for while and it is considered as child has to get blessing from maternal uncle. During the marriage, bride and bridegroom have to be blessed by maternal uncles. In girl's puberty ceremony maternal uncle's presence is also observed very crucial. Though the family has any conflict with him, she has to call him for the function. Inviting maternal uncle for the marriage or any other functions in home is observed as prosperous for child. First invitation is issued to maternal uncle, along with the invitation letter coconut, betel leaves, Arecanut, bananas, and saffron. Somebody will give small amount of rice along with the invitation. It shows that person should not go without eating in function.[13]

Absent of Maternaluncle in ritual

If any function comes in a family (such as puberty, marriage),the role or presence of maternal uncle is significant one. Sometime family may not have a good relationship with maternal uncles. At that family will call maternal uncle as an obligatory event for the function. Buthe may not be able to come. In such casefor the presence of maternal uncle during ritual an arecanut cutter is kept on the grindstone in the place where maternal uncle is supposed to sit. Sometime coconut is kept in the place where maternal uncle is supposed to sit. Then only other ceremony will be continuing. It shows that the presence of maternal uncle and he participates in the ritual.[14]

Eduppuchoru Eduthal/Pettichoru[15]

Even thennow in all villages of districts especially in southern districts of Tamil Nadu such as Kanniyakumari, Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi *eduppuchoru/pettichorueduthal* practice is followed. If anyone is unable to attend a special dinner at family functions of relative, they will give meal to the person who has attended the function for whom has not come to the function. It had been considered as an obligatory in all villages and families. Since it lost its importance in the towns and cities, some of the villages continue this practice. The interesting thing is that among the people from Thoothukudi and Tirunelveli districts while giving dowry to daughter, there will be a vessel known *eduppuchoru pathiram* given to groom's family.[16] As it is given as *eduppuchoru pathiram,* when there is a marriage it should be used while getting food for the person whom has not attended to the function.

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[12] S. Salet Mary (44), Devasahaya Mount, M. Benny (59), Thuckalai of Kanniyakumari district
[13] Ms. A. ThanaraniUlaganathan (57), Peelamedu of Coimbatore district
[14]M.V. Anantha Kumar (76), Nattathi of Thoothukudi district
[15] Meal is sent to a relative whoever unable to attend in special dinner
[16] S. AmuthaTheraslin (37), Meenakshinathapuram of Tirunelveli district

Church role as mandatory in marriage rite

The second part of this article says about role of church and parish council. In this part apart from kin roles in life cycle ceremoniesthe following are discussed parish council, priest role, the practice of mixed marriage and punishment for elopement.

Parish council role

In Latin catholic every parish will have one council by consistingof several council members headed by parish priest and a village head. It is the superior authority to decide any activities at parish council. The main duty of this council is scheduled as follows: conducting village festival by collecting taxes, conducting other community gathering, giving advices for all the societies and associations in parish, welfare plan for youth and aged in parish by having various committees and so on. After the consultation of village council and parish council only marriage is conducted by a priest. Sometime priest may take a role in certain case where parish council needs the help of priest.

Priest role in marriage

As soon as the betrothal is getting over, groom has to bring one letter from his parish council (it is given by the priest) which may be given to bride's parish. Then only the marriage is conducted. For issuing this letter from the groom's parish, he or his family must not have any dues in the village (to the church or any other organizations in village which he has engaged) then, the church decides to give letter for marriage is to be ensued. Then bride and groom are allowed to take marriage class for one week which will be conducted by the concern catholic diocese. The letter from the groom's parish and certificate for which attended the marriage class, both have to be submitted/shown to bride's village parish priest. The letter gives the details of groom such as religion and his activities towards catholic community and his family. So, he gets permitted for the marriage. If his catholic activity is not satisfactory, letter and certificate will not be issued for the marriage. Apart from that priest will also ask to bride and groom about their wish on marriage. If any of them is not willing to get married,priest cancels the marriage. That is what there is an arrangement in the catholic marriages that announcement about the marriage in church for three Sundays. If anyone has opposition or opinion about the marriage they can convey it to the parish priest in written, and the priest has the right to proceed or cancel the marriage with the consultation of parents of bride and groom. This announcement is called *paraivasithal* in local language. This *paraivasithal* has to be announced for three weeks in the concern parish of bride and groom villages.

Mixed marriage

Marriage is governed by both civil and Church law. Just because a marriage is valid in the eyes of the State does not make it valid in the eyes of the Church. The reason is that Church understands marriage to be such an important reality; it identifies various requirements in its canon law, the law of the Catholic Church, which must be met for a valid Catholic marriage (a marriage between two Catholics, between a Catholic and a baptised Christian of another denomination or between a Catholic and an unbaptised person (non-Christian)).

Marriage with non-catholic Christian

A Catholic marrying a baptized non-Catholic needs Church permission.[17]In southern Tamil Nadu very often it is happening that getting married with baptized non-Catholic Christians. If a

[17] Can. 1124

catholic groom marries a baptized non-Catholic bride it is must that bride has to be catholic. The law of Latin Catholic Church will not allow for marriage in catholic practice unless the bride converts into catholic. It is also applicable to groom. Traditional Hindu practice bride/groom is open for marriage with Latin catholic groom/bride, rather other Christianity matrimony.

Marriage with non-Christian

At the same time a marriage between a Catholic and a non-baptized person is not sacramental, the Church still considers that such a marriage can be valid and good. St Paul wrote:"The unbelieving husband is made holy through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy through her husband".[18] According to Canon Law "A Catholic marrying a non-baptized person needs a dispensation for the marriage to be valid".[19]

Punishment for elopement

There was a practice giving punishment for the people who had eloped and married without noticing to church. Till the later A.D. 2000s many of cases were punished for their elopement. We used to see couple in our church along with cross during holymass. The couple has to hold the cross during mass for three weeks. Then only their marriage is accepted by village council. Sometime couple will be holding cross at the place where confession is asked.[20]This practice of giving punishment only after the intervention of diocese seriously had given up with the replacement of public apologizes. The punishment's notion was one should not get married without the knowledge of parish council. By giving this punishment it is understood that the importance of family life and village council.[21]

Heterogeneous nature in Latin Catholic

Although Christianity made many changes among the people who had been converted, when there is festivalor any family functionthe tradition legacy can be seen in all ceremonies.Tamil kinship pattern comes under the Dravidian kinship system. Accordingly, the kinship terms which are referred by them is identified as many commonalities of pan South India.Although Catholicism was accepted by people, they never gave up their traditional practices which they had in the past.Aforementioned all the life cycle ceremonies and social control which directed by the village council show the indignity of community. Most notable point here is that the role of caste in Indian society to be examined.In the social interaction though one is from the same caste group, by religion heis deniedin having marriage alliance with another sect of religious group from the same community. Despite kinship terms, the behavior towards the term is same, when it comes formarriage and in social relationship it would be a biggest obstacle.Such a kin bond can be observed in the state, especially in the southern state of Tamil Nadu thatcoerciveness of caste and religion.It is also to be noted that the less possibility of having marriage alliance with other Christian groups; as it is the same as any other religious group. Thecaste system is not only the reason why wedding should be made within the community. Herethe religion relationship is also stressed by denying other Christian denominations as like other religious sects.The reason may be found for this is in Catholic practices is the nature of heterogeneous culture from various groups. Thus it is identified that for celebrating religious ceremonies people will have to rely on church and parish council; for conducting life cycle ceremonies they follow the practices of caste which are followed from the past.

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[18] 1 Cor 7:14

[19] Can. 1086

[20] M. MariyaChandran (59), Rajavoor of Kanniyakumari district and Mr. Koil Mani (49), Navamuthalur of Thoothukudi district.

[21] M. Cyril (72), Rajavoor of Kanniyakumari district

MARRIAGE – THE SYRO MALANKARA RITE

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Marriage is the foundation of a successful society. It is an essential institution of successful society which was the first institution God created. According to the liturgical tradition of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, the nuptial bond between Jesus Christ, the Divine Bridegroom, and the Church, His Bride, is the prototype of the sacrament of marriage. With the blessing and the bestowal of the nuptial ring by the priest, the spouses enter into a lifelong bond of covenantal love and unity in and through Jesus Christ. By the blessing with and the bestowal of the crown, a symbol of justice and an ornament of eternal salvation, the spouses become the king and queen of the new family.

The Preparation of marriage

The spouses shall attend a marriage preparation course approved by the respective Eparchy, of atleast three days. In this course the theological, moral and canonical dimensions of marriage in the liturgical traditions of this Church shall be taught diligently. There shall be a common programme of studies prepared by the Synodal Commission for the Family for the marriage preparation course.

It is obligatory to attend the marriage preparation course. For a just cause, the local hierarch may exempt the spouses from attending the course. In such cases they shall attend the course at the earliest after the marriage and inform the matter to the parish priest. More particular norms are to be given by each Eparchy to ensure the compliance with this rule.

The pre-nuptial enquiry shall be conducted sufficiently in advance as to provide time for the publication of three marriage banns- ***vilichu chollu*** – on three consecutive Sundays or days of obligation during the celebration of the Holy Qurbono in the respective parish churches of the parties before the marriage. There shall be a pre-nuptial enquiry from which is to be duly filled in by the party confidentially in the presence of parish priest or his delegate. The proposed bride and bridegroom are to be given adequate training in the liturgy of marriage by the parish priest.

The formal process of canonical preparation of the marriage begins when the parents or the bride or bridegroom inform the respective parish priest about the proposal of the marriage. Through the pre-nuptial enquiry form, the parish priest about the proposal of the marriage. Through the pre-nuptial enquiry form, the parish priest or his delegate makes sure that the party is baptized and anointed with **holy *myron*** , free from canonical impediments, defects of consent, and contagious diseases. The certificate of marriage preparation course shall be produced to the parish priest at the time of this enquiry..

The marriage engagement is duly documented before the parish priests or priests present there and signed by the *kudumba karanavanmar*, the eldest male members of the families, and the

couple, in front of two witnesses. The *kudumba karanavanmar* mutually hand over this documented letter before the invited guests and ratifies the *ezhuthumattam.*

The betrothal is solemnized with a prayer of blessing in the church officiated by the parish priest or his delegate and is recorded in the official register.

The *vilichu chollu,* that is, the publication of marriage banns, is to be done to bring to the notice of the parish communities of both parties about the proposed marriage, so that they may bring to the attention of the concerned parish priests, impediments if any, which would impede the valid and licit celebration of the said marriage. Along with the publication of banns there can be an exhortation to pray for the parties.

The vilichu chollu is to be published in the parishes of the domicile or quasi-domicile of the parties. The vilichu chollu could be dispensed with for just and grave reasons. The parish priest is competent to dispense from one of the banns and the protopresbyter from two. Dispensation from all the three banns is to be granted only by the eparchial Bishop on the written request from either of the parties duly recommended by the respective parish priest. If the dispensation from banns is obtained, it should be noted in the marriage register.

Celebration of marriage

In the celebration of marriage local customs which are not contrary to Christian faith shall be respected and adapted in the liturgical celebrations in accordance with the eparchial norms. The permission of the local hierarch is required in this regard.

Mixed marriage

In granting permission for a mixed marriage with due regard for all provisions of common law, norms regarding mixed marriage agreed upon by concerned authorities of Catholic Church and non-Catholic Church shall be observed.

Gender Equity

'The Christian understanding of gender equality is based on the biblical account of creation. Man and women are both created in the image and likeness of God, expressing a "unity of the two" in a common humanity. The New Testament develops this ethos in Jesus' invitation to women's discipleship and St.Paul's exhortation that "there is no male and female, for all are one in Jesus Christ" (Gal 3:28)

The equality and differentiation of women and men are based on their God given, natural, biological and specific personal constitution. Gender inequality is not a "women's issue" but should concern and engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as human rights issue and as pre-condition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development.

Gender equality is a burning issue of all times. Church is taking note of gender inequality and the harm it has been doing to women, men and society. The Syro Malankara Catholic Church has promoted the empowerment of women over the years and has made a noteworthy contribution towards women's empowerment particularly in the field of Education and Health.

Strategic goals

- Violence-free homes and workplaces

- Equal participation of women in all activities.
- Mindset changes in both men and women to promote gender justice.
- Principles of Gender Policy
- Recognizes the innate power of human beings to bring about the transformation of unjust structures and practices and promote development at personal, family and societal levels.
- Acknowledges the responsibility of this premier body to work assiduously towards enhancing the role and importance of women in the activities of the Church.

Education

- Foster gender sensitivity, prepare and use appropriate modules and audio/video materials for various groups. This will be especially helpful for those with little or no formal education.
- Organise leadership training for women, to become animators of the laity and to function effectively in Church committees.
- Provide opportunities for women to take the initiative to empower themselves.
- Organise gender sensitisation discussions for bishops, priests, women religious and lay leaders.

The marriage preparation course should include sessions for the prospective couples along with their parents, covering the evils of dowry, ensuring due share for girls at the time of partition of parental property, gender sensitization, control of women over her own property, right and duty of married women to look after their parents, duty of husbands to facilitate the care of wives' parents, equitable division of labour within home upholding the dignity of women through mass media etc.

FAMILY, MARRIAGE & GENDER ROLE IN SYRO-MALABAR RITE

Shiji Varghese

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Introduction

At the very beginning let me tell you that I consider it to be a great blessing to have been born of Syrian Catholic parents and to be the daughter of Syro Malabar church. The Syro Malabar Church was originated from the early Christian community in India ; famously known as St. Thomas Christians. Even the name Syro Malabar doesn't suit the church. "The territory of the St. Thomas Christians, which was an all Indian church, was restricted at onetime to the Malabar area and eventually this gave rise to the term 'Syro Malabar'. This name literally means 'Syrian Christians' of the Malabar coast"[1] Socially and culturally, we remain as a part of the wider Indian community. It can be summarized in the words of Rev.Placid J Podippara, a great theologian of our church " The St.Thomas Christians were Hindu in culture, Christian in faith and oriental in worship".

Way of Life

The Thomasine connection and the Jewish or Hebraic heritage in a well blended local Keralite culture and atmosphere speaks for our lifestyle. It may be recalled that the Community members who confronted the western Christians said " we follow the way of St.Thomas and you follow the way of St.Peter"[2], distinguishing themselves from the western Christians. The Syro Malabar Christians always adopt the best of the cultural evolution that happens either in the East or in the West. Change is the only constant in our lifestyle. The Syro Malabar Community is the fastest in adopting the latest in the changing world. The community considers life as a way of living than a system of rational and systematic reflections. We have adopted a lot from St.Thomas... that we trust only after seeing and feeling the fact and it made us to grow steady and firm. Eventhough our community produce our own saints, it must be noted that in the present generation craze for luxuries like vehicles, household articles etc. increased . Due to migration for work single parent families and consequent problems increased. Our young couples are increasingly adopt the style of saying 'NO' to children. The peculiar way of our life with dozens of children has reduced to one or two. Once our familes were blessed with a priests or sisters(nuns) or atleast nurses...Now the land of vocation has become a land of vacation.

Socio Economic Status

Syro Malabar community has been playing a pioneering role in many spheres such as banking, commerce, cash crops, rubber, pepper plantations etc. Professionally since ancient times Nasranis are famous as a community of mercantile traders and agriculturists like the Jews. Syro Malabar take prominent role in the fields of education as well as politics, media, literature, business, arts

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[1] Justice Kurian Joseph, The Syro Malabar Chruch It's Identity and Challenges Today, 2006

[2] The Canon of the Synod of Diamper (1599)

and entertainment, science , technology etc. We were quick to understand the benefits of academic education and in our educational achievements, the community stand second to none. With our level of education and limited employment opportunities within the state of Kerala we became the community with the highest rate of migration. The resultant foreign remittances have also helped the socio economic progress.

Role of Women in Socio Economic Status

Women also play in the economic upliftment of the family.In the agrarian family we can see a wife is taking care of the cattles and land, looking after plantations etc. In educated families wife serves as a teacher, bank employee, business woman etc. There were number of Syro Malabar families who had sent their daughters to nursing profession in foreign countries . These nurses played a vital role in the development and growth of family depended on them.

"The training in the nursing profession religiously and rigorously piloted by the Missionaries, must have spurred the spirit of the Malayali women from Christian community to enter the nursing service"[3]. It may not be wrong to say that these women saw their 'nursing' as a vocation and there began the first step of women empowerment.

Family

Syro Malabar community is strongly patriarchal and inheritance is patrilineal. We are very much in tune with hierarchy . It is the very base of our strong domestic life.The father is the head of the family and property is traditionally divided among the sons. One notable aspect is the age old tradition that the youngest son is given the family house [tharavadu veedu] where he stays with the parents. In the Syro Malabar tradition family plays a vital role in the faith and the moral transformation of the faithful. The community is known for their good religious tradition in the families. The custom of family prayer and the practice of giving 'Stuthi' [praise be to Jesuschrist] with folded hands is an age old custom among us. Marian devotion has been a central part of Syro Malabar faith formation.Deference to family elders is extremely important and it is a stereotype that mothers in- law may rule the house even of a son and daughter in law. Family is still a powerfully cohesive and determinating force among Syro Malabar Christians . Multigenerational families are the norm and beyond that extended family network can be quite influential.

Marriage

The community believes that marriage is a divine institution that can never be broken. Marriage is seen as an alliance between two families and not just two individuals. Young people generally wait until their mid 20s for marriage. The young generation often value a greater degree of romance and choice but even then there is significant pressure to negotiate a marriage through and between families. We give prominence to family status and financial position. At the end of the wedding, the bride is expected to move to the husbands family, where she will have a secondary status compared to her mother-in-law. Dowry is an integral part of Syro Malabar marriage. Here dowry is not a word , it is a status. Matrimonial ads make it clear that dowry is assured. The church encourages large families and views this as a blessing.

[3] Binumol Abraham, Women Nurses and the Notion of their Empowerment, Center for Development Studies, TVM

Gender Roles

Eventhough official church teaching consider men and women to be equal, different and complimentary, there is a strong notion that females are inferior. Inequality is equality in the family. The decision taking is given to the male bread winner of the family or even to the male head. In church or in family gender equality is still a dream to be realized. The women of our community is the face of health sector. Wherever you go you can see a malayali nurse and a nun from the community. A discriminatory attitude can be seen everywhere. Though the community has powerful women in the fields of politics, sports, entertainment and other social circles, gender segregation is evident. Though the number of children in families may be small all agree that it is important to make sure that there is a boy among them. There is a deep seated patriarchal mindset which leads to the preference for the sons over daughters.

Conclusion

Syro Malabar Christians of Kerala blended well, the ecclesiastical world of the oriental Syrian church with the socio cultural environment of their homeland. "The Malabar church is perhaps the only single instance in the world of a church that grew up amidst deeply religious minded non Christians"[4]. However it is said that much of the rich heritage is fast degrading which can be contributed to factors like lack of awareness or disinterest in preserving the same and also due to migration of many of the members from their homeland. The community is notoriously lethargic in developing and maintaining basic informations about them. Aspects of faith, family, morality and gender equality are closely related and the unity of these serves as the strong pillar of Syro Malabar Church.I hope and pray that a unified vision of these will be an antidote against the growing disintegration of faith and morality , a serious problem that the church faces today.

[4] Dr. James Aerthayil CMI, The Spiritual Heritage of the St. Thomas Christians, P.127

THE TYING OF THE CEREMONIAL WEDDING THREAD: "RITUAL" AND "TRADITION" AMONG SYRO-MALABAR CATHOLICS

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I want to begin this paper with a little background on the type of scholarship I do. I am a feminist scholar (my PhD is in Women's and Gender Studies) and I specifically study issues of religion and gender. I am not a theologian. Nor am I a scholar of religion who understands religion in a cultural relativist framework. Rather, I examine religion in the context of social justice. Feminist scholarship is attune to the intersections of multiple oppressions, as "women" are not a united group but differentiated from each other on the basis of religion, class, race, sexuality and caste. My own feminist scholarship on religion is orientated to understanding and dismantling multiple oppressions including patriarchal and caste based oppressions.

In this paper, I will discuss what feminist scholars have called "brahmanical patriarchy"—or the intersections of casteism and patriarchy.The topic can be uncomfortable especially because religion itself often gives women avenues for empowerment, women often choose to work within their religious traditions and religious entities and charities are, like feminist organizations, orientated towards forms of social justice. While it may be difficult or, for some, "controversial" to confront how brahmanical patriarchymay shape women's lives within Indian Catholicism, this does not mean that it should be sidelined. I therefore begin this paper by situating my analysis of brahmanical patriarchy specificallywithin a feminist lens orientated towards combatting intersecting oppressions. How can men and women committed to dismantling systems of oppression work across religious and caste lines in order to better improve the status of women? In my discussion of brahmanical patriarchy, I seek to answer this question.

In 2009, the Kerala Catholic Bishop's Council issued a Pastoral letter concerning new sects of Christianity that was read in Syro-Malabar Catholic parishes throughout Kerala. The pastoral letter was written to combat a growing number of Catholic-like Pentecostal churches that had been springing up in Kerala. I'll read parts of an excerpt from this letter:

There are some in these new sects who teach that external objects are the root of the problems of faced by individuals and families. *They teach that evil resides in the use of flowers, pictures of elephants and peacocks, the tying of the ceremonial wedding thread and use of oil- lamps*... These

preachers widely spread an idea that the evils spirits come to us through the objects which are adored by the other religious believers. In these sermons, these preachers show hatred towards the Hindu religion...the Catholic Church does not discard the truth and the sacredness of other religions. [Vatican II] has specifically stated that other religions are to be treated with sincere respect. Some preachers refer to other religions as contrary to Christianity. This is not in the view of the Catholic Church.[1]

This letter is particularly useful in determining the question of what constitutes "ritual" and "tradition" within upper-caste Indian Christianity. In this paper, I will examine why there is a focus on defending the Hindu religion and certain practices within the Syro-Malabar Catholic community such as the tying of the ceremonial wedding thread.

My analysis particularly touches on recent changes to the Syro-Malabar Catholic faith with the widely popular Charismatic movement in Kerala. With a focus on prayer and spiritual renewal over ritual, the Charismatic movement marks a shift in prior religious practices of the Syro-Malabar Catholic community. The impact of the Charismatic movement on Syro-Malabar Catholics is important for understanding how the community distinguishes itself even as the Charismatic movement has seemingly helped the Syro-Malabar Church become less ritualistic than it was in the past.

In the second half of the 20th century and into the new millennium, there are many rituals that have been discarded by the Syro-Malabar Catholics. My larger work looks at the communal dress of Syrian Christian woman—the distinctive *chatta thuni* and hoop earrings called the *kunniku.* This dress and ornamentation was abandoned throughout the 1940s and 50s, and now has literally become a dying tradition as only elderly Syrian Christian women who came of age prior to Indian independence are seen in the garments. The Syriac language mass was also changed in the early 1960s to the Malayalam vernacular. Aramaic names and the use of the suffix "amma" for Christian women—Thangama, Mariamma, Claramma—have also been abandoned as are the distinctly Christian words for "mother," and "father"—*ammachee* and *appachin*—now used to refer to grandparents and as blanket terms for the elderly within the community. More recently, there have been vast changes in how the community understands its relationship to the Church most notably through prayer and worship.

Prayer and worship in the Syro-Malabar faith was not really Charismatic, but family orientated and private. Women, who did not learn/were barred from learning Syriac, spent the entire Syriac mass quietly reciting the rosary to themselves over and over while the priest conducted mass. Prayer and worship was also very hierarchical. For example, the evening prayer was (and still is in most families) led by the eldest in the family with the youngest saying the traditional *suthi* to every elder member of the family in turn. Similarly, the oldest family member is designated as the server and reader of Exodus during the unique *pesaha* ceremony during Passover.

Yet now, with the rise of the Charismatic movement, much of this ritualized prayer and worship is changing. According to my ethnographic research, family prayer and the hierarchal system, once so important in Syro-Malabar households is decreasing. At the same time we are witnessing the massive rise of Charismatic prayer groups—*kootiyams*—faith healings, and spiritual retreats aimed at the individual. The Charismatic movement and independent Pentecostal churches has been reported as the reason for the abandoning of ritualistic prayer within the Syro-Malabar

[1]"Pastoral letter issued by the Catholic Bishops of Kerala on the newly forming sects." http://kcbc.in/news-room/pastoral-letters. (accessed October 15, 2009). Translation by Dr. S. Prema.

Catholic faithful. Take this excerpt from a 2002 story in *the Hindu* on Syrian Christians leaving their traditional churches to new independent churches.

Asked why they left their parents' Church, everyone had the same answer: they were `disappointed and disgusted' with the `mechanical and ritualistic' ways of these Churches. The established Churches could not quench their spiritual thirst. Church-going was just a social custom and attending church service was a mechanical process in which the priest said the prayers (sometimes in an alien language) and the half-awake congregation lip-synched or just yawned. ``It (my former Church) could not offer a balm to my aching soul," one member said.[2]

Pastoral letters are often read at mass in lieu of a sermon from the priest. Messages conveyed through pastoral letters, once so integral in organizing the faithful to fight politically for Christian minority rights, are often seen as out of touch with the spiritual needs of the community. Many of my participants see pastoral letters as a way to whip up communal support for the dominance of the Catholic Church in the educational sector in Kerala. In a story on the rise of Pentecostal churches in the publication *India Today,* Kerala Catholic priest John Isaac is quoted as saying, "The rise in wealth and hierarchy of the traditional churches has distanced traditional churches from ordinary believers who are attracted by the personal, emotional, and evangelist appeals of the new groups that offer instant wealth and health through prayers."[3]

The love for new types of music, completely divorced from the chanting reminiscent of the Syriac mass, and long sermons given not only by priests, but nuns and lay-people are also quite attractive to Syro-Malabar retreat go-ers. Of my interviews with women, many reported that the sermons associated with the Charismatic movement drew them to retreats and faith groups. Women viewers of the widely popular television channel *Shalom TV*also discussed their love for sermons. As one participant, Susan, recounted: "Women, have the most problems in the family. Kids, problems of the house, if our husbands drink or give us beatings. How can we find strength? These sermons explain the bible to us. They explain Jesus to us, and through knowing him better, we gain strength."[4]

This new type of individual interaction with prayer and the bible marks a shift from ritualistic family prayer and formal mass with little or no sermons from the priest.

However, not all ritual is being abandoned. There is a curious rigidification around what practices constitutes "Christian tradition," while other rituals are modified within Charismatic worship. As a gender scholar, it is quite clear to me where these rituals persist and get cast as "traditional"—they most often revolve around marriage, pregnancy and childbirth. These rituals, in turn, continue to tie the community to their upper-caste Hindu identity. And it is to these rituals I now turn.

In order to marry within the church, both males and females must learn about the faith and receive a certificate of completion from a church. The very name of this instruction is *vedapadam*: lessons from the vedas. This name ties the Syro-Malabar community to upper-caste Hinduism and specifically to Brahmanical patriarchy. Historically, only Brahmin males were allowed to learn from the Vedas. And the importance of *vedapadam* to Syro-Malabar Catholics in order to receive the sacrament of marriage is reflective of patriarchal and upper-caste ideals.

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[2] Basheer, K.P.M. "Independent Churches Mushroom in the State." *The Hindu.* Jun 17, 2002.
[3] Rahman, Shafi. "Freelancers of God: Independent Churches Mushroom Across India Attracting Foreign Funds." *India Today.* April 30, 2011.
[4] All names have been changed to protect research participants. Susan, interview by author, Jan 9, 2013.

The engagement ceremony of Syro-Malabar Catholics is called *koodikazhcha* and many Brahmanical patriarchal customs remain in this ceremony. In Kerala, only the Namboodiri Brahmins and Syrian Christians were patrilineal, and as Anna Lindberg has recently explained in the article "The Historical Roots of Dowries in Contemporary Kerala," only these two communities have historically practiced dowry.[5]Dowry is specifically referred to in the Syro-Malabar community as *stridhanam*, or "share." The *stridhanam*is still to this day (despite being against the law) announced at the engagement—the *koodikazhcha*—with a lighted lamp, and donation given to church (10th of *stridhanam*). The links to upper-caste Hinduism here is profound—not just by the fact that Namboodiri Brahmins historically practiced dowry, but also, the fire as witness and the obligatory donation to the temple.

The excerpt I read from the pastoral letter at the outset of this paper particular mentioned the tying of the marriage thread as a ritual to be defended within the Syro-Malabar faith. The tying of Syro-Malabar *thali*, the *minnu*is still the most important part of the Syro-Malabar Catholic marriage ceremony and is steeped in ritual. During the ceremony, the priest puts*minnu* around the women's neck, while boy ties the *minnu*. If the *minnu* falls or is dropped, it is considered extremely inauspicious for the marraige. The tying of the *minnu* is followed by the veiling of the *manthrakodi*. The *manthrakodi* is a sari gifted to the bride from the groom's family. The priest blesses the*manthrakodi*, while the groom drapes it over the bride's head. In many cases, the thread used to tie the *minnu* is taken from the *manthrakodi*. Both the *thali*and the gifting of a sari from the groom's family is part of Hindu marriage rituals. After marriage, the bride enters her husband's house with a lighted lamp, stepping over the threshold with the right foot, as per Hindu custom. According to Fr. Joseph Nagaroor's dissertation on matrimonial legislation in the Syro-Malabar church:

In comparison with the Hindu practices, we can easily notice a similarity in most of the ceremonies. The selection of the bride or bride-groom, parents' authority, consent of the whole community, betrothal, the paraphernalia used in the ritual, marriage ceremony, the feast and fast attached, the communitarian spirit, etc. are explicit examples of the cultural adaption of the Malabar Church.[6]

Another aspect of ritual that is fiercely held onto as "tradition" are practices that center on pregnancy and childbirth—rituals that Susan Visvanathan has described as having ritual substances of the Hindu community.[7] Ayurveda is one of the most important aspects of ritual and pregnancy for Syro-Malabar Catholic women. Throughout the pregnancy, the pregnant woman is rubbed with ayurvedic oils. Women take baths with water boiled with certain herbs, roots and turmeric. The newborn too is rubbed with turmeric and given a mixture of gold and honey. This ritual is supposed to ensure that the child will have fair skin. In my larger work, I look at the Aryan racial/fair skin claims of the Syro-Malabar Catholics that further tie them to the Hindu Namboodiri community. The desire for fair skin is not only an element of beauty, but concretely ties the community to the reported Aryaness of Kerala's Namboodiri Brahmins. It is, in other

[5] See Lindberg, Anna. "The Historical Roots of Dowry in Contemporary Kerala." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 37:1. (Jan 2014): 22-42.

[6] Nagaroor, Joseph. *The Historical Development of the Matrimonial Legislation of the Malabar Church.*(Pontificium Institutum Orientalium Studiorum, Rome, 1971), 119-120.

[7] Visvanathan, Susan. *The Christians of Kerala: History, Belief and Ritual among the Yakoba.* (New Delhi: Oxford India Press), 1993.

words, a marker of caste that separates upper-classes from laboring Dravidian agricultural workers. As Viswanathan explains about the honey and gold concoction:

Fair colour is a preoccupation with the average Syrian Christian, reflecting, perhaps, a desire to be equated with Brahmins who are conventionally perceived as fair-skinned, and from whom they believe themselves to be descended.[8]

The question is, why are rituals concerning marriage and childbirth—specifically Hindu and upper-caste in nature—kept intact, while others, such as prayer and worship are considered outdated especially within the Charismatic movement?

Marriage and childbirth rituals of the Syro-Malabar faith are inherently what the feminist scholar, Uma Chakravorty has called "the ritualization of female sexuality." Ritualized female sexuality reproduces the brahmanical patriarchal system through endogamous marriages—or marrying within the caste/faith. Ritualizing female sexuality becomes the basis by which caste, class, racial and religious hierarchies are perpetuated over and against lower-caste communities. While the Charismatic movement itself would welcome all castes and religions, it is through marriage and childbirth that caste, class, racial and religious hierarchies are maintained from a previous era. Endogamous marriages make it seem as through these divisions are "natural" and have existed from time immemorial. Thus, it is through such a ritualization of female sexuality that a community maintains its group boundaries. While some rituals, such as prayer and worship can be modified, it is the rituals that revolve around sexuality and childbirth that must be rigidly guarded in order for privilege to be literally reproduced. In this light, the excerpt I read at the outset of this paper makes more sense—the tying of the marriage thread, use of oil lamps, and protection of the Hindu religion are all intimately linked to the maintaining of upper-caste Christianity.

While these rituals seem innocuous—there seems to be little harm in rubbing a pregnant woman with oils—it is the perpetuation of these rituals in service to brahmanical patriarchy that is of particular concern. The idea of "Christian tradition" enshrined in rituals that maintain caste and gender hierarchies affects the everyday lives of Christian women and maintains casteism in the region that is then defended on the basis of religious tradition.

The rituals that revolve around marriage and childbirth keep alive the notion of an unchanging "Christian tradition" defined through the "good" behavior of a woman marrying within the faith. These "traditions" have a profound impact on women's autonomy. Though I do not have time to delve into the plight of women in Kerala, let me say here that Kerala has the highest rate of violent crimes in the nation and the city of Kochi is the most dangerous in India. Kerala has the third highest crime rates of violence against women and a higher rate than the city of Delhi which has been labeled as India's most dangerous city especially following the Delhi rape case in 2012.[9] 90% of Kerala women are afraid to walk on roads after sunset.[10] Further, Kerala has a suicide rate that is 2xs the national average.[11] Quantitative studies suggest that women from the Syrian Christian community subscribe to very rigid gender orthodoxy—more so than other communities in Kerala and that may contribute to a low sense of well-being for upper-caste Christian

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[8] Visvanathan 119.

[9] National Crimes Records Bureau. http://ncrb.gov.in/ (accessed June 2, 2014).

[10] See "90% of Women Feel Unsafe on Kerala Roads: Study." http://www.keralawomen.gov.in/index.php/headlines/265-90-women-feel-unsafe-on-kerala-roads-study. (accessed Dec 1, 2014).

[11] Chua, Joceyln. *In Pursuit of the Good Life: Aspiration and Suicide in Globalizing South India.* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 2014.

women.[12] I would add that these notions of "tradition" can prevent us from seeing gender based violence as systematic in the state. Systematic gender based violence then has the potential of being sidelined into a demarcating feature of a particular religion or caste and may prevent us from organizing across caste, class, racial and religious lines. If we are committed to social and gender justice, it is important to interrogate this new face of religiosity in order to fully understand how certain rituals are allowed to change and be fluid, while others (especially concerning female sexuality) are enshrined as "tradition" which often restrict the parameters for women's empowerment and may reinforce caste and patriarchal hegemonies.

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INCULTURIZATION THROUGH THE PRACTICE OF *CHANTHAMCHARTH* AND *MAILANCHIYIDEEL* OF THE WEDDING CELEBRATION OF THE KNANITES

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Thekkumbhagar or the Knanites of Kerala are presently part of the Syro-Malabar Catholic Archeparchy of Kottayam for the Southist people and of the Jacobite Knanaya *Bhadrasanam* of Chingavanam. The Knanaya community and the Archeparchy of Kottayam have played and still play a vital role in the history of the Syro-Malabar Church and of the Indian Church in general.

The Knanaya community considers itself as having a long history of sixteen and a half century. According to the tradition, it had its origin from a colony of Jewish Christians consisting of around 400 persons of seventy two families of seven clans who in AD 345 immigrated to Cranganore (now known as Kodungalloor) from Southern Mesopotamia. The group, lead by a merchant called Knaithomman, included a bishop Mar Youseph, four priests and some deacons. They came to strengthen and re-invigorate the ecclesially weakened St Thomas Christians of India. They did it with the preaching of the Gospel mainly through their life. They continued their relation to the mother Church and had bishops from there. They built churches of their own and had priests of their own and continued in the Catholic faith.

These colonists were welcomed with great interest by the King Cheraman Perumal who gave them seventy two privileges including land without tax. They were called *Rajamakkal* (sons of kings). Knaithomman himself was called *Co-Cherakon* Knaithomman (= Knaithomman, the minister of King Cheraman). These privileges were writen on a copper plate. They were given to Thomas and colleagues and to all his descendents as long as the sun and moon exist. These privileges were highly important since they influenced the formation of the community's culture and in obtaining a high social status to the community as well as to the whole Christians of the country.

Knanaya Customs

A Custom is not a creation of particular individuals, but is evolved and is transmitted from generation to generation. It is transmitted by participation and observance. Keen observation of the culture of a community serves to reveal the history and identity of it. The customs have an intra-communitarian and an inter-communitarian dynamism also. By functioning as a unifying link between the members of a particular community it arouses community feeling among its members and thus acts as an intra-communitarian dynamism. At the same time, by adopting the

customs and practices of other communities and by permitting other communities to adopt one's own customs, there take place an inter-communitarian co-existence also.

The Knanaya community, though small in size, outshines the horizons of Kerala history and culture through their unique mode of living. The variety and cultural richness of the community in its customs, traditions, folk songs, etc. made the Late Card. Varkey Vithayathil to call it 'the eighth wonder of the world'. These marvelous forms of culture are adorned with profound symbolic meanings as well. The intra-communitarian and inter-communitarian dynamisms are also created by its customs. The two major characters of this community, namely, the unity of members and the power of adaptability point to these dynamisms. The unity existing among the members of the community is very often quoted. It has borrowed from other cultures, with which it has got in contact, every good it had found. The *trivenisangamam* referred to the Indian Church can be attributed also to the Knanites. They are Jewish in ethnicity, Christians in faith and Indians in nationality. All three traditions and their sub-cultures have influenced the forming up of their customs.

Though most of the Knanaya customs are related to marriage, there are certain customs related to other important events in life like pregnancy, birth and death. Thus the customs can be broadly divided into non-marital and marital.

The non-marital customs

At the 7th month of pregnancy, the relatives of the pregnant lady visit with many *palaharangal* (sweets). The visitors are treated with a special food called *pidi* and the lady is brought back to the paternal house. Soon after birth, the grandmother pastes a mixture of gold, honey, acoras, and calamus on the tongue of the child so that the child may get gold colour, sweet tongue, good intelligence, etc. This practice is found also among Nambuthiries of Kerala. The baptism was administered on the 9th day of birth. The godfather and godmother of baptism, the name of the child, etc. were fixed following the tradition rigorously.

The customs related to death include blessing at the death-bed, embrace of relatives after burial, the prayer service called *manthra*, etc. At the death-bed a Knanaya calls the children to him. Putting his hands over the head of the recipients who are on their kneels and recites the blessing: "The blessing that God gave to Abraham, Abraham to Isaac, Isaac to Jacob, Jacob to my forefathers, the blessing that I got from my father, my son/daughter I gave to you." The recognition and faith in the succession of this holy and inspiring blessing is worth noting.

The members of the family of the dead stand in a row in the church after burial. Other persons come and embrace them as a gesture of love. It gives also the assurance that they will remain united with them in their great moments of sorrow. We find a similar embrace at the time of the departure of the Knanites from their home land, vividly expressed in the song '*Innu nee njangale*':

Thangalil thangalilanpode thazhukunnu

Marvathu kannuneer marvam nanayunnu.

The embrace is followed by *mantra* in the church. After the prayers, the children of the dead drink from the same tender coconut. This is a promise that they undertake before the community that they will keep up their love and unity even if their father/mother is no more.

Marital Customs

The most important and never broken practice related to the marriage of the Knanites is their discipline of endogamy. There are other marital customs in connection with engagement, *othukalyanam* (betrothal) and *kettukalyanam* (marriage proper). During engagement, the parties agree on the date of betrothal, marriage, dowry, etc. The marriage customs of the betrothal include erecting the first pole of the *pandal* (barn), holding of hands of the paternal uncles as responsible persons for the marriage, handing over of dowry, etc. On betrothal day itself the parties together purchase the nuptial vestments and ornaments for the marriage (*charackeduckal*).

The customs related to the marriage are celebrated on the marriage day and on the eve of the preceding day. These important customs include *chantham charth, mailanchiyiteel, ichappadu kodukkal*, receiving *tali*, *sthuthichollal* (requesting blessing), tying of *tali*, exchanging the rings, veiling, crowning, singing *Barmariyam*, procession to the barn, *natavili*, *nellum neerum vakkal*, *vazhupititham*, giving milk and plantain, *kachathazhukal*, *Pananpattu*, entrusting the daughter to the new mother, *vazhippokla*, *atachuthura*, etc. Among these, we take *chanthamcharth* and *mailanchiyiteel* to consider in detail.

Chantamcharth

The main function at the house of the bridegroom on the eve of the preceding day of marriage is *chanthamcharth.* The sister of the bridegroom prepares a special podium and she places a long roded/hanging oil lamp (*kolvilakku/thukkuvilakku*) in the centre. The brother-in-law brings the bridegroom to the podium. After a short prayer the assembled sings '*Marthoman.* When the song is finished, the barber approaches the boy and asks permission to the assembled, "I ask to those who are above seventeen castes, may I shave the bridegroom?" (*Pathinezhu parishacku melulla malorodu chodickunnu, manavala chekkanu chantam charthatte*?) He repeats the same question three times, and on the third time the audience gives their consent. While the barber shaves, the community sings '*chantamcharth* song' beginning with *Maraniso pathaviyile'*. After shaving and taking bath the bridegroom returns to the platform wearing white dress. All the time the assembly goes on singing. The celebration continues with *ichappadu kodukkal.*

Chantamcharth (beautification) and *antamcharth* (rite of puberty) are used interchangeably to denote the same custom. An aspect of physical and psychic purification and beautification is found in every religion. The baptismal bath in the Christian tradition, physical cleaning and baths in the holy rivers and pools before any important religious act by the Hindus, the washing of hands, legs, face and ears before the prayers of Muslims are examples to it. Such an aspect of spiritual cleaning is at work in the Knanaya practice of *chantamcharth* on the yester eve of marriage. In the ancient days there was the practice of early marriages and the first shaving was done in connection with the marriage. Since *mailanchiyiteel,* the parallel custom at the bride's house, is related to beautification, the term *chanthamcharth* can be preferred.

The term *antamcharth,* however, may also stand. The term '*antham'* gets the meaning common sense or intelligence in the expression 'avanu oru anthavum kunthavumilla'. Hence *antamcharth* may be considered as equivalent to the rite of puberty practiced in many cultures. Through a ceremonial first shaving and ritual bath, the community recognizes the adulthood of the person and sanctions his maturity to lead a married life. To my reading, hence both terms are correct depending on what meaning we intend to give.

Mailanchi iteel

Smearing with henna is very common among the girls all over the world. Smearing it as a ritual is also very common. The Jews, the Arabs, the Muslims of India also practise it as a marriage custom. For the Knanites, *mailanchi iteel* (Smearing with henna) is one of the most important customs that takes place at the bride's house on the previous eve of marriage. The first part is more or less identical to that of *anthamcharth*. The bride comes to the hall accompanied by the elder sister and sits on the podium. A lighted lamp is placed in front of her. After the prayers and the prayer song *Marthoman*, the audience starts the *Mailanchippattu*.

The first strophe of the song describes the creation of Adam and the second, that of Eve. The third contains the life style of the first spouses in the paradise. The fourth deals with the sin of man and the need of smearing with henna. Eve pluck the fruits with the hands and went there with the legs. This is the reason for covering hands and legs with henna. While henna, used as a cosmetic, beautifies the bride, in the custom it is used as a symbol of inner purification, i.e., washing out all stains of sins from the bride before entering a new marred life. The paternal grandmother is responsible to smear the henna. She smears it on the hands and legs in tune with the verses of the song. As in the case of *anthamcharth,* it is followed by ichappadu.

Significance of the Knanaya customs

With the advent of modernity, Knanaya marriage ceremony also has undergone many changes which made it lose much of its ancient grandeur and royalty and significance. Instead of the four day marriage ceremony, presently the marriage is celebrated in two days. The procession using *Panchavadyam* and elephant ride of the couples has become a past memoir. The homely preparation of the festal meals by the relatives and neighbors has given way to entrusting it to the caterers; the choir teams have come up in place of singing *Purathanappattukal* in group by all participants; instead of *Margamkali*, now there are modern forms of dances, if they can be called so. These omissions, manipulations and negligence have negatively influenced the possibility of transmission of culture and we-feeling to the next generation.

Still these vibrant customs of the community make the marriage an exciting experience for the participants and an everlasting memoir for the couples. These customs foster unity among the members and give a rich cultural identity to the community. They help the community members to live the we-feeling. They help also to create awareness of the community among its members and to love it. With the frequent repetition of these customs the awareness and love is transported to the future generations.

Around 30 persons get different roles in the Knanaya marriage ceremony. It helps in asserting the identity and individuality of them and gives a psychological satisfaction to their need to be esteemed. The elders and the females, the often marginalized sections of the society, get important roles and thereby special consideration during these functions. The special functions that the females are endowed with during the Knanaya marriage are surely worth mentioning in the assertion of high status and dignity to the once depressed sex. We have to bear in mind that these customs existed from centuries back, when majority of the women of the society were not even allowed to cover their upper parts.

Inculturization of the Knanites

Knanites have practiced inculturization in their lives through these customs. Ritual bath and smearing of henna are not practices invented by the Knanites. Many people of other cultures have practiced it and still practice it. However, the Knanites made them their own by giving special

significance, meaning and importance to these practices. From the mere physical sphere, they were raised to a spiritual realm. The adaptation and acceptance to the circumstances thus becomes a nature of them. It is stated that many of the Knanaya customs have similarity with the customs of the Cochin Jews in a paper of Prof. P.M. Jussay on the similarities between the Cochin Jews and the Knanites. Many of the songs are the same barring some minor modifications.

The Knanites were impressed by the Indians' practice of co-existence and they adopted it. No one has complained that the Knanites destroyed any temples or mosques. They did not convert people forcefully, which they thought was against the rich culture of India and against the spirit of the Gospels. They accepted all the cultures and did not argue that their culture is superior and it alone should exist. They had the practice of sharing as well. They shared among themselves, to the other Christians and to all other people their faith, their liturgy and culture. The only thing that they did not share was their identity as a separate community. Though the Knanites are foreigners by migration, many of their customs are adaptations to their adopted land.

LITURGY OF THE HOURS IN MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH

Dr. Philip Vysanethu, OIC

Introduction

This paper is a short study of Liturgy of the Hours in the Malankara Church. There are two texts used in Liturgy of the Hours in the West Syrian Liturgy from which the Malankara liturgy emerged. The first is *Ktobo d Sluto Shimo* (Book of common prayers) and the second is *Penkitho*, the collection of the office for the whole liturgical year.* This paper deals with the first one, *Shimo* which is used as the office of common prayers in Liturgy of the Hours in the Malankara Catholic Church.

1. Ordo of Liturgy of the Hours

The liturgy is celebrated according to an *Ordo*, or an order, a rite established and approved by the Church. It can be called the shape of worship. It consists of liturgical texts, lectionary, gestures, time, music, artistic forms, symbols and architecture. Here we deal with a few themes.

1.1.Themes of the days and hours

Each day and hour has a particular theme:

Days:

1. Sunday - the Resurrection of Christ
2. Monday- repentance
3. Tuesday - repentance
4. Wednesday – the Mother of God
5. Thursday – the apostles and the doctors of the Church
6. Friday – the cross, martyrs and the saints
7. Saturday – the departed members of the Church, both clergy and laity

Hours: The seven hours are observed on the reflection of the Passion of Christ:

1. Evening – Last supper
2. Suthoro – at Gethsemane
3. Night – before Kaiappas, Hannas and Herodes
4. Morning – before Pilatus
5. Third hour – way to Calvary
6. Sixth hour – crucifixion
7. Ninth hour – death on the cross

2. Theological significance of Liturgy of the Hours

Liturgy of the Hours in the Antiochian tradition/Malankara tradition consists mostly of hymns composed by Mar Ephrem, Mar Balai, Mar Jacob of Sarug, Semaoon Quqoyo etc. Most of these hymns are capsules of the fundamental faith of the Church. The Church that originally

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* Unfortunately this collection is not commonly used except some of the feast days. Only a little part of this vast collection is translated into Malayalam. In the Malankara Catholic Church the first version of Liturgy of the Hours was published in 1943. In 1969 the full translation of the *Shimo* into Malayalam was done by Fr. Mathew Chempothinal who was both a musician and a Syriac Scholar.

based on the Trinitarian theology is the major thrust of all these hymns. Christology, Mariology and Ecclesiology of the Malankara Church are also portrayed in the hymns and chanting. An example of ecclesiology is shown below:

> The Church, the bride of Christ, is *similar to Paradise* where the glory fills.
> Therein are baptism, the relics of the martyrs and the Holy Altar
> That is the container of the life giving *aushadhi* (medicine)
> Who wants to talk with the Lord?
> Enter into the Church because the Lord lives in it.[1]

3. Liturgy of the Hours through the prism of *Bhakti yoga and Jnana yoga*

In the study of Liturgy of the Hours it is very important to analyse the hymns because the main content of Liturgy of the Hours is in hymnal form. As St. Ambrose said, the poetry and the music are like two wings of the Liturgy, which take up the worshiper to a mystical experience in the liturgy. In the Indian context this experience can be categorised under two terminologies: '*Bhakti yoga*' or 'path of devotion/love' and '*Jnana yoga*' or 'path of knowledge'.

3.1.Bhakti Yoga

According to the Indian spirituality there are three ways to the Ultimate Being: They are *Karma yoga/ marga*, *Jnana yoga/ marga* and *Bhakti yoga/ marga* among which the *Bhakti yoga* is the most important means to come into union with God. The following paragraphs will deal with the different aspects of *Bhakti yoga.*

3.1.1. Vatsalya Bhakti model.

Vatsalya can be explained as the love of a mother or father to her/his child. It is the love that is manifested in many actions like feeding the child, rocking the child, carrying the child, kissing and hugging the child etc. *Bhakti* can be translated as devotion. Therefore *Vatsalya bhakti* can be explained as 'devotion in affection'. Mary became the 'devotee' of Jesus in her *Vatsalya bhakti*. The following is a hymn in which the composer portrays Mary who feeds the Child Jesus:

> Behold, it is a wonder that the Virgin has delivered a child
> The ancestor of all the generations, wrapped in swaddling cloths
> Him, who holds the mountains, *a young woman carries*
> He who sustains the poor (one who is hungry), *sucking milk* [2]

Here the *Vatsalya bhakti* of Mary is very clearly portrayed because in this hymn Mary accepts her motherhood of the saviour and at the same time she confesses her 'fragility' to carry the Almighty. A newborn baby is the symbol of human fragility or vulnerability. Reflecting on the fragile nature of the baby and its innocence, a feeling of *vatsalya* is created in the worshiper. The second step is the passing over of the meditative mind from the 'fragility' to the 'all-powerful' God. Here the worshiper attains the joyful experience of *Vatsalya bhakti.*

3.1.2. Bridal model

In Christian spirituality, more often the 'bridal model' is used to explain the relation between Christ and the Church (Cf. Ephesians 5, 20-23). This model is used very lavishly in the liturgical hymns of the Malankara Church. Example:

> *Your Charm and awe* have *intoxicated* me
> We have no voice to sing your praise O Son of God

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[1] Cf: *Qyomtho, Lilyo*
[2] *S'himo, Shubaho*; p. 126; For more references: *Shubaho*: p.117, 152,164,175,185,207

On the highs you are seen at the right hand of the Father
In the deep among the thieves [3]

Attracted by the charm of the lover or bridegroom the mystic sees him in different places. The bride is not only in the glory of heaven but also in the miseries of this world. Here it is very clear that God is not playing 'hide and seek' as in the bridal mysticism of Hindu spirituality nor is He far away in Heaven, instead He is among the human beings i.e. *Immanuel*, God is with us.[4]

3.1.3. Guru-Sishya model

In Indian tradition Guru is considered the representative of God. All knowledge comes from God only through the *Guru*. Learning depends fully on the degree of intimacy between the *Guru* and *Sishya*. His mental and spiritual growth depends on the union with the *Guru*.[5] In Christian spirituality the *Guru-Sishya* model is found in the relation between Christ and his disciples, which is depicted in the liturgical hymns.

3.2.Jnana Yoga

Jnana yoga is an intellectual approach to God. It uses negation rather than affirmation. The important aspect in the *Jnana yoga* is self- realisation and through this self-realisation the worshiper comes into union with the *Real Being*. Compared to the overwhelming *Bhakti yoga* approaches in the Malankara hymns, the instances of *Jnana yoga* motives are very meagre. There are instances in the hymns, which *indirectly* bring out the mystical motive of *Jnana yoga.*

3.2.1. Creator-creature model

In the Creator-creature model, the *Jnana Yoga* motive consists in the realisation of God as Creator and human beings as the creatures, created in the *image* and *likeness* of God. Man as the creature of God depends ontologically on God. He or she yearns for the 'living with God' in heaven.[6] From this longing, hymns of praise emerge from the creature. The following hymn points out this motive:

Lord, for your glory, let praises emerge from the heavenly creatures
And the earthly creatures *who are created in your image and likeness*
The earth and heaven, the land and the ocean will sing your praise [7]

The duty of the creature is nothing else but praising the Creator. The real praise is a state of mind in which one comes to the realisation of his or her 'being' in God. St. Paul says: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me."(Gal: 2, 20). In other words one's very existence and the whole life becomes a 'praise' of God.

3.2.2. Light analogy

Influenced by the Gnostic terminology the Syrian composers have very often used 'light' as analogy for God and divinity. It is also a symbol of intellect or knowledge. In using this term the Syrian composers were very cautious to avoid the dualism of the Gnostics.[8] In the light

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[3] Qyomto, Sunday Evening
[4] Cf. Shubaho, Tuesday 3rd hour, *Bouto* of Mar Jacob
[5] Cf. *Shubaho: Lylyo*, 2nd *Qaumo* Thursday, Qolo; Utter Faith in *Guru*: *Prabhatham*: 2nd *Qolo* after *Quqlion.*
[6] In the Indian spirituality:*Salokya* (living in the 'world' of *Brahma*),
[7] *S'himo, Shubaho*, p. 83
[8] Cf. *S'himo,Men'olam*, Wednesday, Suthoro, 2nd Qolo

analogy where God is depicted as the light of the world, one is invited to the self-realisation that he or she is also created in the 'image' and 'likeness' of God.[9]

4. Music in Liturgy of the Hours

Malankara liturgy is soaked in music. What takes the worshiper to the zenith of a mystical experience in the Malankara liturgy is its musicality. In other words one can say that *musicality makes the Malankara liturgy mystical.* There is a double saturation process in the Malankara liturgy i.e. the motive of the hymns is mystical as well as the musical nature of the hymns is also mystical. The nature of the musicality proper is mystical because it belongs to the oriental music that is mystical. *Sruti* and *Laya* as the fundamental principles of Oriental music, especially of the Indian Music are totally revealed in the Malankara Liturgy. Both the *kalpitha sangitha and manodharma sangitha* as the two dimensions of Indian music is manifested in the Malankara Liturgy. The *octo echoes* (8 colours of melody) used in the Malankara liturgy is one of the examples.[10]

5. Contextualisation of Liturgy of the Hours

Contextualisation of Liturgy of the Hours is centred on the theology of incarnation.

5.1.Liturgy of the Hours interprets the signs of the time

The hymns and prayers of Liturgy of the Hours were the interpretation of the faith and theology. Through hymns the Syrian composers interpreted the faith in their own context and that was the need of that time. All the hymns used in Liturgy of the Hours in the Malankara Church are very mystical and theologically rich. However, they are determined by the context of the polemics and apologetics. Most of these hymns were composed in between 300 A.D and 700 A.D and they cannot directly speak to the faithful of the 21st century until they are interpreted. Here comes the importance of new hymns because they can directly speak to the faithful of 21st century, especially in the context of religious pluralism and ecumenism. The Malankara Church must search for and accept the mystical compositions that 'interpret the signs of the time'. As Mar Jacob of Serugh encouraged and acknowledged the compositions of the simple potter Simeon Quqoyo the Malankara Church must be open to the dynamism of the Holy Spirit that renews the Church and inspires even the so called 'simple faithful' of the Church.

Conclusion

The significant character of Liturgy of the Hours in the Malankara Church is that it is poetic, musical and mystical. The richness of its theology and spirituality is to be explored further especially in the context of multi-religious and pluri-ecclesial context of India today. The Church must be opened to add to the Liturgy, mystical compositions in conformity with the theology and spirituality of the Orient in the present context. Then it will be more significant and befitting for the worshiping community of the 21st century.

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[9] *S'himo, Shubaho*, Wed. *Prabhatham* 2nd Qolo, P. 141

[10] Cf. Philip Vysanethu, *Musicality Makes the Malankara Liturgy Mystical*, SEERI Publication, Chapters 3,4

UNIQUE FEATURES OF THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS IN THE SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH: CULTURAL AND SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES

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Introduction

St Thomas Christians of Malabar were using the East Syrian liturgy at least since the 4th century. It was the only developed liturgy that was in use in their Church before the seventeenth century. Thus they had their Liturgy of Hours from the East Syrian tradition. The St. Thomas Christians could accept and appreciate the East Syrian liturgy as their own, mainly due to the apostolic Christ experience of St Thomas the Apostle, which served as the foundation for the liturgical traditions of the Churches in Mesopotamia and Malabar. The St. Thomas Christians considered the East Syrian liturgy as their own liturgy inherited from St. Thomas, the Apostle.[1] It should be noted that one and the same liturgy was used in two distinct socio-cultural milieus, that is in two highly developed world cultures, namely the Sumerian or Semitic culture of the Middle East and the Dravidian culture of India. In this short study we may examine the unique features of the Liturgy of the Hours in the Syro-Malabar tradition. We shall also deal with the Liturgy of the Hours in the East Syrian tradition, since the Syro-Malabar liturgical tradition is basically East Syrian. We may make a general survey of the Liturgy of Hours and study them more from a cultural perspective than from a theological perspective.

1. Special Features of the East Syrian Liturgy of the Hours

One of the chief characteristics of the East Syrian Christianity is that it is the Christian tradition having the maximum Jewish Christian features. It is very much true also about the East Syrian Liturgy of Hours. While analyzing the Liturgy of Hours in the East Syrian tradition we observe many typical Jewish features. It is quite likely that in any ecclesial tradition of the Liturgy of the Hours there are Jewish characteristics preserved, simply because of the fact that the Christian Liturgy of Hours traces its origin very much to the Jewish tradition of prayers. However, the presence of Jewish traits is much more in the East Syrian tradition. Before identifying the Jewish features in the East Syrian Liturgy of Hours we may look into the general Jewish background of the Liturgy of the Hours.

1.1. Jewish Background of the Liturgy of the Hours

The Christian canonical hours or Liturgy of the Hours stemmed from Jewish prayer. During the Babylonian Exile, when the Temple was no longer in use, the first synagogues were

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[1] The petition sent to Pope Gregory XIII in 1578 by some leading native Christians has the following declaration: "...our liturgical prayers are in Syriac (Chaldaic) language transmitted to us by our Father St. Thomas." P. Maniyattu, "Foreign Interventions in the Liturgical Traditions", in P. Pallath, ed., *Catholic Eastern Churches: Heritage and Identity*, Rome 1994, 185, note 31.

established, and the services (at fixed hours of the day) of Torah readings, psalms, and hymns began to evolve. This "sacrifice of praise" became substitute for the sacrifice of animals.[2]

By the time of the Roman Empire, the Jews and eventually early Christians began to follow the Roman system of conducting the business day in scheduling their times for prayer. In Roman cities, the bell in the forum rang the beginning of the business day at about six o'clock in the morning (Prime, the "first hour"), noted the day's progress by striking again at about nine o'clock in the morning (Terce, the "third hour"), tolled for the lunch break at noon (Sext, the "sixth hour"), called the people back to work again at about three o'clock in the afternoon (None, the "ninth hour"), and rang the close of the business day at about six o'clock in the evening (the time for evening prayer).[3] As Christianity began to separate itself from Judaism, the practice of praying at fixed times continued. The early Church was known to pray the Psalms (Acts 4:23–30), which has remained a part of the canonical hours and all Christian prayers.

In the early tradition of the Church there were only three regular hours of service (Evening, Midnight, and Morning). In practice only Morning and Evening were commonly used, but these were well attended daily by laity as well as clergy. When the Church of the East had monasteries (which are no longer the case) there gradually developed the custom of seven hours of prayer.

1.2. Jewish Features in the East Syrian Liturgy of the Hours

The most important Jewish element found in the Christian Liturgy of Hours is the Psalms. The East Syrian tradition has an extra-ordinary concern for the recitation of Psalms. Psalms are lavishly recited in the Eucharistic celebration, other sacraments and Liturgy of Hours. From the perspective of the commemoration of the mystery of salvation, the recitation of Psalms commemorates the Old Testament phase of salvation. It represents the Old Testament waiting for Christ. However, more importance is given to the aspect that Psalms are praise of God par excellence. Introducing Qanona after the first verse of each Psalm with a Christian theme of prayer, East Syrian tradition has made the Psalms thoroughly Christian. East Syrian tradition has a special arrangement of the Psalms. A set of Psalms, ideally of three, is known as *marmitha*. Three *marmyatha* constitute a *hullala*. There are 20 *hullale* in the East Syrian liturgical Psalter.

1.3. Other Important Features in the East Syrian Liturgy of the Hours

The liturgical disposition of the Church was very significant for the celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours. Until fourteenth century East Syrian Churches were equipped with a *bema* or elevated platform in the middle of the *haikla*. In the liturgical space of the East Syrian Church the *bema* has an important place. The bema in the middle of *haikla* symbolizes the ministry of the Word among the people. The Liturgy of Hours celebrated on the bema stresses the communitarian aspect of the Liturgy of Hours. The celebrant on the bema is literally among the people. Thus the celebration of the Liturgy of Hours becomes the celebration of the people. The position of bema among the people might have contributed to a better participation of the people.

Another special feature of East Syrian celebration was the celebration of the Liturgy of Hours in the *narthex* during the season of summer. This also stressed the aspect of the participation of the community as a whole.

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[2] http://*Judaism and the Early Church* (access 16.12.2014).
[3] http://*Judaism and the Early Church* (access 16.12.2014).

1.3.1. *Ramsa*

It is important to note that the structure of the *Ramsa* is combined with the Rite of introduction and the liturgy of the word of the Eucharistic celebration: Enarxis, Rite of lighting the Lamp and Incensing, Liturgy of the Word, Rite of procession and the rite of conclusion.[4] The cathedral rite of *lucernarium* and incense was accompanied with the Christological anthem of *lakumara*. The use of Psalms in the East Syrian Evening Office is decisive. The recitation of the Evening Psalms (Ps 140,141, 118: 105-112, 116) known as *Marya Qresak* is central to the Evening Office. There is a responsorial Psalm known as *'Suraya daqdam'* and an anthem known as *Onitha daqdam* (anthem before) before the *Marya Qresak*. Likewise there is a reponsorial psalm known as *Suraya d wasar* and anthem known as *Onitha d wasar* after *Marya Qresak*. On Sundays and feast days one marmitha is recited after the Lord's Prayer. On ferial days two *marmiyatha* are prescribed. On Sundays and feast days after the Trisagion and Laying on of Hands *'Suyake'* (conclusions) with one or two *marmyatha* are recited. Another special element in the East Syrian *Ramsa* is the procession in the church with the cross during the *Onitha d' Wasaliqe*. In the Malabar tradition the procession goes out around the granite cross. This rite insists on the aspect of Liturgy of Hours as continuation of the commemoration of the paschal mystery of Christ.

1.3.2. Lelya-Sapra

The core of *Lelya-Sapra*, the night vigil office and the morning office is recitation of Psalms. In the *Lelya* many *hullale* are prescribed (one *hullala* consists ideally of 9 psalms): 11 *hullale* for feast days, 7 *hullale* for Sundays, 3 *hullale* for commemorations. For the feast days and Sundays again 2 *hullale* are prescribed as *Suyake* (conclusions). The expression of deep faith and hope in salvation with complete trust in the Lord at all times is the purpose of psalms.[5]

The fact that in the present form, due to monastic influence, *Lelya-Sapra* are not separated but form a single vigil office - *Lelya* has no concluding prayers and *Sapra* has no initial prayers. *Lelya* has no *huttama* which indicates its connection with *Qala d-Shahra* and *Sapra*. Therefore, the *Sapra* begins with deacon's admonition, "Let us pray peace be with us" and ends with *Huttama* as the official conclusion of the night prayer.[6]

In the commentary of Gabriel Qatraya, he mentions two lights in the Church [foll. 215a-218b]: one inside the sanctuary which is never put out, and another (menorah) in the nave which is lighted only during *Ramsa* and *Sapra*. The inside-lamp symbolises the light of Christ's Gospel (2 Cor 4:4), and the outside-lamps, the light of law given through Moses (Pro 6:23). From the main lamp that is brought out, all other lamps in the *haikla* are lighted, and then, the main lamp is carried back into the sanctuary. With regard to the origin of the rite of light in *Sapra*, certainly an imitation of the evening *lucernarium*, we favour its Jewish derivation, but it should be linked with the Temple cult rather than that of synagogue practice. Gabriel Qatraya also witnesses the rite of incense in everyday *Ramsa* and *Sapra* during the rite of *lakumara*.

It should be kept in mind that the anthem of *lakumara* and the rite of litany are absent in Sunday *Sapra* exactly because they are present in Sunday *Raze*. This means that the ordo of *Sapra* is prepared in consideration of *Raze*.

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[4] J. MOOLAN, *Liturgy of the Hours (Divine Praises) Syro-Malabar Church* (Kottayam, 2014) 261.
[5] J. MOOLAN, "Divine Praises (Liturgy of the Hours) in the Church of St. Thomas Christians", A. Mekkattukunnel, ed., *Mar Toma Margam: The Ecclesial Heritage of the St. Thomas* Christians (Kottayam 2012) 389.
[6] J. MOOLAN, *Liturgy of the Hours (Divine Praises) Syro-Malabar Church* (Kottayam, 2014) 278.

2. Liturgy of the Hours in the St. Thomas Christian Tradition

St. Thomas Christians, following the East Syrian liturgical heritage, had a great concern for the Liturgy of the Hours. They had followed until the end of the sixteenth century the discipline of the Chaldean Church with regard to the recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours. According to Malabar tradition, the clergy used to recite the East Syrian Liturgy of the Hours in parish Churches in choir and the laity who knew Syriac well easily responded to the choral recitation. Fr. Mathias Mundadan observes that, on Sunday mornings and Saturday evenings, so on feast days, all the people gathered in the church to join the priests in the recital of the divine office, and on other days a few attended.[7] The practice of St. Thomas Christians with regard to Liturgy of Hours is clear from the words of Melchior Nunes Barreto, writing to his brethren in Europe: "And on all days before sunset they assemble in the Church to recite the psalms and lessons in Chaldean, and in the morning they do the same, the cassanars...reciting their matins at the altar and the people answering their alelyas and other words with such impetus of the spirit that, although I do not understand the words they provoke in me devotion."[8]

Two important reasons may be cited for the communitarian celebration of the Liturgy of Hours in the Thomas Christian tradition. First of all the ecclesial life was never considered an exclusively clerical affair. The Church was understood to be the people of God. All ecclesial endeavors were, therefore, concerns of the entire Church. The lay faithful were never seen as passive members having not much to do in the day to day life of the Church. In fact, the role of the lay faithful was so important that in effect the administration of the Church was run by the lay faithful. The *palliyogam* had a very prominent role to play in the life of the Church. Its prominence is clear from the fact that the bishop required the *desakkuri* (certificate of approval) from the parish assembly to ordain a candidate to priesthood. The lay faithful had a thorough engagement in all ecclesial affairs, and the liturgical celebrations were not exceptions. Therefore, the lay faithful recognized it their right and obligation to join the official prayers of the Church.

Another reason why the lay faithful had an active participation in the Liturgy of Hours is that there was no custom of daily Eucharistic celebration. In the absence of Eucharistic celebration, Liturgy of Hours was the only important liturgical activity in the church. Hence the lay faithful were prompted to participate in the daily celebration of Liturgy of Hours.

2.1. Special Features of the Liturgy of the Hours in the Malabar Tradition

In accordance with the custom of the East Syriac tradition the Mar Toma Nasrani Church of India begins her 'Liturgical Day' with the *Ramsa*, the 'Evening Liturgy' at 6.00 pm. Then the Church completes it singing praises to the Lord through the following 'hours' like *Subbha* (9.00 pm), *Lelya* (12.00 am), *Qala d-Shahra* (3.00 am), *Sapra* (6.00 am), *Quta'a* (9.00 am) and *Endana* (12.00 noon). Today Syro-Malabar Church uses the shortened form for one week system of the major hours such as *Ramsa*, *Lelya* and *Sapra*.

Most of the typical East Syrian features of the Liturgy of Hours are shared also by the Malabar tradition. However, there are some features specific to the Malabar tradition. The Jewish elements found in the East Syrian liturgy were not seen foreign in the Malabar tradition since the

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[7] A.M. MUNDADAN, Sixteenth Century Traditions of St. Thomas Christians (Bangalore, 1970) 161; See also T. PUTHIYAKUNNEL, Syro-Malabar Clergy and Their General Obligation (Ernakulam, 1964) 133-140.
[8] J. Wicki, ed., *Documenta Indica*, Vol. V (Rome, 1958) 416.

Jewish tradition had its strong influence in Malabar from very ancient times, by way of trade and Jewish colonies.

Though East Syrian in origin, the Liturgy of Hours in the Malabar tradition is very well in agreement with the religious ethos of India. The sages of India insisted on praying twice a day, morning and evening. These are prayers at the '*Samdhya'*. The word samdhya literally means 'holding together' or 'meeting point'. The *samdhya* denotes the meeting point of the pairs of the polar opposites in nature and life, i.e., sun and moon, day and night, darkness and light etc.[9] The important *samdhays* like *prabhata samdhya* and *sāyam samdhya* are considered the auspicious time of prayer. The East Syrian liturgical hours of Sapra and Ramsa, practiced by the St. Thomas Christians, are in conformity with the Indian prayers of *prabhata samdhya* and *sāyam samdhya.* Lighting of the *Samdhya Deepam* (evening lamp) is of great significance for the Hindu families in Kerala. Lucernarium, the solemn lighting of the lamp in the Malabar tradition of Ramsa is thus having a significant cultural parallel.

Another element of significant cultural bearing is *Kaikasturi*, the Indianized form of the Kiss of Peace. It is the constant tradition of the St. Thomas Christians to make the exchange of peace at the beginning and end of the Liturgy of Hours. Peace is exchanged from person to person through the hands. Peace is qualified here as *kasturi*, fragrant object. The rite of kaikasturi proclaims that Christ, our peace (Eph 2:14) is our fragrance (2 Cor 2:14). *Kaikasturi* is given in the beginning of *Ramsa* and *Lelya*, and at the end of *Ramsa* and *Sapra*. It refers to the communion aspect of the Liturgy of the Hours, communion between Christ and liturgical assembly. In order to become worthy to pray before the Lord in happiness and peace of mind, it is required that we forgive each other. (Mt 5:23-24).

Conclusion

Liturgy is the celebration of the faith of the believing community. As a believing community the St. Thomas Christians made proper use of every liturgical celebration to express their faith in the best possible manner. In this celebration they were conscious of their ecclesiological and social identity. Thus cultural elements too play a vital role in the celebration of faith. We find the Liturgy of Hours of St. Thomas Christians making a synthesis of ecclesiological and cultural elements in the proclamation of faith. Thus the East Syrian liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians become rich with the penetration of the elements from the culture. Observing this wonderful synthesis, Fr Placid J Podipara qualified the Mar Toma Margam as 'Christian in religion, hindu in culture and oriental in worship.'

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[9] N.J. KALAMBUKATTU, "Liturgy of the Hours: A Response to the Spiritual Ideal of Ceaseless Prayer", in P. KOCHAPPILLY, et al, ed., *The Way of Life: Festschrift in Honour of Prof. Dr. Varghese Pathikulangara, CMI* (Kottayam, 2011)199.

THE LITURGY OF THE HOURS IN THE LATIN RITE

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The Mystery of Christ is lived by the Church in an uninterrupted manner from the day of the Pentecost to the *Parousia.* She lives in continuous communion with her Lord re-enacting in her life the mystery of his life and death, his resurrection and his glorification until she will fully share in his glory. The daily celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours is an excellent expression of this continuous communion of the Church with Christ.

1. The term: Liturgy of the Hours

From among the many terms used in the course of time (Breviary, Divine, Office, Sacrifice of Praise) the Church has chosen this term.

i. ***Breviary:*** It suggests a book and not a liturgical action. It indicated the strictly clerical nature of this liturgical action.

ii. ***Divine Office:*** It seems to have a juridical and not a Christian cultic connotation.

iii. ***Sacrifice of Praise:*** It did not indicate the specific scope of this liturgical action, as expressed in the Liturgical Constitution (Art. 84 and 88). It can be applied both for the Mass and the Liturgy of the Hours.

iv. ***Liturgy of the Hours:*** This new name clearly expresses the nature of this liturgical action as one that has to be celebrated respecting the time that is proper to each hour. This liturgical act sanctifies not time in general, nor even the day taken as a block, but the life of man lived according to a rhythm and sequence of hours. The dynamic aspect is very evident in this.

2. A short history of the Liturgy of the Hours.

a) Some preliminary observations on the Jewish prayer:

Originally there were only two prayers during the day: the morning and the evening prayer (schema). Later on the mid-day hour was added. These prayers were closely connected with the morning and evening sacrifices.

b) The personal prayer of Christ

Jesus observed the morning and evening prayer hours (Mc. 6,46; Mc. 1, 35). He knew of the mid-day prayer hour (Mt.6, 5). He used the schema as the formulae of his prayer (Lk 10, 26; Mk 12, 29-31). He prayed also at times, not fixed by the Jewish cultic laws, e.g. during the night vigils (Mk. 6, 46; Lk. 6, 12). He gave to the disciples the 'Our Father' as a substitute for the 'schema' (Lk 11, 1) Jesus used the Aramaic instead of the Hebrew in the composition of the 'Our Father'.

c) The prayer of the Apostles:

i) before the destruction of the Temple.

They prayed three times a day (The miracle of the Pentecost took place when the apostles were together in the cenacle praying at the third hour, Peter and John go to the temple to pray at the ninth hour; Peter prays at mid-day (Acts. 2, 1-2, 15; 3, 1; 10,9).

The apostles observe the night vigils (Acts. 12, 12; 16,25). They say the `Our Father' three times a day instead of the `Schema' (Cfr. *Didache*).

ii) after the destruction of the Temple

During this period the Apostles substitute the temple with Christ. They begin the worship of the Father in spirit and in truth in a definite way. The glory of God passes from the temple to the person of Christ. The prayer in the Christian assembly, which is the visible sign of the presence of Christ has its definite beginning.

In this analysis of the New Testament Prayer we can see the different aspects under which Christ is present in the prayer of the Church:

- as an example
- as an object of prayer and as the medium through which we pray.
- as the *'terminus ad quem'* of our prayer.
- here we find also the nucleus of the number and meaning of the hours of prayers.

d. In the early Church

i) Some testimonials:

- ***Didache:*** They prayed three times during the day. The `Our Fatrher' is the formula used by the Christians.

- ***In letter of St. Clement to the Corinthians:*** The succession of day and night is seen as signifying the death and resurrection of the Lord. The Christian prayer is to be regulated according this rhythm of hours.

- *Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian and Hippolytus* speak of the three hours as the `terce' `sext' and `none' as distinct from the morning and evening prayers. They also mention the celebration of some night vigils.

- ***The Christian meaning of the hours of prayer***: The *terce* was the hour of the decent of the Holy Spirit, *Sext,* the hour of passion and *None*, the hour of Christ's death. The morning and evening prayers were the hours for the celebration of the resurrection of Our Lord.

ii) From I - II centuries:

The assembly of the Christian people gathered together from time to time to pray according to the possibility and the decision of the Bishop. The value of this community prayer did not come from the fact that they were organised by special prescriptions given by the hierarchy, but from the fact that they were true prayers of the community of the Christians gathered together in the name of Jesus. Hence there was very little of prescribed texts; most of the prayers were improvised. They had the following hours of official prayers:

- ***Morning Prayer***: It was solemnised in Rome at the time of Hippolytus. It was the celebration at the beginning of a new life; it was the celebration of the praise of the risen Lord.

- ***The evening prayer***: It began with the blessing of the lamp. The lamp represented Christ. The sunset that brings darkness cannot destroy the eternal light, Christ that is present in the midst of a Christian community.

- The terce, sext and none were private hours.

- *The Prayer of Night* was probably in the beginning only a private practice. It was a public act in those days in which there was a solemn celebration of a night Vigil which ended with the celebration of the Holy Mass, e.g. the Paschal Vigil. It becomes a regular practice only in the monasteries. In no church we find that the community recited all these hours during the day.

iii) From IV - VI centuries:

The Church organizes here liturgical functions with greater solemnity and with the participation of the greater number of people. The priests begin to acquire a very important role in these celebrations. The public prayer of the Church becomes more and more official and according to certain prescribed norms. We find during this period two different types of offices during: the monastic and the cathedral office.

- *The Cathedral Office*: In parish Churches and especially in the cathedrals the priests and the people gather together under the presidency of the Bishop and celebrate the morning and evening offices. The morning office consisted of psalms (50, 66, 117 and 148-150). Only by the V century we have the fixation of 5 psalms and a canticle), hymns and prayers. The evening office was a *lucernarium,* ceremony of lighting the lamp.

- *The monastic office*: The monks continue the spirit of the primitive Christianity in the Church. They dedicated themselves to prayer with a certain regularity which was not possible for the Christians that lived in the world and not even for the priests dedicated to active ministry. Their life was meant to be a sign of that heavenly life, when the elect will be totally employed in the praise of God. Characteristics of monastic office were the following:

- *Cathedral office, contaminated by the Monastic Office*: From the VI century some churches have their fixed clergy, the *presbyterium.* In some Churches there was a group of monks for the service of prayer and a group of priests only for the administration of the sacraments. Some of the monks became bishops. This made them introduce some of the monastic customs in the Cathedral prayer. The fervour and magnificence of these celebrations attracted the people to the monasteries and this made the priests imitate the monks in their liturgical functions.

iv) From VI - IX centuries:

- In Rome:

Around the year 500, in Rome, the whole Psalter is recited in the course of the week. At Matins (Midnight hour) on ferial days there were 12 psalms and four lessons. On Sundays there were 18 or sometimes 24 psalms with 9 lessons. On feast days there were only nine psalms and nine lessons. The Lauds and vespers were as we have them. The minor hour has psalm 118 and compline 4 psalms. The main elements of the Divine Office were:

v) From X-XV Centuries:

The office becomes a great burden for the clergy, because of the unnecessary additions and devotional prayers that were being added to it. The choral recitation gives place to private recitation, especially with the appearance of the Mendicant Orders. They move very much from place to place and therefore they needed the Breviaries in volumes that can be carried around easily. They were shortened by substituting the Sunday and ferial office with a feast. It is no more celebrated in the Church, with the participation of the faithful as before. In 1275 the Council of Trier obliges all the priests to have breviary and permits them to recite it in private, during the journey.

vi) From XVI-XX centuries:

On the eve of the Council of Trent, almost every church has its canons. If they could not take part in the choral recitation they were obliged to recite it privately. In 1568 the new Breviary, as desired by the Council Trent, comes to light.

In the I Vatican Council the custom that prevailed of the obligatory recitation was going to be enforced. It did not take place because the Council did not complete its work. It was later incorporated into the Code of Canon Law.

Pius X, changed the old system of reciting 18 psalms on Sundays and 12 on ferial days into a uniform system of 9 psalms for all the different types of Offices. In 1945 we have the new Psalter.

Some attempts at simplification were made also from the year 1955 to 1966.

vii) Vatican II - Liturgical Constitution:

After giving the theology of Divine Office, the Council decided upon the following points:

- suppression of Prime.

- choice of only one minor hour

- reduction of the psalms at Matins and greater importance to longer readings, in order to make this hour an hour of meditation.

viii) The New Breviary:

The Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship published on 2nd February 1974, the General Instruction on the Liturgy of the Hours, which contains the theology as well as the liturgical form of the Divine Office. The General Instruction is divided into 5 chapters.

a) The importance of Divine Office in the life of the Church.

b) The sanctification of the day or the various liturgical hours.

c) The constitutive elements of the Divine Office

d) The various celebrations during the year.

e) The rites to be observed in the common celebration of the Divine Office.

CATHOLIC IDENTITY IN THE FOLK CULTURAL CIRCUIT OF KERALA

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This presentation has three parts—Data, Methods and Understanding. It has the limited purpose of conscientising my colleagues of the various possibilities of understanding everyday life as expressions of folk religion. The Catholic community of Kerala with its rich and varied everyday life deserves better attention from scholars of folkloristics and religious studies. There is need for convergence of folklore, sociology, communication studies, cultural studies, literary studies, linguistics, theology, history and economics. The relevance of digital humanities also has to be examined.

0.0.2 Folklore and popular culture are two knowledge systems that manipulate identity in a knowledge society. A lot of literature and communication channels are available for the circulation of grand catholic traditions (official teachings) but little traditions (folk beliefs and practices) are abandoned at the border of ambiguity.

This critical area is under researched in Kerala Christian studies. This paper once again shows the need for large scale scientific study in this area with methodological contemporaneity.

0.0.3. The **part I** lists the most relevant folk items. This is not an exhaustive list nor is it the result of painstaking field work. The data made available is the result of an armchair folklorist's exercise in secondary sources. But we hope the listing pattern as a system of thought will prompt young researchers to identify similar expressive traditions that enrich the repertoire.

0.0.4.1 I have attempted a taxonomy of the folk forms by arranging them as clusters. It has been done arbitrarly and hence to be improved on the strength of fresh field studies.

0.0.4.2 The border between folk culture and popular culture is not clearly marked. A purist church historian/canonist/theologian would label them as examples of syncretism (This is what happened with the Portuguese missionaries in the sixteenth Century). (see Zacharia 1994)

I have avoided many typical popular culture artifacts from this list. The best examples are film, advertisement, social media and other internet products. In popular culture, audience are in an imagined world/virtual world under the spell of homeliness and pleasure.

0.0.4.3. In folk expressions the chief interpreter is the performer. His/her gestures recreate the sacred space-time. The interplay between the performer's and audience facilitate the emergence of full meaning. This folk interpretation or hermeneutics is authentic as folklore. The performer's knowledge is complemented by the experience of the audience. This folk process of knowledge production is characteristic of folklore. This knowledge process is significantly different from dogmatic knowledge.

1.0.1 Clustering of all kinds involve perspectives of the researcher. This becomes all the more critical in the case of religious identification directed by dogmatic knowledge. Many folk items presented here in different clusters can be regrouped in different sets of local secular cultural design. The best examples are *taali* 'pedant' and *dakshina* 'offering to guru'

1.1.1 This characteristic is called flexibility of the data. The flexible data has the traits of extensionality (can add new fields easily) and scaleability (can expand in size rapidly). Kodiyettu and kodiyirakku are good examples to illustrate this point. The folklore data listed here is Big Data (see Kitchin 2014) which demands digital methods for data mining, analysis and interpretation. I do believe Big Data is Good Data.

1.2.1 Data: 'Too Big To Know' is the title of a book by David Weinberger (2011, Basic Books, Newyork). The network of knowledge in the internet age is the object of study in Weinberger's book. We extend this metaphorically to the traditional knowledge system popularly known as folklore. In the keyword folklore both folk and lore are equally important. Both lore and folk are defining each other at every point of network.

1.2.2 Weinberger's book 'Too Big To Know' has an explanatory gloss in the title which seems to be very relevant in understanding the structure and nature of folklore. 'Rethinking Knowledge *Now That the* Facts aren't the Facts, Experts *are* Everywhere *and* the Smartest Person in the Room *is the* Room.'

1.2.3 As our folklore data is too big we shall provide only a list of Kerala folklore items that are significant for the rethinking of Kerala Catholic identity in everyday life. Greater attention should have been paid to the contexts of folklore expressions. They are listed as clusters.

Clusters of Folklore with Catholic Identity

1.3 Folk Literature

1.3.1 Purathana Pattukal/ Ancient Songs

1.3.2 Ulpatti Puranas/ Origin Stories

(Marttomma Gitam, Veeradian Pattu, Paanan Pattu etc.)

1.3.4 Folk Tales

(Folk hagiography of St. George, St Teresa of Avila etc. in Malayalam)

1.3.5 Folk Drama

(Cavittu Naatakam etc.)

1.3.6 **Folk Dance**

1.3.6.1 Margam kali

1.3.6.2 Vattakkali

1.3.6.3 Kampatikkali/ Koolkali

1.3.6.4 Paricamuttukali (Pallipattukal, Kalyanapattukal)

1.3.6.5 Linguistic Play

1.3.7 Proverbs

1.3.8 Verbal Icons

(Muttappan, Malakayattam, Sleevaappatha, Kurisinte vazhi, Thirukkutumbam, Marthommayute Maargam)

1.3.9 Kinship Terms

(Achayan, Appan, Ammachi, Perappan, Peramma, Chittamma, Chittappan, Nathoon, Elemma, Eleppan)

1.3.10 Personal Names

(Baptism name, Calling name, Official name, Nick name)

Variants of the same name — western and oriental versions

Ethnic Names

Frequency of Names. Typical Catholic Names

(see A. M. Marykutty 1997)

1.4 Folk/Ethnic Food

1.4.1 Pesahaa Meal

Intri Appam, and Paal — A special meal for Maundy Thursday evening.

— Religious identity is stressed by regulation.

1.4.2 Ayani appam

1.4.3 Modes of Cooking

(Boiling, Steaming, Roasting Frying etc.)

Popular items Piralan, Ulattu etc.

1.5.1 **Community Meals**

1.5.2 Marriage Feast

Mode of serving food — planton leaves

1.5.3 Death Anniversary

(Chatham items — Neyyappam)

1.5.4 Parish Festival Meals

(Puzhukku Neercha)

1.5.5 Koozhi Neercha/Chicken meal

1.5.6 Family ritual Meal

(Muthiyuuttu)

1.5.6 Popular dishes

1.5.6.1 Fish curry

(Peera Pattichatu, Mulakittatu)

1.5.6.2 Meat - Beef, Pork

varieties of preparation.

1.5.6.3 Vegetables

(Inchikkari for Pashnikkanji)

1.5.6.4 Piti

1.5.6.5 Curuttu

1.5.6.6 Kallappam and Pothirachikkari

1.5.6.7 Sweet Dish

(Paani + tair + Pazham) was popular in the past.

1.5.6.8 Special role of Unniappam/Neyyappam

1.6.1 **Special Devotion** — Fasting

Very Common among Women as special devotion — regulations

First Friday observations

Abstinence from food, drinks

1.6.2 Pilgrimage

Mountain shrines (Malakayattam)

1.6.3 Fresh Fire and Fresh Water

1.6.4 Tullal

1.6.5 Urulal

1.6.6 Niinthal

1.6.7 Kalluchumakkalal

1.6.8 Pouring Oil

Ritual, Medicine

1.6.9 Oil for Kedavilakku

Neercha oil

1.6.10 Neercha Food

Cooked rice and curries, fried rice etc.

1.7 Lamp and Light

1.7.1 Nilavilakku

Lamp with cross for ceremonial occasions

1.7.2 Lamp for the reception of the bride

1.7.3 Kalvilakku/Stone lamps (Kalkkurissu)

1.8 Economy of Folk religious festivals — Perunaal/Tirunaal

1.8.1 Subscription, Donation and sponsoring by families or regional groups.

1.8.2 Prasudenti

1.8.3 Rent collected from temporary shops in the church compound.

1.8.4 Role of Kaikkaran, Yogam

- Perunnal Kaikkaran

1.8.5 Safe keeping of money and treasures — Regulations

Locking system, counting of money — different local conventions

1.8.6 Right of Inheritance

— Male - Female discrimination

1.8.7 Simong or dakshina

1.8.8 Market practices

1.8.9 Caste and Business

1.8.10 Religious Identity and Economy, Kuries

— Money business, Liquor business

1.8.10 Pitiyari

1.8.11 Education, Health care, Kalari

1.9 Festivals

1.9.1 Liturgical Calendar and Local calendar — integration for Church festivals Makaram tirunaal, Meedam tirunaal

1.9.2 Flag post — History — Special inscriptions and icons on the flag. The presence of the priest. Evolution of flag post - Golden flag post.

1.9.3 Drums and Other musical instruments

1.9.4 Decorative umbrellas

1.9.5 Fire works

1.9.6 Market and Festival

1.9.7 Procession - Local protocols

1.9.8 Betel throw

1.9.9 Garlands of lime fruits

1.9.10 Auction at the end of procession — a carnival

1.9.11 Festival as family union

1.9.12 Food and drinks

1.9.13 **Different statues**, Art of sculpturing

— Various statues of St. George and related stories (Edathua, Aruvithura, Edappally).

1.9.14 Season of Festival — Different models

1.9.15 Unique Festivals to mark epiphany — Rakkuli Perunnal (Pala, Manimala) Pintipperunnal (Trichur)

Kappal Perunnal (Kuravilangad), I¼-s¡«v

1.10 **Casting out evil**

1.10.1 Chaazhivilakku

1.10.2 Eli vilakku

1.10.3 Kazhnneduppu

1.10.4 Tying Caratu

1.10.5 Atima kotuppu

1.11 **Fashion - Westernisation Vs Indigenisation**

1.11.1 Dress

1.11.2 Ornaments - Uniqueness of Minnu, Kunukku, Minnukettu/tallikettu, Mantrakodi, Catta Kavani, Neeryatu

1.11.3 Special dress for special occasion

— Marriage dress

1.12.4 Social conventions and dre3ss code for Baptism, Marriages, Death

1.13 Marriage

1.13.1 Caste, Rite, Nationality, Region

1.13.2 Kalyanam Urappikkal, (Decision Making)

1.13.3 Betrothal

1.13.4 Dowry, Pasaaram

1.13.5 Kacha, Kacha tazhukal

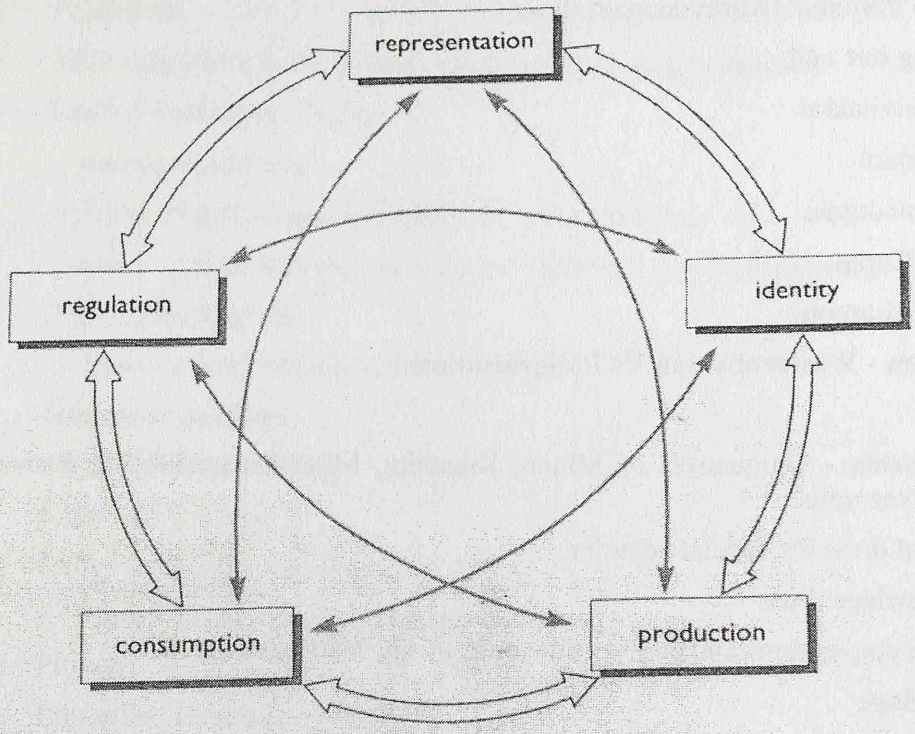
13.6 Stuti kotuppu

2.0.1 Part II of this paper proposes a methodology for the analysis of the data. It becomes relevant in the context of the search for Catholic identification in the Kerala folklore. Religious identity performed through the cultural circuit — production, consumption, regulation, representation, identity.

2.1.1 The concept of cultural circuit popularised by Stuart Hall and colleagues is adapted as the basis of analysis here.

(For more details

see Gay, Hall etal 1997, Doing Cultural Studies, Sage)



2.2.1 For detailed analysis consider Minnu/Taali 'pedant' tied at the neck of bride as the important sign of marriage.

OR

Dakshina offered to the teacher at the time of initiation to writing or marriage ceremony.

OR

Mantrakodi — cloth offered to bride during the marriage ceremony.

2.3.1 Generic understanding of everyday expressions demands integration with cognitive process. Everyday practices and linguistic expressions are not distinct from cognitive aspects of the mind. So every item of the folkloristic expression demands not lexical but encyclopaedic understanding.

This is an open ended exercise with ample scope for variations, additions and displacement.

3.0.1 **The Part III** of this paper should have been devoted for the understanding of the study. Understanding involves DIKW — **Data > Information > Knowledge > Wisdom.**

I am yet to begin this process as you can see from this Extended Abstract.

I shall very briefly record my intuitions and presuppositions.

3.1.1 The relationship between experience, embodied cognition and language holds the key to the understanding of folklore.

3.1.2 Both knowledge representation and meaning construction (conceptual structure and conceptualisation) are part of the folklore process,

3.2.1 Image schema used in the folklore process involves Merging, Collection and Splitting.

3.3.1 Identity is manipulated by moving various elements spatially to interior boundary or exterior.

3.4.1 In **Catholic religious conceptualisation** force schema involving concepts of Compulsion, Promotion, Blockage, Removal of restraint and enablement plays an important role.

3.4.2 Catholic identity and folk expressions in contemporary narratives — Metanarratives.

3.4.2.1 Scientific studies — books, dissertations.

3.4.2.2 Narratives in Malayalam literature — Ponkunnam Varkey, Muttathu Varkey

3.4.3 Contemporary film and serials — film songs

3.4.4 Television and Advertisement

3.4.5 Internet, Social Media

3.5 **Taali illustrated in context.**

Christian folk expressions can be classified on the basis of contexts.

Richard Baumann's classification of contexts will be useful. We shall illustrate this classification using *taali*.

3.5.1 Context of Meaning (What does *taali* mean?)

3.5.2 Institutional context (What is the role of *taali* in the culture?)

3.5.3 Communicative context (What are the communicative networks of *taali*?)

3.5.4 Social context (What are the social determinations of *taali*?)

3.5.5 Individual context (How does *taali* perform the agency?)

3.5.6 Context of situation (How is *taali* functioning in various social situation — domestic life, family life, public domain, religious community, caste, religion, gender. (Does *taali* proclaim Catholic identity?)

3.6 Mapping of Kerala folklore in general — religious identity

3.6.1 Synchronic and diachronic models — Tarisappally copper plates — Cultural Symbiosis

3.6.2 Oral history — Local history, Church histories, Family histories / Structure and Functions

3.6.3 Kerala folklore and Semitic religious identities: Jewish Folk literature, Mappila folk literature, Christian folklore, Hyphenated society and Hyphenated practices, Networking without giving up religious identity, Kerala renaissance and religious identity. A Kerala model.

HYPHENATION is the **METAPHOR** and **KEYWORD**

CHRISTIANITY, COMMUNITY AND PERFORMANCE: A STUDY OF AN INDIAN MAGI PLAY

Jolly Puthussery

One of the chief Christian folk theatrical form is the *Moovarasu natakam* or the Magi Play. This form is performed by the community, for the community, and is of the community and therefore it has come to stay as the 'core' of the Indian Christian performance tradition .

Moovarasu natakam

Moovarasu natakam or *Moonuraja koothu*, portrays the story of nativity and the Journey of the Magi on the Epiphany day, is a prominent genre among the Kerala Christian performance tradition. This religious theatrical performance is conducted every year on the first Sunday of January at the premises of St. Antony's Church, Athikkodu, Kuzhinjan para town, Palakkad district of Kerala.

The narrative of this event progress according to the St. Mathew's gospel (2:1-16) and also incorporates elements from the apocryphal traditions like: Nativity, Magi and Herod plays of the medieval Europe. The presentational aspect of this dance drama is closely akin to the *Terukkoothu* tradition of Tamilnadu and it also shows similarities with the *Nadagam* of Sri Lanka.

The most interesting aspect of this hybrid tradition is the portrayal of King Herod as a Hindu, who believes in the *Puranas* and *Sastras* of Hindus and relies his faith on the Veda Sastri/Pappan (soothsayer cum ritualist) Moreover he is been tempted and warned by a set of Satans (payees) before his meeting with the *Magi* (three Kings) It is interesting to note Lucifer warning a Hindu King.

The right to perform *Moovarasunatakam*, which has an uninterrupted performance history of 164 years, is vested with the people of Thirty-Three hamlets (*uurus*) around Palakkad district. Those who actively participate in this *natakam* belong to the *Vanniyar* Latin Christian Community of the above hamlets.

The scholarly poet *Arokiya Vatiyaar* wrote the available text in the form of a manuscript in classical Tamil. This consists of two hundred and sixty nine poems. It is written by the author with the help of Fr. J.C. Bruyera, a French Jesuit Priest called as Arulananda Swamy by the people. During 1850 he was the vicar of this Parish and *Moovarsu natakam* started performing from that time.

The specialty of this performance event is its use of the entire village with a fluid staging method. The performance space can be broadly divided into two. They are: Inside the church compound and outside the church compound i.e., the compound around church building, The permanent stage on the church ground, and the interior portion of the church is included in the first. The latter consists of three places: Pappanpalli, Nadupalayam and Venkar Palayam

respectively from where the three *Magis - Balthasar, Melchio* and *Kasper* starts their journey respectively and the routes through which their procession move to church.

The performers must possess a hereditary family right to perform their respective roles. They perform the roles clad in *Terukkoothu* type costumes with the footsteps and hand gestures mastered by them through training from the Master/*Vatiyar*. There are mainly five varieties of footsteps called *Onnamkall* to *Anchamkall* used in *Moovarasunatakam* performance. *Pandithakaran* family, *Mariyanveedu*, *Vellaikkaran* family, *Upadesi Veedu* is the respective families, which holds the right for performing the characters like *Balthasar, Melchio*, *Kasper* and *Herod*. Even the other minor roles are also having a hereditary lineage.

As mentioned earlier, with active audience participation *Moovarasu natakam* becomes a performance event in its true sense. This total theatre starts with the journey of the kings from three places. This is the first procession in this performance. Later the event progress through a number of processional entries of characters and ends up with the grand procession around the church carrying the idol of infant Jesus in a wooden cart by the devotees. In between these two grand processions there are a number of scenes well connected with a continuous correspondence in the narrative they are:

1. The three kings meet each other at the compound of the church introduce and share their intention of the journey for meeting the newly born Jesus.
2. The minister of King Herod visits them and enquires about the purpose of their coming to the land of Bethlehem.
3. Minister in turn reports the intension of the *Magi's* wish to King Herod, who is staying at a palace, which is the permanent stage in the church compound.
4. Herod invites *Magi* to the palace; they come in a procession to the palace (stage) led by the minister. Herod comes out of the palace and receives them.
5. *Satans* arrive at Palace and tempts King Herod, they also warn him not to believe the *Magi* and their Christian faith.
6. King Herod and *Magi* discuss about their respective religious faiths-Herod believes in Hindu *Puranas* and *Sastras*.
7. King Herod calls for his courtly religious scholar to check the *Magi's* opinion on the birth of Savior.
8. *Pappans/Veda Sastri* (Soothsayer of Herod) comes to the court; *Magi* confront the greedy soothsayer and expose their ignorance before the king.
9. Herod agrees to call the local church priest and leaves the stage
10. The church priest and his assistants come and proclaim the birth of Jesus.
11. The *Magi* by taking the idols of the three kings in their hands kneeling down with prayers. This *tevaram* session includes the participation of the audience. Active audience gets into trace.
12. After this, *Magi* along with the believers go in a procession to the church and kneel down before the crib inside the church. *Magi* remove their headgear in adoration.
13. A grand procession in which the performers carry the baby Jesus in a wooden carriage (*Ther*)
14. The procession ends up inside the church and the devotees participate in the holy mass.

(all the above said units of the performance will be narrated with the help of Pictures)

The above-mentioned activities are well connected through a mode of fluid stage presentation. The following theatrical elements can be seen in this highly participatory ritual enactment.

A) *Therukoothu* style of rendering lines and costume patterns are used.
B) Performers possess Generic as well as codified footsteps and facial gestures along with circular movements and leaps.
C) The presence of a team of backing vocals led by the *Vatiyaar*. No musical instrument on the stage but the *Chenda* is used for processions
D) The songs sung by *Vatiyaar* in between the scenes work as a *Suthradaras* introductory narration.
E) Characters are portrayed in binary oppositions that are: Herod the pagan Hindu King is placed against *Magi*- the true believers in Christian faith, the local Hindu Soothsayer is placed against the Christian priest, the total Christian Faith is against the *Satan*'s deeds, Hindu mythology against Christian Biblical Teachings.
F) The extensive use of available local material for the performance like Bullock Cart, fireworks, plantain leaves, etc.
G) The absolute freedom of the participants to get into the performance at any time and perform their votive offerings by seeking the blessing from the kings, The Magi blesses the devotee who kneels down before him. The devotee washes the performers' feet, kisses their hands and offers money as *Dakshina* while the performance is on.
H) The active participants also sing along with the performers and also adjust the space required for the performance's visibility.
I) The element of belief in their religion expressed through this practice makes the active ones fall in to a trance.
In short, *Moovarasunatakam* with its ritual orientation allows the performers with the hereditary right to perform their ritual right, which meets the social obligation of the active participant/devotee who realizes it through their votive offerings. In a way this annual performance makes them intact and reflects the religious identity of the community.

The striking feature of this art lies in its ritualistic association. As an integral part of the enactment of belief of the birth of Christ, this performance is interwoven with the context of the Christian festival in which the ritual practice is explicitly expressed through word and deed, not only during the performance but also in the preparation for the performance. In other words the ritual observances that go along with the production of *Moovarasu natakam* moulds the performance as the 'core' with its idiom and ideology. This practice of linking ritual with performance tradition is not uncommon in the native tradition. Most of the performances of the natives where votive offerings are cyclically and ritually exchanged are termed as ritual theatre in the Indian context. All the characteristics that make a theatrical performance a ritual theatre go well with the *Moovarasu natakam*. The context, event, performance and audience relationship with no clear distinctions of boundaries of the text are some of the characteristic features at- tributed to the sacredness of the ritual theatre, can also be seen in *Moovarasu natakam* Ritual theatre by and large is 'community specific' where the identity of community is expressed through the performance. It is the community which ascribe and behave with reverence while taking part in the performance. It is the community's attitude towards a particular religious dogma when expressed through a performance that performance becomes ritual theatre to the community perse. The attitude of the community to identitify itself esoterically, force

the community to perpetuate the enactment of core belief through performance annually and cyclically. By annual repetition of the performance, the community expressed its authority over the art form and in the process established its solidarity. The repetition of the performance also attest the Christian communities idiom and ideology not for just identification but for a space for its own among the neighborhood cultures. This strategy is quite important because the then Christianity is conceived as an alien religion and therefore antagonistic to the natives. This inbuilt conflict made the *Moovarasu natakam* establish its identity at the cost of neighborhood cultures by making fun of those belief systems; and by convincingly merging the native systems of expression, it resolved the conflict through ritual process. The natives too, though anti-thetical to the theme, did identify the art form as the community's and respected it as one of its heritage. This process of enculturation of the art form as one of the native expressive tradition made the art form to continue even till date.

The hybrid form of the Kerala Christian performance tradition is parallel to that of pidgin and other creolized languages. Because, the structure of the performances in *Chavittunatakam* and *Moovarasunatakam* ,shows a superimposition of the western theme on the conventional performance structure of another native genre. But the synthesis and the continuous existence of this genre with a growth and transition suggest a model different from that of the straightforward power-relation of dominance and subjugation, which exists in these cultural amalgamations. This different model, where the genres have the quality of tacit decomposition of the overpowering dominance of the themes (in an 'alien' or constructed or induced context) due to its possession of the native idioms, is nothing but the irresistible model of cultural hybridity. This hybrid displacing space gives priority to the hybrid idioms of the genres. These idioms uphold the collective identity of the performance tradition. This, in turn, proclaims the idea of the community in an imaginary realm. The performance idioms are immersed in the performance structure of each genre and this unique quality of the performance attributes a position to the genre. In other words, these idioms work as the identity markers in placing the performance genres in a performance tradition. In the case of the Christian performance idioms, one can see the major part played by the western missionary interface and its ideological establishment through a form of religion. Here, the native idioms were purposefully hybridized and used by the missionaries. So, one can undoubtedly consider the Christian performance idioms as hybridized ones which show the simultaneous existence of the mellifluous fusion and the dialectical articulation. In other words, these hybrid ones illustrate the examples of 'organic' and 'intentional' hybridity of Bakhtin with breaking and joining at the same time, in the same place or the difference and sameness in an apparently impossible simultaneity. The hybrid idioms, its formation and relevance consist of a bizarre binary operation, where each impulse is qualified against the other, forcing momentary forms of dislocation and displacement into complex entities.

As mentioned earlier, the organic and the intentional hybrid idioms of the Kerala Christian performance tradition can be easily understood by taking two genres, namely *Chavittunatakam* and *Moovarasunatakam* as examples. Both of these originated in the medieval phase of the Kerala Christianity and permeated through the ages. The striking features of organic hybrid idioms of performance are very much explicit in the formation of the performance codes and the structure of the *Moovarasunatakam* where the idioms are formulated through an unconscious mixing and fusion. Here, the mixture of the European

theme and the Kerala performance codes remains mute and opaque, with no conscious contrast. The following striking characteristic features of organic hybridity[i] are explicit in the *Moovarasunatakam* genre. They are:

i. Unintentional and unconscious: - The selection of the context of Epiphany for the play production is unintentional because of the relevance of 'nativity' theme of biblical narrative during that festival. The importance given to the play productions, as part of the festivities among the different cultures in general and the Asia-Oceania region in particular, makes one think that the purpose behind the production is an unconscious one by the community and is devoid of the possible power centered ideological praxis. In other words, *Moovarasunatakam* becomes an unconscious part of the Epiphany celebrations of the Kerala Christian community where the text also is unintentionally implanted in the context.

ii. Mixing: - The mellifluous mixing of the textual theme with the purpose of the context of Church celebration shows a complete fusion of the biblical as well as the apocryphal text and the theatrical performance tradition of Kerala. The organic amalgamation of the biblical text with the performance codes of the region is made possible through geographical and contextual adoptions of the narrative by using many native elements such as: the bullock carts decorated with the agricultural crops of the country (as a mode of processional transportation of the kings); the use of indigenous torches and candles (for lighting the performance space); the musical ambience produced with the native percussion instruments and fire works; the excellent use of the sound of a pop-gun as a marker of time along with the number of fire work displays which demarcate the end and the beginning of the sequences. Apart from that, the accurate use of the locations such as the interior portion, the compound and the vicinity of St. Anthony's Church used for connecting the floating performance space and the processional mode corresponding to the 'continuous correspondence' method used in the narrative will make the make-believe realistic. Similarly, the characterization of King Herod as a pagan/Hindu king and the *Magi* (the wise men from the East) as kings from the three Eastern countries facilitates the complete native adaptation and amalgamation of the text into the context. In this absolute organic mixing, the mixture remains mute and opaque and makes the encounter occur within the limits of a single utterance.

iii. Absence of contrast: - The true mixture of the organic hybrids with its mute/opaque nature remains with no conscious contrast and oppositions. But, this hybrid mixture is very much productive in nature and it is evident from the powerful impact, which *Moovarasunatakam* casts upon its people or audience. The harmonious blending of the theme and the performance codes along with the theatrical elements of the South Indian dance-drama tradition in an appropriate festive ritualistic context makes the smooth progress of the narrative possible without any contradictions in the style of acting, in the format of presentation and in the structure of the sequences. This progress finally ends up with the ritualistic trance of the active performer and the reactive audience/devotees. This finally creates an ethereal realm of the performance where the votive or obligatory offerings of the performer and the participant get fulfilled. Altogether, they glorify the eternal bliss of the almighty and collectively proclaim their communal solidarity. This is possible only to a productive system, which has no conscious contradictions. In the case of *Moovarasunatakam,* the mute/opaque co-existence of the hybrid idioms further extends

its possibilities of the lack of contradictions and internalizes certain dramatic 'improprieties'. The best example is the portrayal of King Herod as a pagan/Hindu king, who is being subjected to the temptation of Satans of the Christian scriptures and whose blessing do the devotees also seek in the initial sequence. Despite his pagan/Hindu belief, the King blesses the audience with the sign of cross. The organic hybridity subsumes this appropriately and keeps the make-believe intact. Moreover, the element of binary oppositions representing the good and the bad is used as a mode of characterization in this play. This subverts the internal contrasts between the performer and the audience and keeps the whole structure of the play unified and proclaims the worldview of the community.

iv. Language of identity: - The process of organic hybridization ends up in creating a new language for the hybrid variety that proclaims the mixture or makes this new variety an object. This is nothing but the gain of identity. Here, the performance genre with its new language illustrates an organic hybrid identity, distinct and rigid in nature. In other words, *Moovarasunatakam* shows an unconscious coalescence of cultural idioms that have a distinct Christian identity with a rigid communal spirit. This altogether makes *Moovarasunatakam* stand as a distinct one representing the 'core' factor among the Christian performance tradition of Kerala.

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[i] For details see Robert. C.Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 161

RITUALS ON THE OCCASIONS OF DEATH, MOURNING AND COMMEMORATION IN THE SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH

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Introduction

Second Vatican Council was instrumental in making available tremendous changes and significant freedom to the local churches especially in fostering unique and precious traditions of the Oriental Churches which are part of the Roman Catholic Church. "It is the mind of the Catholic Church that each individual Church or Rite retains its traditions whole and entire, while adjusting its way of life to the various needs of time and place."[1] In the words of Rev.Fr. Placid Podipara, one of the pioneering priests form the CMIs who stood for the cause of traditions and individuality of Syro-Malabar Church, "We (St.Thomas Christians of Malabar) are Hindu in culture, Christian in religion and Oriental in worship."[2] St.Thomas Christians has a unique entity with its own theology, spirituality and ritualistic specificities. These factors are shaped by their cultural environment and continued practices in the community. Christian symbolisms attached to them rendered deeper Christian understandings of even invisible realities. We definitely can see traces of them even in our own times and localities.

The scope of this paper is to present a general and brief idea about traditions and customs of Syro-Malabar rite regarding, death, mourning and death anniversaries. There is no doubt that a number of local observances and customs facilitated in the formation of such formal rituals.

1. Understanding of Death

The Syro-Malabar *Liturgy of the Hours* has a prayers that goes as follows:"You who are subject to death, be comforted and rejoice! Because the power of death is destroyed, Jesus by his own power has conquered death and by his Resurrection has offered new life." This rendering is reflective of an eschatological face of death which in turn opens up a Christian hope and an eschatological expectation of resurrection. There is an affirmation that death has been destroyed by Jesus through His resurrection and a similar restoration of life will also be part of all those who believe in Him.

Different Phases of the "Emotional" Departure and Its Theological Implications

Death is a sentimental Journey or a departure which has its culmination and hope in the resurrection of the body. In the Syro-Malabar funeral rites we see three faces of departure. 1. The coffin of the deceased person will be carries from his/her Home to Church, 2. Then it carried from the Church to the Cemetery, 3. Then onwards the mortal remains there in the cemetery until it is resurrected. Such a hope and expectation is also seen in the Holy Qurbana

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[1] Decree on the Catholic Oriental churches, N.2

[2] Placid Podipara, *The Malabar Christians.*27.

of the Syro-Malabar Rite: "You are the One who raises our bodies and saviour of our souls." And again there is a prayer for the departed souls which goes as follows: "all the departed, both the great and small have fallen asleep in You in the hope that through Your glorious resurrection You will raise them again in glory." All these prayers give an idea of an eschatological expectation of our resurrection.

Face-to-face union with Christ

For those who die in Christ, death is union with the Lord. This can also be seen when Jesus informed the good thief, "Today you shall be with me in paradise" (Lk. 23:43). When we closely analyse the prayers of the funeral rite which the priest repeats several times that *let the departed soul may enjoy eternal bliss and have a face to face union with Christ in Heaven.*

Back to the dust

The Bible also realistically speaks of the decomposition of the body. When Adam and Eve sinned, they were deprived of the tree of life and hence of physical immortality (Gen. 3:22; Rom. 5:12). It is, therefore, man's fate to return to the dust of the ground (Gen. 3:19; Ecclesiastes 12:7). This idea is clearly expressed in the prayer of the funeral rites; "Remember, you are dust, and to dust you shall return." A clear idea that we come from dust and go back to dust.

You will not die

The serpent's lie, "You will not die" (Gen 3:4) has lived on throughout human history to our time. The belief in some form of life after death has been held in practically every society. The need for reassurance and certainty in the light of the challenge that death poses to human life has led people in every culture to formulate beliefs in some form of afterlife.

The idea that you will not die is well expressed in the liturgy of Syro-Malabar Rite. The living and life giving bread which has come down from heaven gives life and whoever eats this bread will not die, but will receive remission of sins attain salvation and live forever. Repeatedly we proclaim that the total salvation is in His hands.

Facing the East

St. Thomas Christians like all other oriental Christians used to pray facing the east. At death bed a dying person's head is to face east and the bed is arranged accordingly. Facing to the east means turning to God, St. Augustine would say facing to east is turning to God: *conversum ad Dominum* (Turning to God) and the people around would chant prayers. When the dead body is brought to the Church before burial, it is placed in the *haikla* facing the altar which is on the eastern side.[3] The dead are buried facing east.

Service at the Final Resting Place (*kuzhimaada sewa*)

St. Thomas Christians' whose houses are far away from the Church used to bury their dead near their houses. They used to erect a burial stone with oil lamps. Every evening they used to pour oil and light these lamps. Occasionally priests used to visit and pray at these private family tombs. This was known as '*kuzhimaada sewa'* (service of the tomb). Those who lived closer to the Church buried their dead in the south, west and north sides of its courtyard, but never at the east side. Cemetery burial is a Portuguese introduction. But now a days cemetery burial became a common practice.

[3] Thomas Mannooramparambil, "Popular Piety in the Syro-Malabar Church" in *Thomas Christian Heritage,* IV, 6 (July – 2011) 50-79.

Customs

With regard to death, burial and commemoration of the dead there are many customs. The East Syrian Ritual was followed for the burial of the dead.[4] At funeral the dead is wrapped in white clothes. The corps was washed in warm water and anointed a few hours after death. "St. Thomas Christians adopted it from their Hindu brethren and Christianized many socio-cultural practices connected with death and burial"[5] and other rituals such as repast *(pattinikanji)* after the burial for breaking the fast, mourning for eight days, ritual bath *(pulakuli)*, commemoration of the dead and anniversary celebration for the dead *(chattam or sradham)*.

2. Mourning

Mourning is an expression of our grief for a loved one we have lost through death. Christ reminds us in the Sermon on the Mount: *"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted"* (Matthew 5:4). Our Heavenly Father wants us to find consolation in His loving arms. During the memorial Qurbana for the dead there is a beautiful psalm recited by the priest that is "Lord, out of the depths, I cry to you. Lord hear my voice." At the same time there is also a song in the burial rites reminds us "you need not cry because Jesus offers resurrection to those who put firm faith in Him."

When somebody dies, No food is prepared or eaten in the house before the funeral. But children are given food in the neighbouring houses. After the burial, the priest would bless a tender coconut, drink a little of its water, and then share it with the nearest relatives of the deceased as a sign of preparation in their sorrow.

Certain places people who depended on the departed would bewail his death in songs for a certain number of days and they would be paid for this. A simple vegetarian meal called '*pattinikanji'* is served after the funeral. They call this ceremony the *Nalothu.* The priests conduct special prayers on this occasion and renew the blessing of the house. The devotees are given the cross to be kissed and ordinary cumin seed to be tasted. This ritual is called as *kaikasturi.*

All the close relatives take an ascetical vow for abstinence. They take only vegetarian meals until the death anniversary. This is very notable in the case of one or more adult sons (usually unmarried) of the deceased. He begins to grow beard for an year. He will not marry until the death anniversary. Eleven days after death there were special prayers at the tomb and a vegetarian meal at home. These were repeated at various intervals until death anniversary. But this observance is reduced into seven or forty one days.

The relatives of the deceased observed the period of *pulakuli* (bath and defilement) like Hindus, which was followed by a ceremonial bath; cumin was again distributed to the participants. There followed feasts known as the Seventeenth, the Twenty-eight, the Fortieth day of demise and the *chatham* (*sradha*) or anniversary; the later was kept annually by children in honour of their deceased parents. Sometimes the *pula* or *Pulaadiantriram* would be transferred to a near date. But now a days, only feast is kept up; the observance of pollution and ceremonial bath have been abolished.

The family members and close relatives visit the tomb of the deceased and offer flowers and special prayers on the day of *Pulaadiantriram.* After that day, members of the family occasionally go to the tomb and offer prayers.

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[4] Placid Podipara, *The Malabar Christians.*52

[5] Andrews Thazhath, "Popular Devotions of the Syro-Malabar Church" in *Thomas Christian Heritage,* IV,6 (July-2011) 11-17)

3. Death Anniversaries

All the subsequent feasts celebrated in memory of the dead were in the name and nature of Hindu, but Christianised by the prayer and blessings of priests.

Chatham or *Sradha*

The anniversary of death is commemorated by a feast called *chatham* (*sradha*). Non-vegetable food is permitted for *chatham. Chatham* is sometimes repeated every year. Generally parents who are alive do not celebrate these feasts in commemoration of their deceased children. Year after year the death anniversary was celebrated with special prayers, in the Church, at the tomb and home, culminated by '*aanduchatham*', a sumptuous meal. This meal starts with an antique custom. First of all two plantains are served to every participant. All eat them as the very first item. This symbolizes the fall of our first parents, Adam and Eve. They fell prey to death by plucking and eating the forbidden fruit. As the second item everyone is given three '*neyyappams*' or three '*unniyappams*' each. All eat these small delicious, sweet cakelike pieces of bread, symbolizing Eucharist, baptism, Christ and Trinity – life and resurrection. After observing this unique and ancient custom St Thomas Christians proceed to the death anniversary meal. It is the privilege of married daughters of the family to bring '*neyyappams*' or '*unniyappams*' for this occasion.

Chatham is the celebration almost in the same pattern as *Pula* on the death-anniversary day. The anniversary of death, which is called *chatham* is commemorated as a feast to which all the close relations are invited. The priest officiates it with special prayers and blessings. On these occasions they do not forget to give alms and food to the poor people. The meal in connection may be also non-vegetarian. Those invited to these feasts would offer money in a plate and accept *pax* (peace), from the priest. The money was utilized in suffrage for the dead or for the maintenance of priests or Church functions for the repose of the soul of the departed.[6] The *chatham*, of the father of the family is observed every year, but less solemnly, by the children in several places.

The Syro-Malabar Rite the commemoration of the death is the 9th Friday or last Friday of the season of Denha. St. Thomas Christians used to keep up the special memory of the beloved departed all through the season of Great Fast, by visiting their tombs and praying specially for them. November devotion got established during the Latinization period.

Conclusion

Let me conclude with a beautiful prayer from Syro-Malabar Liturgy recited on days of commemoration of the dead.

Lord, hear our prayer. May our supplications reach Your presence. Receive our sacrifices and offerings and pardon the offences of the departed ones. Lord, mercifully accept this sacrifice that we offer on behalf of Your servant as You accepted the first sacrifice of Abel, the innocent and the sacrifices of Noah, the spotless and blameless of Abrham who put his trust in You, of Job who bore his afflictions patently, of Elias Your true prophet, and of Your disciples in the Upper Room. Accept this sacrifice as You accepted the widow's mite. Make our departed brother worthy to enter the heavenly bridal chamber together with the just we offer on behalf of Your servant; forgive the debts and blot out the iniquities of this departed person and his loved ones. Merciful Lord, Make this humble servant worthy to dwell in the heavenly bridal chamber, on Your right side with the just ones. Remember this servant in that blessed and glorious place and grant him happiness and eternal peace. May he offer Your Divine Trinity praise and honour, thanksgiving and worship forever.

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[6] Placid Podipara, *The Malabar Christians*.52.

DEATH, MOURNING, DEATH ANNIVERSARY IN LATIN RITE AND TRIBAL TRADITIONS

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Introduction

For all human beings and for the groups to which they are bound by ties of blood, friendship, leisure interests, or proximity, death is a unique and decisive event. It is a challenge and a source of anxiety to Christians no less than to other human beings. Men and women are afraid to die, and they avoid thinking of their "final hour" or at least avoid speaking of it. Death has been called the "taboo" subject of the twentieth century.

Christ experienced death, and the gospel narratives tell us that he foresaw it long in advance, predicted its coming, and prepared himself for it. He changed the meaning of death by turning it into a passage to the glory of the resurrection. He led the human race and every individual human being into a new history: the history of the world of the resurrection. In this light let us describe the understanding of Death, Mourning and death anniversaries in Latin Rite and Tribal Traditions.

1. Death and Mourning: Christian Point of View

Christ won this victory when he rose to life, for by his death he freed human beings from death. Faith, therefore, with its solidly based teaching, provides every thoughtful person with an answer to his or her anxious queries about his or her future lot. At the same time it makes him or her able to be united in Christ with his or her loved ones who have already died, and gives hope that they have found true life with God.[1]

The death of Christians can be defined as their encounter with Christ in the mystery of his passion and death. This encounter alone allows them to experience their own passage. The Roman Ritual says, in speaking of the liturgy for celebrating the death of a Christian, that its component elements are meant to help "the dying person, if still conscious," to "imitate Christ in the face of the anxiety about death that is common to all men" and to "accept suffering and death in the hope of heavenly life and resurrection, for Christ, by his power, destroyed our death by his own dying."[2]

1.1 The Celebration of Death as a "Passover"

The entire liturgical pedagogy of the Church down the centuries has been guided by the desire to make dying Christians aware that they should join themselves to Christ in the paschal mystery of his victorious death and resurrection. Thus the Instruction *Eucharisticum mysterium* of May 25, 1967 (no. 39), which is cited in the Introduction to the new Rite of

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[1] Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* on the Church in the Modern World 18 (Flannery 918).

[2] *Rite of the Commendation of the Dying, no. 39=Chapter VI of the Rite of Anointing and Pastoral Care of the Sick, in The Rite of the Catholic Church 1.*

Anointing (no. 26), said that "communion received as viaticum should be considered a special sign of participation in the mystery that is celebrated in the Eucharist: the mystery of the death of the Lord and his passage to the father." To help the dying Christians accept their death, the Church urges them to celebrate it as a passage to the Father, to make of it a "Passover" in the full sense.

The Ritual makes emphasis on making it clear to the dying that the Christian community is united with them as they face the fear of death that is inborn in all human beings. "Charity toward one's neighbour urges Christians to express fellowship with a dying brother or sister by praying with him or her for God's mercy and for confidence in Christ."[3] The Christian's passage is not meant to be made in isolation. The concern that the Christian's monastic, ecclesial or familial community should accompany him/her at death has left a profound mark on the Church's liturgical tradition.

1.2 Last Sacrament and the Anointing of the Sick

The recent understanding regarding the sacrament ministered to the sick is not the last sacrament and that its administration during the final hours of the Christian's life must be experienced as exceptional. However, apart from the fact that serious illness often leads to death and so anointings need to take place in that context, there are those hopefully rare circumstances in which anointing is given because viaticum is not possible. Thus, the meaning of death for Christians necessarily becomes part of the comprehensive theology of the sacrament of anointing. Death makes one ask about the meaning of life. Because people do not know why they live, they find it difficult to die. Death has no parallel in calling humans to their uniqueness and individuality. Such stress on singularity is a challenge to understand themselves. Some have tried to find the meaning of human life in what comes after biological death: heavenly glory.

A community which cannot deal with its old and infirm will not have the adequate means to deal with the presence of death in its midst. Monika Hellwig makes this point well when she says, "Every parting and absence of friends and family members in the course of life is in some measure a rehearsal for the great absence and parting of death. The manner in which all the absence and partings are experienced also influences the possibility of hope beyond death." Church calls for celebration when one of its members is dying or already died for sacrament of anointing, the rites for the dying, or the funeral service to receive special grace of courage. The Church speaks of the acceptance of one's finitude. To worship on these occasions is to see death not as the end of life, but as part of life itself. These liturgies impart the grace to experience death as something which is always present.

The liturgical celebrations at the time of death can create an atmosphere where the worshippers can accept the dark side of the dying experience, both for themselves and the person who is leaving this life. Death is part of what it means to be human. It is not something that puts an end to being human. Death is what makes human existence human. Death distinguishes the living person from subhuman life. Death gives not the meaning of life, but meaning in life. It pointed out by Kuebler Ross that those who find life meaningful more easily embrace death. They need not pass through the four stages: denial, anger, bargaining and depression. They move immediately to acceptance. The hope is that the rites for the dying and dead can provide the human context wherein the paschal mystery can become the meaning of the human passage into death.

The paschal faith and the liturgy of the dead proclaim that beyond physical death, something of the human person remains and that it has been worthwhile making these contributions

[3] Rite of Anointing, no. 138

which will last in the presence of God. All that Christians can know about life after death is that what happened to Christ will happen to them. The Christian death is the last stage of that which began at baptism. The initial immersion is continued in the final burial, which itself only a passing over. On several occasions the Roman ritual of death refers to baptism and meditates on the connection between sacramental life and eternal life. It is by series of passage and initiations that man enters into life, and it is by virtue of a succession of eternal passages that the Christian gradually leaves the regions of darkness in order to proceed to the country of light.

1.3 Funeral Service

In baptism all Christians have by the grace of Christ died to sin and risen to life, and so they are united with Him as members of His body. This Paschal Mystery the Church celebrates at the funeral of her children, when by death they enter with Christ into eternal life. They have to be fully purified in order to join the company of the Saints and of the elect in heaven. They live in the blessed hope that at the end of times Christ will come again and then all the dead will arise in their bodies. Therefore the Church offers for the dead the Eucharistic Sacrifice of Christ Pasch. She prays and intercedes for them, and together with all Christ's members, implores God's help for the deceased and solace for those who survive them.

Christians celebrate the funeral of their brethren thereby to express their firm hope in eternal life. They do so according to the mentality and customs of their own people. They encourage and approve all that is good in family traditions, local customs and practices. Where, however, these seem to go against the Gospel message, they try to modify the existing practices in such a way that Christian funeral services may manifest faith in the resurrection and show forth a true evangelical spirit.

Due respect is paid to the bodies of the deceased Christians, for the Holy Spirit had made them his dwelling place. All vain pomp and show is to be avoided. It is therefore fitting that during the time between death and burial celebration be held in which Christians profess their faith in eternal life and intercede for the repose of the deceased.

In accordance with local practices, some of the more significant occasions for common prayer may be the following – the Vigil Service in the house of the deceased;- placing the body in the coffin; - the transfer to the graveyard. The latter is preceded by the funeral service, in which the family of the deceased and the entire Christian congregation takes part. This service consists of the liturgy of the Word on the theme of Christian hope and consolation, the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and the Valedictory Rite. There are certain number of gestures or rites that emphasize the paschal character of death and Christian faith in the resurrection (light, cross, the liturgical vestments and songs). These are also helpful to express its faith, its grief and its hope. There are three types of rites; the first has three stations: House, Church and Cemetery; the second has two stations: Chapel of the Cemetery and the grave; and the last has only one, the house of the deceased. The mother Church brings up the Christian through sacraments, and at the end of his journey accompanies him to submit in the hands of the Father (Catechism n. 1683). Church also remembers the deceased on their death anniversaries and commends them to God. Offer Holy Masses for the dead expresses pititions in various forms.

2. Death and Mourning: Tribal Perspective

The tribals venerate the one true God, each tribe calling him differently according to its language. Since the tribals believe that God has made man to live forever, they have an unshakeable faith in man's survival after death. Death is not the end of life; rather it is the beginning of a new life in communion with the Ancestors. That is why they have the pious

reverence for their Ancestors. One of the noted tribal Scholars John Lakra presents a vivid picture of the relationship of the tribal community with their Ancestors, "The dead members of the family are very much alive in the memory of the living and are still regarded as forming one family with them. Their mysterious presence in the family is so real to them that the dead members of the family are considered as actually 'living dead' member of the family."[4] Their close relationship with the dead members of the community explains their firm belief in the life after death and also makes rituals of mourning and obsequies more special and profoundly meaningful.

2.1 Obsequies Rituals

There are many rituals connected with the obsequies of the dead but only a few can express tribal spirituality better. At the time of final farewell to the deceased, as they lower the body into the grave the Hos pray to Singbonga. (Take this person towards you, O God). Similarly at the time of final burial, depositing the bones in the clan ossuary, the *panch* prays to the ancestors. (Ancestors of such clan, you are under the world. Please admit this deceased also with you).[5] This is a beautiful example of handing over the soul of the departed to God and to the saints even as in the Christian liturgy the departed soul is handed over to God.

The ritual actions accompanying the obsequies of the dead show that the tribals are very much connected about the kind of death a person died – a good death or bad death. They observe omens to find this out. They observe the footprints of some creatures on the ash-strewn floor of the room where the body of the dead person was laid. By observing and interpreting the footprints they come to know whether a person died a good death or a bad death. If they find out that the person died a good death then they are happy and satisfied because, according to their belief, God himself has called this person to the other world. If they see the footprint of cow, a dog or a cat they consider the evil spirit has eaten them up. In that case they go through necessary religious rites to rectify this wrong.

2.2 Belief in Life After Death

Belief in the life after death is deep rooted in the tribal community. For the tribals, life after death is "the continuity of life in the form of spirits. It is a sort of transformed or spiritualised state in which a dead person continues to live here and now among his people."[6] According to their belief the deceased go to join the company of the ancestors in a place like sheol. It has to be noted that they have "no idea of a heaven up above where the soul goes after death."[7] Since the deceased cannot do anything for their own welfare after death, therefore the living members try to help them to join the company of the ancestors by offering sacrifices and performing the rites of the second burial or the great marriage. The Hos pray to the ancestors that they welcome the deceased into their company. In case the dead has been defiled by the wicked spirit then they pray so that they let him purify, "Ancestors, from today do not discard him, do not judge him; admit him into the *kili*; allow him to join you while you sit in our house, eat and drink. Even if you have given to the hill bonga purify him from defilement. He is our brother and relative. From today let him take care our children and cattle. Let him not suffer from *bongas*."[8] The dead ancestors' now more empowered than before, in their turn guard and protect the living members from all harm and keep peace in the family.

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[4] John Lakra, *Tribal Spirituality: A Way of Life*, St. Ignatius High School, Gumla 2006, p. 40.
[5] John Lakra, *Tribal Spirituality: A Way of Life*, p. 56-57.
[6] Prem Xalxo, *Current Ecological Crisis and Its Moral Dimension*, Xavier Publications, Ranchi 2008, p.38.
[7] S.C. Roy, *Oraon Religion and Customs*, Gyan Publishing House, New Delhi 1999, p. 34.
[8] Purty, *Ho-disum Ho-honko*, 125.

2.3 Remembering the Dead

After the death of a person family members and the whole community mourn for the certain period of time where they abstain from celebrations and eating meat till they perform the special ritual to come in normal life situation and have feast (*Gami*) in the name of deceased person, who has been incorporated into the community of the Ancestors. In a way, it is the community which decides whether a particular person has entered into the community of the Ancestors. If a person has died a good death, then the ritual of bringing home the shadow of the deceased is performed. That signifies that the deceased has become one among the ancestral spirits. Such rituals are not performed for those who dies accidental or violent deaths, those who commit suicide, or for a woman who dies during pregnancy or child-birth.[9] The tribals strongly believe that the community of the Ancestors takes care of the family members and village community, and that is why, they are remembered with gratitude and reverence on all occasions and frequently offered prayers and sacrifices.

Conclusion

There seems to be significant similarities between the Christian and tribal understanding of death, mourning and death anniversary belief in life after death. Death is a beginning of a new life in both cases. However, the Christians have clear idea of being united with the Lord in all glory after death if a person has lived a good life; the tribals do not have any idea of heaven. Their obsequies rituals, mourning and the hope of being incorporated into the community of the Ancestors reflect the Christian faith in the communion of Saints[10]. Such belief and practices should enable and encourage the living members of both the Christian as well tribal communities to live a worthy life – a life for the others – so as to be received by the Saints in Paradise or to be incorporated into the community of the Ancestors.

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[9] Cfr. Prem Xalxo, Current Ecological Crisis and Its Moral Dimension, p. 39.
[10] Cfr. John Lakra, *Tribal Spirituality: A Way of Life*, p. 58.

PASSION WEEK CELEBRATIONS IN THE SYRO MALABAR TRADITION

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1. Introduction

Passion Week is the culmination of the whole of the Great Fast[1]/Lent season, and this week itself culminates in the great feast of Resurrection/Easter, the centre of the whole Christian year, in all Christian traditions. Syro Malabar liturgical tradition has a very well developed liturgical year, commemorating and celebrating the whole mystery of salvation from Incarnation to Parousia in a progressive manner in the whole year, and the Passion Week together with the Feast of Resurrection is at the centre of it. Generally the liturgical historians agree that the liturgy celebrated by the Thomas Christians before the Synod of Diamper (1599) was East Syriac. East Syriac liturgy is a liturgy developed outside of Roman Empire. The liturgy of the Thomas Christians of India was an Indian variation of this liturgy, with much Indian adaptations. The other two churches, Chaldean Church, a Church in communion with Rome, and the Assyrian Church / Church of the East (not in communion with Rome) also use this liturgy with their own adaptations and variations. Syriac, a dialect of Aramaic, the language of Jesus, is the liturgical language of this tradition. In the Syro Malabar Church Syriac was used till 1962, but now the vernacular languages and English get prominence. So naturally we can guess that the Passion Week celebration was also according to the East Syriac pattern and structure. The period of Great Fast (*Sauma Rabba*) begins at the midnight of the Sunday 50 days before the Easter. So it is called as *Ambathu nombu* (50 days fast) though there are only 40 days of fasting when the 7 Sundays and the two days of extra fast are excluded. But practically they used to abstain from the meat, fish etc for the whole period of this season. It is a season of fasting, prayer, penance and works of charity. The last week is the culmination of this season starting with the Osana Sunday and ends with the celebration of resurrection of our Lord. In the Syro Malabar tradition this last week is known in different names now - Passion Week, Great Week and Holy Week – though the last two came to this tradition because of the influence of the Latin tradition.[2] Strictly speaking the Passion Week starts on the evening of Saturday before the Osana Sunday and ends with the vigil celebration of the Easter. But here we are also discussing shortly about the Resurrection Sunday celebrations as a culmination of the Passion Week.

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[1] In the Syro Malabar tradition the lentern season is known as Great Fast (*Souma Ramba*).

[2] V. Pathikulangara, *Divine Praises and Liturgical Year*, Kottayam 2000, 164.

2. Osana Sunday Celebrations

We celebrate on this day the solemn and victorious entry of our Lord into Jerusalem just before his passion (Mt 21:1-11; Mk 11:1-11; Lk 19:28-38; Jn 12:12-16). Those who followed him, especially the children, cried out: "Hosanna to the Son of David." In the East Syriac tradition this feast on the 7th Sunday of Great Fast is known as 'Great Feast of Osana."[3] Among the Thomas Christians this is also known as 'Kuruthola Njayar' (Coconut Palm Sunday). Though in the Middle East they are using Palm branches, in India, especially in Kerala, Christians are using tender coconut palm leaves for the celebration.[4]

It seems that this feast and the procession remembering the solemn entry of Christ started in Jerusalem. Egeria in her diary explained the details of this feast celebrated in Jerusalem in the 4th century. The rites started at the Mount of Olives and moves to the place of Ascension, from there to the city of Jerusalem, and then to the Holy Sepulchre in a procession, led by the bishop.[5] Later this rite and procession were spread to different parts of the world and in many places incorporated to the liturgy of the day. In the East Syriac tradition Catholicos Mar Babai (+503) gave the final structure of the Palm Sunday celebrations,[6] though there was Osana celebration in the Syriac Churches, which was known to St. Ephrem.[7]

Main liturgical celebrations of this day include the *Ramsa* (Vespers), the *Lelya* (nocturnal vigil), *Qale d-shahara* (morning vigil) and *Sapra* (Matins) and the Holy Qurbana. The Royal anthem (*Onitha d-basilique*) of *Ramsa* reminds us of the meeting of the Bride (Church) and her Bridegroom (Christ).[8] This is further mentioned even in the anthem of Communion in the Holy Qurbana.[9] The whole creation becomes the space of this meeting (and Jerusalem as the symbolic centre of the whole universe). See the *Onyatha de-mawthba* of *Lelya*: "O, Zion, adorn beautifully your joyful bride-chamber and gladly receive Christ, your humble bridegroom; go out to receive him with your praises, carrying your children with you ..."[10]

The special rite of the day is the blessing of the palms and the procession with it. The integrated celebration of *Sapra* (morning liturgy) with the Holy Qurbana starts outside the church in order to have procession. The faithful participate in the liturgical rites holding palms or put together on a table (and later distributed) and they are blessed after the 'Hymn of the three boys' and *theshbohtha* followed. Before the *Lakumara* Hymn (Resurrection Hymn), carrying the palms and singing osana hymns, the faithful move in procession to the church. Knocking of the closed doors of the church three times, singing the prescribed psalm verses, seem to be a remnant of the former Latin rite. The whole community enters the church and continues the solemn celebration of the Holy Qurbana. Solemn entry of our Lord into Jerusalem and the purification of the temple are the contents of the Gospel proclamation.

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[3] *Breviarium iuxta Ritum Syrorum Orientalium id est Chaldaeorum*, II, Romae 1938, 314. (Hereafter as Bedjan, II.)
[4] The word *Osana* means "save us" but its plural word osane also means palm branches. See Payne-Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, I, 1639.
[5] *Itinerarium*, 30-31.
[6] See A.G. Kollamparambil, *The Life-Giving Paschal Lamb: Great Week Celebrations in the East Syrian Liturgy*, Changanassery 1997, 21.
[7] See his *memra* on the Lord's Holy Feast of Hosannas in E. Beck, *Des heiligen Ephraem des Syres Sermones* II, CSCO 311-312, Syr. 134-135, 55-77/72-97. Cfr. A.G. Kollamparambil, *The Life-Giving Paschal Lamb*, 21.
[8] Bedjan, II, 314; A.G. Kollamparambil, *The Life-Giving Paschal Lamb*, 37.
[9] Bedjan, II, 315.
[10] Bedjan, II, 316. ET A.G. Kollamparambil, *The Life-Giving Paschal Lamb*, 39.

3. Monday to Thursday of the Passion Week

These are the days of the conclusion of the Great Fast and the remaining two days are special days of fast in the Syro Malabar tradition. Originally "Monday of the final week of Great Lent consists of *Ramsa* (Vespers) with ferial structure, by Lelya (Nocturnes) consisting of a special office at the Portico of the church, by *mawtba* (session), by *Qale d-shahara* (vigil), by *Sapra* (Matins), by the Baptismal office and *Eddana* (midday prayer)."[11] Many scholars relate the special office at the Portico of the church to the "coming to the Harbour"[12] theme and the "Bridal Chamber"[13] theme which we can see also in the West Syrian Holy Week Liturgy.[14] "The Tuesday Liturgy is noted for two differences from the former day. "First of all the *Ramsa* of Tuesday, as in the case of the Mystery Weeks, has the variable parts in view of a Qurbana of the Pre-sanctified, and moreover the special office held at the portico on Monday is absent."[15] Remaining celebrations on this day is same as of Monday.[16] Wednesday and Thursday liturgies also follow the same structure. These days now have solemn Eucharistic celebrations together with *Ramsa* celebration in many places.

4. Triduum Celebration in the Syro Malabar Tradition

Three days from the vigil Pesaha celebration on the Pesaha Thursday evening (including the celebration of Easter Sunday) is known as Triduum. This is the most important liturgical unit in the whole liturgical year culminating in the celebration of the great feast, Rresurrection of our Lord. "The exceptional and long vigil held on Thursday night is the point of culmination of the paschal fasting, prayer and penance and it marks the beginning of the paschal joy. This fact is confirmed by the rubrics given at the vigil when it says: "From this vigil onwards up to the [Sunday of] Pentecost there is no kneeling (genuflection) whatsoever."[17] Thus the East Syrian liturgy maintained the unity of the Christian Pasch through its celebration extending from Thursday evening until Sunday morning as a single and singular unit commemorating the events of Passion-Death-Resurrection of our Lord."[18] According to A.G. Kollamparambil this liturgy has a double-function: "They conclude the intensive preparation through fast, prayer and penance and at the same time as pointing to the inauguration of "newness," "new creation" in the Risen Lord."[19] The liturgical celebrations of these days are taking place at evening.

4.1. Pesaha Vigil Celebration

The centre of this celebration is the most solemn Holy Qurbana in this tradition, remembering the foundation of the Eucharist. In a sense it is the Feast of the Holy Eucharist in this tradition. The foot washing ceremony is also conducted after the Gospel and the homily amidst the Holy

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[11] A.G. Kollamparambil, *The Life-Giving Paschal Lamb*, 78. Bedjan, II, 332-338..
[12] This theme is explained in relation to the preparation of the catechumens who are gong to be baptized shortly, at the Easter Vigil
[13] The theme of the Bridal Chamber is explained in relation to the parable of Ten Virgins (Mt 25:1-13). This theme makes sense when we relate this with the principal theme of the Osanna Sunday, bride-bridegroom meeting.
[14] Cfr. E.R. Hambye, "The Symbol of the <<Coming to the Harbour>> in the Syriac Tradition," OCA 197, Roma 1974, 400-411; A.G. Kollamparambil, *The Life-Giving Paschal Lamb*, 80-88.
[15] A.G. Kollamparambil, *The Life-Giving Paschal Lamb*, 89.
[16] Cfr. Bedjan, II, 338-343.
[17] Bedjan, II, 368.
[18] A.G. Kollamparambil, *The Life-Giving Paschal Lamb*, 115.
[19] A.G. Kollamparambil, *The Life-Giving Paschal Lamb*, 116.

Qurbana. "According to ancient records, the foot washing was conducted only in the Cathedrals by the Bishops, washing of twelve priests. In monasteries and religious houses, the superiors used to wash the feet of all monks or religious during the Night Liturgy (Lelya)."[20] But these days foot washing is normal in all the churches in the Syro Malabar tradition.

4.2. Pesaha Meal in the Family

This is a special and unique custom of the Thomas Christians in the whole Christian tradition. Varghese Pathikulangara says: "The Peseha meal during the night of Thursday of *Peseha* is a custom seen today only among the *Mar Thomma Nazranikal* of India. It is an adapted family celebration originated in the context of the Jewish Passover meal and the institution of the Holy Eucharist."[21] This reminds us of the Jewish connection of the origin of Thomas Christians of India. He continues to explain the preparation and rites related to this family custom:

A special bread (*Kurissappam*[=Bread with Cross]) and drink (Milk) are the items of the Peseha meal. The mother of the family leads the preparation of these items while the father of the family officiates during the meal proper. Hence, if the father or mother of the family dies, in that particular year there is no official preparation or eating of the Peseha meal. They eat without any solemnity the bread and milk brought by their friends and relatives. This bread is prepared with a cross over it, which is made out of the palms blessed on Osana Sunday. After a short prayer led by the father of the family in which the Jewish Passover meal and the institution of the Holy Eucharist are remembered, the father cuts the bread into 13 pieces. He then takes each of them, dips them in the milk and gives them to the members. They according to their rank in age, approach devoutly, receive in the hands and eat it standing. Then all sit down to eat and drink the remaining bread and milk. What remains from the particular bread and milk is neither given to non-Christians nor thrown out. They are eaten on the following day and that is not considered breaking of the severe fast of Passion Friday. After the Peseha meal, the *Mar Thoma Nazranikal* of ancient times used to spend the whole night either in their own houses or in the church in prayer, reading the Bible and singing the Psalms.[22]

Though there are small variations this is still a living custom among the Syro Malabar Catholics wherever they are.

5. Passion Friday

Among the Thomas Christians this is a complete day of prayer and fasting, setting aside all kinds of works, even the daily chores. On this day we celebrate the redeeming passion, death and burial of our Lord. The most important liturgical celebration of this day is the solemn and long *Ramsa* (Evening liturgy) together with the adoration of the Cross (*Sliba*),[23] the procession with it and its burial ceremony. "The *Sliba* on the Bema[24] is specially adorned with *Kottina*, the alb and *Urara*,

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[20] V. Pathikulangara, *Divine Praises and Liturgical Year*, 166.
[21] V. Pathikulangara, *Divine Praises and Liturgical Year*, 166.
[22] V. Pathikulangara, *Divine Praises and Liturgical Year*, 166-167. See also A.G. Kollamparambil, The Life-Giving Paschal Lamb, 251-262; J. Naduvilezham, "The Celebration of the Pasion Week in the East Syrian Liturgy," in *Mar Thomas Margam: The Ecclesial Heritage of St. Thomas Chritians*, ed. A. Mekkattukunnel, Kottayam 2012, 347-348.
[23] Nowadays crucifixes are used in many churches.
[24] In this tradition Bema in the midst of the church, where the Liturgy of the Word is celebrated, is the symbol of Jerusalem and the table on it the symbol of Gagultha.

the stole. *Kottina* symbolizes the person of Jesus Christ and *Urara* His ministerial priesthood."[25] During this celebration at the time of the readings the Passion Narrative from Gospels according to Matthew, Luke and John is proclaimed and a rather long homily is delivered. Then the cross carried in a procession to the altar[26] together with the Gospel Lectionary. After putting them on the altar at due places all spend some time in silence, in prayer and repentance. This "liturgical action is the bringing down of the body of our Lord from the cross on Gagultha and carrying it to the sepulcher." Then the ministers went back to the bema and continue with the *Karozutha* (Proclamatory) prayers and the following Royal anthem (*Onitha d-Basilique*). During the Royal Anthem the main celebrant incense the cross and then starts the procession, "the priests and ministers carrying the *Sliba* amidst lit candles and incensing censer go in procession within the church, east to west and north to south in cross form. The faithful remain in their own places and sing the royal anthem."[27] After the procession the cross is taken to the bema and every one kisses it as a sign of bidding farewell. After kissing of the cross they taste a little of the bitter drink, prepared from bitter leaves to show the most intimate participation in the passion and death of the Lord. In many places the procession goes around the church or the granite cross in front or even through the streets of the town or village.

6. Easter Vigil Celebrations on Great Saturday

The vigil celebration on the Great Saturday includes solemn celebration of the Evening Liturgy (*Ramsa*), the Rite of Reconciliation, the Baptismal Rite and the Holy Qurbana. "In the evening Liturgy the resurrectional theme is emphasized. The Rite of Reconciliation is reminiscent of the early Church, where after the long period of repentance and penance the public sinners were officially received back to the Church during Resurrection celebration. Now it is considered to be an occasion for the repentence and reconciliation of all at the end of the long period of Great Fast."[28] This rite is followed by baptismal rites (if there are catechumens/children), participation in the Death and Resurrection of Christ. By solemn Holy Qurbana the Resurrection vigil celebrations are concluded.

7. Celebration of Resurrection (*Qyamta*)

It is the crowning of the whole Passion Week celebration. The special rite of Resurrection is the Rite of Peace conducted around 3.00 a.m. and the most solemn Holy Qurbana after that. Resurrection of our Lord is celebrated by raising the *sliba* (cross) buried beneath the altar on Passion Friday evening.

The Church and the Cross are beautifully decorated with lamps, flowers and aromatic spices. The main celebrant lifts up the cross, symbolizing the resurrection of Christ. The symbolic proclamation of our Lord's resurrection is presented through the lifting up of the cross that is decorated, glorious, illuminated and victorious. This cross is brought solemnly to the altar in a small procession and it is incensed. The liturgical assembly sings the anthem and proclaim the Risen Lord. The lambs in the sanctuary are lit and the candles are lighted. The decorated cross is

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[25] V. Pathikulangara, *Divine Praises and Liturgical Year*, 168.
[26] Altar in this tradition is the symbol of the Sepulchre of our Lord.
[27] V. Pathikulangara, *Divine Praises and Liturgical Year*, 169.
[28] V. Pathikulangara, *Divine Praises and Liturgical Year*, 171.

carried around the church or through streets of the town or village as is the custom of the each parish.[29]

After the procession returned to the church the cross is erected on the Bema which follows the celebration of Peace, a special exchange of Peace of Resurrection. The deacon announces to exchange peace with one another saying: 'Give peace to one another in the love of Christ.' "Following this announcement, all together adore the *sliba* first, and then exchange peace with one another saying: *Let the Risen Lord be with us* and responding: *New Life and renewal be with us*."[30] The most solemn Holy Qurbana followed by this Peace celebration is the summit of this Feast of feasts.

The theme of the whole celebration can be summed up in three words: Resurrection, Life and Renewal. This celebration is the foretaste of the eternal joy that awaits us in the Kingdom. It is "both an end and a beginning: the end of all that which is "old" and the beginning of the "new life", a constant "passage" from "this world" into the Kingdom already revealed in Christ."[31] The elaborate celebration of the Easter Vigil and the Morning Liturgy with the exchange of the Peace of Resurrection in the Syro Malabar tradition is surely an experience of this Mystery of Resurrection.

8. Conclusion

The eight day elaborate celebration of the passion, death, burial and resurrection of our Lord in the Syro Malabar tradition is at the centre of the whole liturgical year in this Church and expose special characteristics of its theology and unique adapted customs in this tradition. Osana Sunday celebrations introduce the faithful into the unique setting of this week and help them to receive the bridegroom. Following days, especially the Pesaha Thursday and Passion Friday are the days of sharing of his own life and body with the bride, the Church. In the Easter celebrations the bridegroom also makes participate the bride in his own glory by renewing her altogether into a new creation in him. Participation in this liturgy surely revitalises our faith and make us one with the bridegroom, Christ. The present Liturgy of the Passion Week, though we have restored many of the prayers and rites, contains some remnants of the former Latinized rites and customs. We hope in the near future a complete restoration of the Passion Week liturgy shall be a reality.

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[29] J. Naduvilezham, "The Celebration of the Passion Week," 348-349. See also A.G. Kollamparambil, *The Life-Giving Paschal Lamb*, 161-162.

[30] V. Pathikulangara, *Divine Praises and Liturgical Year*, 180. Cf. Bedjan, II, 410; V. Pathikulangara, *Resurrection, Life and Renewal*, 184-205; A.G. Kollamparambil, *The Life-Giving Paschal Lamb*, 163-166.

[31] V. Pathikulangara, "Editorial", *Christian Orient*, 19.3 (1998), 103.

THE HOLY WEEK SERVICE IN THE MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH: A THEOLOGICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL APRECIATION

Philip Chempakassery

The holy Week and Easter services in thhe Malankara Church has the uniqueness of being the most central service of the liturgical year with special prayers for all the watches of the days, the priestly leadership in thhe services, readings from the scriptures and the breaking of the word, incensing, the priestly blessing, changes in some of thhe items of the Eucharistic liturgy together with the attendance and active participation of a large number of faithful in all the services of the week. No other day of the liturgical year, not even the days of parish feast, receive an importance comparable to that of the holy week and Easter. The significance of the week in the life of the faithful and its socio-cultural relevance may be detailed as follows:

1. The Text of the Liturgy and the Main Concepts

In this section of the paper I will just note down some of the main concepts that are conveyed through the text of the liturgy. The Malankara liturgy which is the same as the Syro-Antiochean liturgy is followed by six Churches in Kerala keeping essential identity with the original, namely, the Malankara Catholics, The Malankara Orthodox Syrians, The Jacobite Syrians, the Malankara Marthoma Syrians and the Thozhiyoor Christians all of whom derive their Christian history from the preaching of St. Thomas the Apostle and trace their common origin as the Puthenkoor Christians who broke away from their common St. Thomas heritage. All these groups though follow the text of the Antiochean liturgy have inherited the Puthenkoor spirit which came about through the spiritual renewal introduced by the protestants and pentecostals in the 19th and early 20th centuries. In the use of these extra-liturgical prayers and songs the Marthomites have the first place followed by the Malankara Catholics, a significant number of whom have come from the Marthoma Church. The ideas connected with the strictly liturgical texts may be summarized as follows:

1.1. Jesus is hailed as the Redeemer

The liturgy which understands the Genesis account of creation in a very literal sense sees the parallelism between the creation of man which happened on the first Friday of the beginning of history (because man was created on the sixth day-Gen 1:26-31) and the Friday of Jesus' crucifixion (Mk 15:26-42), the day of the redemption of humankind.[1] The expulsion of man from the Paradise is qualified as an exile to the valley of tears[2]. It is from here that Christ redeemed him by his death. It is primarily an act of God the Father who "decided not to let his image perish" and so "sent the eternal Word for our salvation "[3]. For this redemption, the Church thanks the triune God by saying, "On Friday Adam disobeyed and left the Paradise; On Friday Christ descended from the summit of the Cross towards those who are in the abyss. For all this we thank

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[1] Cf. Ninth Hour Prayer for Good Friday, Text of the Holy Week Services, pp. 149-150
[2] Cf. ibid
[3] Cf. ibid p. 150

the Triune God now and always and forever".[4] This redemptive nature of Jesus' death is the common belief of Christians down through the time of the Fathers.[5] Redemption achieved by Jesus is understood as freedom from the tortures of sin[6], freedom from inordinate desire for worldly pleasures,[7] an idea which is common to the Oriental Churches.[8]Redemption is the expression of Jesus' infinite compassion for humans.[9]He consoles and provides peace by wiping away the tears from every face.[10] Therefore the Church requess peace from Christ for the whole world. [11]

The redeeming action of Jesus can be seen in its pastoral relevance strengthening and empowering the faithful in all aspects of their life. Thus the prayer acclaims the power of Jesus' suffering to strengthen the sufferer[12], to ravage the power of death and Satan,[13] and to uplift the fallen.[14]Jesus' suffering is also acknowledged as culminating in the revelation of the Holy Trinity.[15]It results also in the gift to the Church of Jesus' holy mother, the virgin Mary[16]as the greatest helper and intercessor on behalf of the suffering and sinful faithful. It is also acknowledged that the body sacrificed on the Cross is the body received from Mary.[17] Through his death Jesus reveals himself as the physician (a regular title used for Jesus in the Syriac tradition[18]) both of the body[19], the mind[20]and soul.[21]

2. The Non Textual Aspects of the Liturgy

What we have exposed so far is the conceptual aspects of the holy week service. But liturgy, especially that of the holy week, is not an exercise of the communication of ideas, but something

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[4] Cf. ibid.

[5] For Ephrem's view on thhe mater , cf. Thomas Kollamparambil, "Ephrem the Syrian: Spiritual Vision (partiii) Journal of St. Thomas Christians, 22?1 (2011), p. 104; for the view of Gregory thhe Nyssan cf A. Hamman (ed) The Paschal Mystery, Staten Island, 1969, p. 85; for modern views cf. Jonathan Hill, The Crucible of Christianity, Oxford, 2010, p.127; Messob Krikorian, The Christiology of the Oriental Orthodox Churches, Frankfurt am Main, 2010, p.13' Kevin Seasoltz, Human Victimization Christ the Victin in the Eucharist, Worship, 76/2 (2002), ATLA, Collegeville,p. 107

[6] Cf. The third vigil of Night Prayers on holy Monday (p.27), second vigil of Night Prayers on holy Thursday (p. 87); the rite of the adoration of the Cross on Good Friday (p 158) Etc.

[7] Cf Morning Prayer on Good Friday (p. 132)

[8] Cf the Rite Passion Week According to the Coptic Orthodox Church, Oxford, 2007, p.373.

[9] Cf. Exchange of peace in the Easter Service (p. 197); adoration of thhe Crosson Good Friday (p. 157); Feet Washing on Holy Thursday (p. 197) etc.

[10] Cf First Vigil of Night Prayers on holy Saturday (p. 170); second vigil of Night Prayers on holy Saturday (p. 174) etc.

[11] Cf. Adoration oof the Cross on Good Friday (p. 157).

[12] Cf. Evening Prayerof Good Friday (p 110).

[13] Cf. First vigil of Night Prayer of holy Saturday (p 170).

[14] Cf. Third vigil of Night prayer on holy Saturday (p 180).

[15] Cf. Second vigil of Night rayer on Good Friday(p 121,122); Evening prayer of Holy Saturday p (165-169); Fourth vigil of Night Prayer on Good Friday (p 127) etc.

[16] Cf. Third vigil of Night Prayer on holy Thursday (p 190-191).

[17] Cf. Rite of adoration of the Cross on Good Friday (p 156).

[18] Cf. Thommas Anikuzhikkattil, *Jesus Christ the Saviour*, Satna, 2002, , p. 306.

[19] Cf. Evening Prayer on holy Thursday (p 82); Night Prayer on holy Monday (p 31).

[20] Cf. Evening Prayer, Good Friday (p 110); Third hour on Good Fraday (p 142).

[21] Cf. Rite of adoration of the Cross(p158); First Vigil of the Night Prayer holy Saturday (pp 170-171)

that transcends the realm of the concepts and communication. In spite of the revolutionary explosion in information techniques, man is still unable to share and convey his deep –rooted experiences, especially those of a most personal religious nature. Such experiences are personally attained, rather than communicated by imparting concepts. The unique nature of the Syro-Malankara holy week service is that it is arranged in such a way that sincere participants gain a spiritual experience of identification with mysteries, not as things communicated by others, but as something originating in themselves personally. The holy week service has the power of transcending time and space to gain a mystic identification with Jesus in his suffering death and resurrection. This is done not so much by the text of the liturgy but by those which accompany the text. Many are such non-textual aspects of the liturgy.

2.1. The installation of the Golgotha

On thhe twenty fifth day of the Lenten period, which is known as the middle lent day, a cross properly adorned and raised on a wooden stand known as the Golgotha is installed in the centre of the Church. The colour of the cloth that is used for decoration is changed to black in the days of the holy week. This Cross on Golgotha at the centre of the Church speaks in a silent way to those who enter the Church that they are approaching Jesus hanging on Cross on Golgotha of Jerusalem.

2.2. The prohibition of Travels and Greetings

The Malankara tradition prohibits travels during the holy week. Though in the present age of heavy involvement in the social and cultural fields this is difficult and many failures are happening in individual cases, this tradition of being confined to the Church and its liturgy is more strictly observed by the pastors of the Church. As travels are discouraged, greetings are also prohibited. The tradition of kissing the hand of the celebrant priest and bishops as part of the liturgy also is suspended during the holy week. This rule is strictly kept in thhe Eucharist on passion days and no kiss of peace is permitted. But the normal items are resumed in the liturgy of the Easter service in which there is a solemn service of greeting peace to one another and kissing the consecrated hand of the celebrant.

2.3. The holy Week tune

In the Mallankara tradition prayers are not simply read out, but sung (even the prose prayers) in a pious and pleading tune. But during the holy week the tune is changed. Prayers are not sung, nor read out, but loudly pronounced in a tune that is special for the season. It is especially important in the case of the readings from the gospels. The readings in that particular tune gives the impression that something most wonderful and beyond the comprehension of man is taking place and is announced from afar by the heavenly beings. The participants are no more in the temporal world with the five senses of perception but in an incomprehensible world by itself, where the mind and conscience are the only means of perception.

2.4. The Mixing Up of Tenses

In the holy week service, especially on Good Friday, there is a mixing up of tenses in the prayers and readings. The gospel narratives referring to the events of Good Friday are read in the present. But this practice is being abandoned today with the popularization of the Malayalam Bible published by POC, Ernakulam. The use of the present tense is in view of giving the participants the effect that these events in the life of Jesus are being enacted in front of their eyes. In some of

the prayers the tenses are mixed up. E.g. in a song of the first service on Good Friday, the congregation sings:

"O brothers, I am wonderstruck at the scene I saw on Golgotha. God is hanging on the Cross. The hooligans mock at him. You, the heavily beings, you, the earthly being, come and adore him, all of you!"[22] In the second service on Good Friday the congregation sings:

"On this day, the judge of the world on the judgment seat receives

Judgment as a slave; on this day the unjust people shower on the Son of God a multitude of abuses."[23]

After this present tense the tense is immediately changed to the past. In the same song after the first stanza quoted we have the second stanza which reads:

"They made the crown of thorns for the Lord, for the one who crowns the world" Immediately after this the faithful sing:

Today he (Pitate) sentenced him as though he were a criminal, him who is to come in the future to sentence the kings"[24]

Thus the past of the historical events in the life of Jesus, the present of the worshiping community and the indefinite future of *eschaton* are beautifully merged into one another to become one reality which defies all attempts at conceptual communication.

This mixing up of tenses is to be seen in connection with thhe intermingling of the sense of space. In the genuine Malankara tradition there is an identification of the places which witnessed the important events in salvation history.

"The middle of the earth, the place where Adam's skull lies, the altar of Melchizedek, the place where Abraham offered his son Isaac, the place of the altar of David- to this mountain of great salvation historical importance, our Lord climbed up carrying the sins of all the generations".[25]

2.5. Mary's Representative Role

During the holy week the Malankara Church concentrates its whole attention on the Triune God- the Father who sends the Son, the Son who suffers for the humankind and the holy Spirit who strengthens the faith and brings the congregation to total transformation through repentance and the experience of the love shown on thhe Cross. Therefore no prayers are addressed to any saint including Mary, the mother of God. At the same time Mary has a place in the liturgy of the holy week. It is her role as the representative of the Church. On Good Friday, the great day of the passion, the strictly liturgical services start with the cry of Mary who weeps in intense pain at the sufferings of Jesus.[26] The Church identifies herself with Mary and lives the pain in her own life. In her intense pain, she argues with Pilate on the morality of the sentence pronounced on Jesus, calls the people healed and raised by Jesus to condemn the crucifiers, she calls the angels to fight

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[22] The book of services for the feasts and holy days (for use of thhe priests), 1993,Page 185.
[23] Ibid p. 189.
[24] Ibid, p. 189
[25] Mor Chrisostamus Mosa Salama, *Jeevajalam,* Cheeranchira (Changanacherry), 2008, p.145.
[26] The book services, op.cit, p. 180.

against those who perpetrate the cruelty etc. All this has the effect that the past event of crucifixion is newly and really experienced in the present of the faithful.

2.6. The incensing and the Kiss of the Cross

The holy week is a time in which much incensing is done and it reaches its climax on the Good Friday in the rite of the kissing of the cross used for the service. It is always a simple and plain wooden cross with no extra decoration that is used for the services. All the services representing the judgment, carrying the Cross to Golgotha, the crucifixion, death and burial are enacted with the plain wooden cross. Thus all possibilities of an idolatrous interpretation of the services are ruled out. The most important part of the service in which the identification with the suffering Jesus is represented by prostration before and kissing of the cross placed at the entrance of the sanctuary is done in a Church full of incense, making it barely possible to see the object of this worship.

2.7. The Intimate Reality of Experience and Infinity of Immateriality

Actively participating in the services together with the fasting and penance, the avoidance of external disturbances, the strict silence, the prostrations with the kissing of the ground, the experience of the past event in the present of thhe participation and the avoidance of decorations and accompaniments to bring out the utter simplicity (kaivalya) of the object of worship and its non-materiality- all these reveal two aspects of the liturgy: the experience attained in the liturgy is intimately real; it is also infinitely immaterial offering nothing as object of imagination or the senses. This is the uniqueness of the Malankara liturgy of the holy week service.

This intense identification with the suffering Jesus has its anti-climax in thhe liturgy of the Easter. In this service, the same wooden cross is raised from the place of burial, decorated with red cloth to represent the glory of resurrection and accompanied in a procession and kissed. This shows the intimate identification with the risen Lord.

3. The Holy Week Service in its Socio- Cultural Dimension

The Hindu religion does not seem to have an idea of the suffering and humiliation of God. At the same time it believes in the incarnations of God (Vishnu) to punish the sinners and to establish justice or dharma in the world. But Hindus give great importance to fasting and penance as means of purification from sins committed in the present life and in the previous lives. The very concept of *punarjanma* is associated with the idea that the human self cannot attain union with the infinite Self except through a total and all-embracing purification from all *adharma.*

For the Muslims also there is no clearly defined doctrine of redemption and they do not believe in the incarnation of God. But purposeful suffering is the holy war (jihad) of man in the way of God. Its importance is acknowledged both in the personal and social levels. The martyrdom of Imam Husayn, the grandson of Muhammed Nabi and the spiritual head of the Shii community is seen as necessary for the fulfillment of his role as Imam. "It is with his martyrdom that he has become the paradigm of selfless sacrifice and measure of truth"[27].

This shows that the holy week service in the Malankara Catholic Church has its significance in the multi-religious culture of India. The Church has its uniqueness in its idea of Christ's passion and the way the believers can identify with it. But the uniqueness does not exclude other communities but only complement and enrich them supplying and pointing to other ways of making Jesus' passion meaningful for human race.

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[27] Muhamoud Ayoub, *Redemptive Suffering in Islam* The Hague (Netherlands), 1978, p. 4.

THE RITES, RITUALS AND THE PRACTICES IN THE TRIBAL SOCIETY AND THE CHURCH

Rev. Anand Jojo, Bishop of Hazaribag

According to the ancient history, Chotanagpur was comprised of the states of Jharkhand, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh and some parts of Bengal. The people living in these territories are called the Adivasis- the original inhabitants of the area and the country. The Constitution of India has put these people in the list of Schedule Tribes. The major tribes who live in these regions are: Santhal, Oraon, Munda Kharia and Ho tribes. Among the Catholics of these states are mostly from above mentioned tribal communities. The cultural behaviors are more or less the similar type. They live their lives in the close association with the nature which is blessed with good climatic condition and the rich mineral resources.

Two types of religious practices are very prominent in the lives of the tribal people: **Worship to the nature and the ancestral worship.** Since, their livelihood depends upon the agriculture, most of the worship and feasts are connected with the agriculture seasons. They remember their ancestors during the feasts and the celebrations. The tribal people practically find impossible to separate themselves from the nature and their ancestors.

The culture of the tribal people is very rich. The cultural values more important of these communities are: community spirit, equality in the society, sharing, caring, love for the nature, living up their convictions, Sincere and hard working, hospitality of the guests, love and respect for others, Strong belief system, accommodative nature, strong patriotism etc.

The Belgian missionaries arrived in this area during the second half of 18th century. The people of these places accepted them in their culture. The missionaries had shown their great interest in the life and the culture of the people. They learnt the languages of the people. Some have written the grammar on the dialects of the people. We find remarkable contributions of the missionaries. eg. the translation of the Hindi Bible, English- Hindi Dictionary, and Encyclopedia in Mundarica etc. In the very work of the evangelization, the missionaries have used the imageries of the local cultures and the customs. They have put their best efforts to preserve the local cultural heritages. The following are the few practices relevant in the lives of the tribal people:

Rite of the initiation to the life

The whole tribal world wants to accept the offspring as the gifts of God in the marital life. After the conception, the wife is well-taken care by the husband and the whole family of the husband. She is kept away from the crematory places and forbidden to touch the dead body. When the day of the birth comes, she is helped by the kusrains (midwives). After 8 days of the birth of the a baby, there is the ceremony called Chatthi- a celebration of the new born and his/her name day. This event also is the sign of introduction of that child in the family, clan and in the society as in accordance with the catholic faith a child becomes the family member of God in and through the sacrament of the baptism.

Orientation towards the life and the culture is done by the members of the society. In the traditional society, it was done in a bachelor's hall (dormitory) called Giti oraa, Dhumkuria etc.

in various cultures. The values of the family and the dynasty and the society were imparted to them in this hall. When the boys and girls reach the marriageable age, the parents arrange their bride and the bridegroom through the help of a mediator who is called aguwa (a person who mediates in the process of matrimony between a boy and a girl). The bride and the bridegroom give their consent in front of the village heads and the people of the villages of both the parties. Thus, the marriage ritual is completed and the bride is taken solemnly into the house of the bridegroom and the whole villagers of the bridegroom welcome the new bride. She becomes the member of the family and the village of the bridegroom. Even till today, there is a marriage taking place in the village Madowa (a hut made out of sal tree leaves) and then the bride and the bridegroom come to the church for the marriage blessing by the parish priest.

The feasts and their rituals

There are many feasts celebrated by the tribal people in their villages all over chotanagpur. All these feasts symbolize the life. Among them, I would like to mention the following:

Baha Parab (The feast of the flowers)

It is celebrated in the month of phagun (February and March) when the old leaves of the trees fall and the new leaves come and then the trees are laden with the flowers. In Jharkhand, the sal tree and the bassia latifolia (a tree which gives sweet flower) flower in the month of February- March. It gives the message of new life, leaving the old self and taking the new life. The pahan (the village priest) offer the sacrifice of white chick and prays to God to send the good rain so that there may be a good harvest of grains. In the catholic circle, the feast of Easter comes and very well fits in its message of new life. In some places, this feast is preceded by the animal hunting in the jungle. The whole villagers go once in a year together to the jungle for hunting. They distribute equally the meat of the animal killed during the hunting. It is told that even the dog gets its share.

Karam Feast

This feast is celebrated in the month of August- September. According to the myth, the karam tree is worshipped because it has been the shelter of the tribal ancestors who were fleeing from their enemies. They hid themselves behind the karam trees and escaped from the sight of their enemies. The karam tree is supposed to possess a spirit that helped their escape. This is considered as the sacred tree.

This feast also is considered as the feast of the virgins- the unmarried girls who observe the fast in order to get the good bridegroom and the offspring in their life. The village pahan (the village priest) goes to the jungle along with the virgins and after prayer he cuts a branch of the Karam tree and then brings to the village in procession and erect it in the Akhara (a place where the village people meet for the dancing and enjoyment). The villagers dance to- gether around this branch. The virgins in front of the pahan break their fast and offer prayers and offerings to Dharmesh and ask the blessings in their lives. After the ceremony, the pahan uproot the branch from the Akhara and take it to the nearby the river or the spring to be flown. In the Christian perspective, the cross on which Jesus died is the source of life and security. It is worshipped as the source of life.

The feast of Sohrai

It is celebrated by all the tribal people but more popular among the Santhal tribes. They celebrate it in the month of October- November after the harvesting season. During the celebration, the

santhal people express their gratitude towards their cattle that help them in the agricultural work. The celebration is for three days. The first day the ancestors and the bongas (sacred spirit) are remembered and pleased. It is done in Jaherthan (The sacred place of the santhals). He second day, the people worship the Cow-shed. They wash the animals and apply oils on their horns and the garland the flowers on their neck. The third day is the celebration of Khuntaw (It is a practice in which the bull is tied in a pole and a person makes the bull angry by showing a dry leather of an animal and the bull tries to hit the leather by its horn). This action is done repeatedly to each of the bull. In the catholic practice, the mass is offered either in the village or the parish and then the holy water is sprinkled on the cattle and prayed over them that they may be protected from the diseases and that they may be able to help the farmer in the agricultural works.

The feast of the new corn

This is feast is known in the tribal dialect- Nawajom- Nayakhani. When the new corn is ripped, the people decide to harvest the new corn and prepare chiura (beaten rice). They also prepare the rice and the pahan (village priest) of the village offer them to Bongas (sacred spirit) and the ancestors of the village and then only the new rice is taken as food by the villagers. The same practise is found in the Catholic Church among the tribal people. The parish priest fixes the day for the thanksgiving mass to the Lord for the new corn. The holy Eucharist is offered for the thanksgiving to the Lord and the people bring rice and other corns for the blessing. These practises make the lives of the tribal people rich and more meaningful.

In a conclusion, I must say that it has become a big challenge to maintain these rites, the rituals and their practises in this modern age by the society. Many things are forgotten. Therefore, genuine effort is needed by the church and the church personnel to take interest in the cultures, rites and the rituals of the people.

CATHOLICISM AMONG TRIBALS IN KERALA, INDIA

Selvaraj Arulnathan

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1. Kurichia Christians And Their Conversion History

Introduction

Tribal population is identified as the aboriginal inhabitants of our country. They are seen in almost every State of India. For centuries, they have been living a simple life based on the natural environment and have developed cultural patterns congenial to their physical and social environment. As the name implies, Tribals or 'Adivasis' are the original dwellers, living in the subcontinent from unrecorded time and possibly driven into the forests by more aggressive settlers - Aryans being the earliest one to socially subjugate them. In order to resist complete domination, Tribals evolved their distinct identity through endogamy, their cropping pattern, hunting and food gathering. Above all, in their intensely personal relationship with the forest around them, they formed perfectly balanced rhythms which can best be described as symbiotic[1].

To define who a tribal is, P. G. Krishnan's comes closer to the traits of Kurichias when he adduces as "a social group of simple and kind, the members of which speak a common dialect, have a single government act together for common purposes and have a common name, a contiguous territory, a relatively uniform culture or way of life and a tradition of common descent."[2] Though Kurichias have a dialect of their own, Kurichia Christians don't use the dialect as they got completely acclimatized in the mainline culture of other people.

Conversion of Tribals to Christianity

Tribal conversion to Christianity is rather a late phenomenon in India compared to the conversion of Syrian Christians in Kerala or the Shudra and Dalit Christians in other parts of south India especially Tamilnadu and Andhrapradesh. It took more than 18 centuries for Christianity to enter the portals of tribal world in India. Some of the central and north western tribal zones were the first ones to see Christian missionaries to enter into their hamlets. It was not only for conversion purposes, but mainly for education and health and hygiene purposes. Jharkhand, one of the predominant tribal Christian belts today, has been the centre of a religious tug-of-war since the 18th century. The first Christian missionaries to arrive in the Chotanagpur plateau, which is most of Jharkhand today, were not the Catholics but German Protestants who travelled through

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[1] Dr. Prakash Chandra Mehta, 2000: p.7.

[2] P.G. Krishnan, March - June, 1985, pp 45-46.

Chakradharpur and Khunti to Ranchi. The Anglicans and the Catholics followed suit. In the late 19th century, Christian missionaries converted a large number of people, especially Tribals[3] to catholic faith.

Kurichiya Christians and their Origin

Conversion of Tribals to Christianity in South India was even later. The first tribal community to be converted to Christianity in south India is the Kurichias of Wayanad in Kerala. The origin of Kurichiyas in Wayanad was obscure. Scholars have put forward different opinion regarding the advent of Kurichiyas[4]. The traditional account was that, the Kottayam Rajas brought them for fighting with the Vedar rulers, Arippan and Vedan. As a result of this, their caste men would not take them back and they settled in this land[5].

This resulted in a large number of excommunications due to their deviation from their customary commensurate and connubial norms. Such excommunications led to intra-tribal divisions and finally segmented them into four sub-divisions: (1) *Jatikurichian* or Kurichias of Waynad who accepted the titular name of Kurichian from the Kottayam Raja, (2) the *Kunnam Kurichians*, who settled in Kannavam forest in Kuthuparamba and in Kolayad Panchayath of present Kannur District, (3) The *Anchilla Kurichia,* descendants of five lineages of Tirunelli village in Mananthavadi, and (4) *Pathiri Kurichian* or Christian Kurichian, the outcast Kurichians who had embraced Christianity at Pallikunnu[6]. The excommunicated Kurichias have widely been converted to Christianity and these groups of people are sarcastically called by locals as the *Pathiri kurichian*[7]. The term *'pathiri'* means a Christian priest, and has been derived from their association with the Christian faith and priests.[8]

The conversion that took place after ex-communication from the Kurichias represents the adoption of alien elements of religion, and may be accounted mostly for its facilities than the faith[9]. ***Jacob John Kattakayam*** argues that even though Kurichia Christians achieved a better social change a genuine change in belief is not there[10]. His assertion is proved to be false as today there is genuine faith both overt and covert present among the Kurichia Christians in Pallikunnu. One can witness to such great devotion and belief during the two-week feast of Lourdumadha (Our Lady of Lourdes) in the first and second week of February every year.

Apostle of the Kurichia Christians

Kurichia Christians' conversion dates back to the last decade of the 19th century[11]. Fr. Adigad, the priest of Mananthavadi church, was the one who converted the first two ex-communicated Kurichias to Christianity. For the next ten years these missionary works were conducted among the Tribals by Fr. Weiterin and about 140 Kurichias were converted under his auspices[12]. Fr. Armand Shan Mary Jefrino, a saint in Parish Church Mission Society, who was sent by Bishop

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[3] Raksha Kumar, 2013
[4] K.T.Ravivarma, 2004: 62-163.
[5] Pankajashan M.R, 1969: 13
[6] Chapter 4, Kurichiyas: A Historical Overview, p. 149
[7] Interview with Josehp, Converted Christian, Kambalakkad, 12.4.2007. (chapter 4, p. 150)
[8] K.S. Singh (ed.), *n.* 54: 721
[9] T. Madhava Menon (ed.) *n.* 17: 195
[10] Jacob John Kattakayam, 1985: 7
[11] Centenary Souvenir, Lourd Matha Church, Pallikunnu, 2000, p.41.
[12] Ibid

Eujin Luiz Kaynor of Mysore diocese to Wynad in 1908[13]. Fr. Jefrino is the most known as the apostle of the Kurichias who built the present Pallikunnu Lourdumadhe church at the turn of the 20th century[14]. He gave refuge to a large number of *Anchilla kurichians* who had been excommunicated[15]. As per in the baptismal register of Pallikunnu parish, about 650 tribal members were given baptism, of this 573 tribals were baptized under the auspices of Fr. Jefrino[16].

Lourdu Madha Church and Kurichia Christians

Lourdu Madha church, the parish church of Pallikunnu is the epicentre of Kurichia Christians. Their life, livelihood, liturgies, community gathering and Christian identity and social and cultural life, everything revolve around Lourdu Madha church. An interesting aspect regarding this church is that it has several rituals and practices similar to those prevalent in Hindu Temples[17]. Like any church it has an annual festival for two weeks in February and it draws large number of devotees from other parts of Kerala.

They belong to the Roman Catholic denomination of Christianity and worship Lourdu Matha, the patron saint of the Parish. By following the Christian way of life the new born child is named and baptized on the 8th day in a ceremony held in the nearby Catholic Church. The first communion (*adikurbana*) of boys and girls are held within 12 years of age. Death of a *Pathiri kurichian* is announced by intoning of church bell and the body is buried in the church cemetery. Among them the rituals are observed strictly with great piety and fervour.

2. Key Findings Of The Study On The Socio-Economic Condition Of Christians Of Scheduled Tribes In Wayanad District–Kerala

Impressed by the pomp and gaiety of the feast of Lourdumadha which was very different and unique in many ways, the author took up a study on the life and condition of the Kurichia Christians as there was hardly any formal and exclusive study done on the Kurichia Christians. Hence the author found it very relevant to study the people from social economic, cultural and religious point of view. I would like to give an account of their life pertaining to their catholic faith and events related to the church.

Overall development

The author took up a survey of the pattern of the practice of Catholicism by Kurichia Christians of Wayanad. Though the study was a general one to assess the impact of globalization upon the life of the Tribals, one section was set apart to assess the level of catholic faith among them, their practice of catholic faith and its external forms in rituals, liturgies and other outward ceremonies. The following is the major findings in our study.

God fearing people

The Catholic Church has played an important role in the life of the Kuruchiya converts ever since they embraced Christianity. After their defeat in the hands of the British invaders and the

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[13] This diary is translated to English by Fr. Antony Machchado and Fr. Lefre, and later into Malayalam by Mary Zakariya in 1976

[14] K.K.N. Kurup, 1998: p. 156

[15] After 1923, the conversion activities of this church in Wayanad was shifted from the diocese of Mysore to the newly formed diocese at Calicut

[16] The Baptism Register gives details with name and family accounts of the converted tribals

[17] E. K. Rajan, 2011: 154

immigrants they were left with neither education nor dignified employment. From our survey, it was observed that about **23%** of the respondents opined that the church has uplifted their economic status and 77 % said that they earned social respect and dignity. Some of them are of the opinion that the church can do much more than what has been done so far.

The Kuruchiyas are a simple and God fearing people. Their devotion to mother Mary whom they address as Mother of Pallikunnu is very inspiring. Most of the families are regular in their family prayer which is again part of their catholic upbringing. There is a collective decision (represented by all the people by their representatives) in any important matter in the parish especially the feast of Lourdumadha.

Religious ceremonies

Kurichia Christians celebrate every ceremony with due consideration and sanctity, as they see that these ceremonies and rituals have great social values. They believe that such collective celebration of ceremonies express group behavior, which includes beliefs and customs of the group concerning life and culture.

Their celebration of Annual Festival (Pallikuunnu Lourdu Mada), is done with much pomp and ritualism. Tribal unity, culture and performance of rituals are seen here. The ceremonial bath given to the statue of mother Mary on the penultimate day of the festival, participation of the elders (tribal head), and other heads in the ritual bath and decoration is very essential for them and this has some characteristics of ritual ceremonial bath. The unique and special feature of the feast is the community meal with the buffalo meat in which all the members of the Kurichia Christian families participate.

Their favorite musical instrument is Chenda which they play on all religious ceremonies. It is quite exhilarating to see scores men hang their chenda on their neck and stand in two long rows facing one another and beat the chenda for hours. Though the sound is rending one's ears, people enjoy the sound for its presentation, its rhythm, their agility, and the emotion and gaiety it evokes. All their celebrations, be it religious or life-cycle ceremonies, are marked by color, noise, dance and other instruments which are their cultural and community symbols.

They also have some special features in their sacramental rituals. For example, though they follow the catholic ritual in baptism, the first male child is named after the paternal grandfather and the first girl child is named after the paternal grandmother. The second male child is named after the maternal grandfather and the second girl child is named after the maternal grandmother and so on. In recent years, they have begun to name the children with modern names as the influence of modern culture, their mobility and tendency to feel accepted by other communities.

During the wedding ceremony, they have some special rituals which we usually don't see with other communities. They feed the young would be bride and groom with a mixture of sugar coconut in a ceremony performed before the marriage. There a great degree of equality in the marriage ceremony which we usually don't witness in other communities. Both the bride and the groom are treated equally and honorably. They do not have the practice of giving dowry. But in recent years this practice seems to be gradually changing both for giving and receiving. This is again the impact of their mobility with outside world which practices dowry. There is no practice of divorce among them. Marriage is a permanent bond as mentioned by some of the respondents. Yet there are a couple of cases where the spouses live away from each other because of

incompatibility between them, but have not gone through a formal divorce or have contracted another marriage.

Conclusion

Though there is a unique tribal identity in the life of Kurichia Christians in the religious and cultural realms, one can easily witness the sharp different in their economic, educational and political life to that of other Christians in Kerala. Modern development discourse, Kerala development model, Millennium Development Project, nothing has reached Kurichia Christians standing a contrast to other communities which are far better off in economic, educational and political life. The Catholic Church should understand its responsibility of integral development of all, especially the marginalized so that it can create parity among its different social and ethnic group of Christians. This is perhaps the immediate agenda for the Catholic Church in Pallikunnu, Wayanad.

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POPULAR RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AMONG THE DALIT CHRISTIANS: A CRITICAL APPRAISAL

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1.0 Popular Devotions

Popular religious practices and devotional activities spontaneously performed by people are the major constituent elements in every culture, and especially of the marginalized. They are the parts of the "ensemble of beliefs, rituals, ceremonies, devotions and prayers which are commonly practised by the people at large."[1] These meaning-generating complex worlds articulate themselves in varying degrees through their ethos, mythos and logos. Amidst the homogenising and universalising attempts of some of the religions and ideologies, the meaning-generating attempts of the Dalits stand out as an ever-active engagement with their disempowered situations of their life.[2]

The marginalized people like the Dalits, who grapple with their own problems of life and death, are the central agents in any religion-making and meaning-generating activity in addition to the official religions of the dominant both from within and outside the country. The stories of successes and defeats told by the Dalits with their own mouths are the foundation upon which the real questions of conflict-ridden situations articulate themselves. Not all these articulations of the

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[1] Virgil Elizondo, "Popular Religion as Support of Identity: A Pastoral-Psychological Case-Study based on the Mexican American Experience in the USA", in *Concilium (186/ 1986)*, 37.

[2] For the marginalized people, "culture is not only the goal of empowerment, but it is as well as a very important *means* for empowerment. That is why from the beginning of Dalit awakening, they have deployed this means and aspired to reach the goal of their culture being recognised. When political power and economic advantages eluded them, they have been clinging on to their cultural weapon." Felix Wilfred, *Dalit Empowerment* (Bangalore: NBCLC, 2007), 79-80.

marginalized people may hit the headlines of the media world. Amidst the elite prejudices against the Dalits, the responsible interventionists[3] need to identify the actual voice of the oppressed. The agency of the Dalits, its interior movements with their respective cultural locations has to be incorporated into the theologians' inner world with a sense of solidarity. The complex web of their intertextual religio-cultural resources is the vast reservoir very much deployed in the process of the generation of meaningfulness. And here the popular religious practices are sought to be comprehended in the following sub-divisions: (1) Response to Human Suffering, (2) In the Context of Fragmentation and Communion, (3) Interior Movements of the Marginalized.

1.1 Response to Human Suffering

One of the reasons for people's approach to religions, classical or popular or both, is to seek help and empowerment in the context of the existing inequalities. The following scourges, both local and global, enlisted below, though not exhaustive, could be identified for creating the culture of growing oppression of the Dalits in India who have been progressively impoverished and increasingly marginalized:

- the unjust patterns of land distribution
- the lop-sided priorities of development
- the denial of legitimate rights like education and health
- the growing disgruntlement due to unemployment, underemployment, and uncertain employment
- the immoral practice of casteism and the wicked practice of untouchability
- the rising trends of majoritarian atrocities leading to communal disharmony
- the uprising drift towards the culture of addiction to indulgences like substance abuse, unaccounted sex, and questionable styles of consumerist living
- the degradation of the body of women as a mere consumer good
- the culture of instrumentalization of the poor people for generating rich profits for the dominant people

In fact, access to new information technology, computerized sophistication, could have modernized gadgets could have allayed the woes of the less fortunate people. But in reality such modernization seems to sharpen the inequalities related to gender, ethnicity, class, caste, religion, language and age. As part of negotiating with all these vicissitudes of life, the hapless victims of human history seem to spontaneously turn towards the realm of meaning-generating system in terms of myth-making, religion-making and symbol-making.

Their religions are naturalistic, spontaneously materialistic and they are non-institutionalised....They are the symbolic treasure houses of the sufferings and joys of those people. They are the wailing walls of the people as well as the gorilla-war pits of the people. They are the local utopias of the people.[4]

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[3] These are the organic intellectuals –theologians, philosophers, social scientists, pastors, activists, or agents of transformation. They have to be acutely aware of the on-going complex interactions between (1) Agency of the people with their oral and written stories with the memory of their successes and failures, (2) Multiple factors and forces actually operative affecting their life, (3) Agency of the organic intellectuals with their own prejudgements coloured by their location of nature and nurture. By way of consciously critiquing their own prejudgements, they seek to evolve the agenda of transformation from the subaltern location.

[4] N. Muthu Mohan, "View Points: Reflections on Ban on Animal Sacrifice", *Satya Nilayam* 5 (February 2004) 131.

Even amidst multiple forms of repression by the ruling elite, the wounded psyche of the victims of history while seeking to ventilate repressed pathos, articulate visions of life, propose new alternatives through the medium of religious idioms even within the limited politico-economic space. That is why some of the popular religious practices could be even called as the weapons of the weak against the dominant forces. The arena of such spontaneous religious practices could be the fertile ground for identifying the both the explicit consciousness and the implicit consciousness of the suffering masses of people. One of such living and powerful popular religious traditions is the world of popular devotions centred around Mary of Nazareth acclaimed at once as virgin and mother and celebrated as consoler and inspirer. "[T]he practice of Marian devotion is modernized and goes on with the times, it is also one of the most fundamental, conservative, and militant forces in the Catholic Church, acting against secularism, individualization, and such gender issues as women's emancipation and sexual liberation".[5] The cult of Virgin Mother Mary seems to provide some answers for the problem of suffering and to address the needs of empowerment amidst such struggles.

1.2 In the Context of Fragmentation and Communion

The power-wielding leisurely class people tend to deploy their religious matrix, both at the popular and classical levels, from the ethical demands to ritualistic performance. Their religious orientations seek "to obtain supernatural protection for their material wealth and consolidate their positions of power and domination".[6] But on the other hand, the Dalits tend to be engaged in their religious world with the movement from ritualism to ethical commitment. Their religious quests embolden them "to interrogate inequality, to negotiate power with the dominant groups, and to assert, display and safeguard their newly acquired socio-economic statuses".[7]

No doubt, for the folk religious plane "the ritual processes shift people to new conditions of confidence, integration and health".[8] In the functioning of their belief-systems and religious practices we come across the "non-dichotomous holistic world-view that consider the humans, the cosmic and the divine as inseparable and inalienable components that affect and care for one another.[9]

Culture of Fragmentation Caused by Anti-Human Powers	Culture of Communion Pursued by the Marginalized
Hierarchization of persons, things, space, and time	Egalitarianization of every one and every thing
Thrives on exclusion of others to be dismissed as deplorably impure unworthy	Struggles for inclusion of others to be embraced as co-humans worthy of human

[5] Anna-Karina Hermkens, Willy Jansen, and Catrien Notermans, "Introduction: The Power of Marian Pilgrimage" in Anna-Karina Hermkens, Willy Jansen and Catrien Notermans (eds.), *Moved by Mary:* The Power of Pilgrimage in the Modern World, (Nijmegen: Radbound University, 2009), p. 1.

[6] K. James Ponniah, "Re-viewing Folk Religions and Re-visioning Christian Studies". *Indian Journal of Christian Studies.* Volume I/ 1 (January- July 2012), p. 82.

[7] K. James Ponniah, "Re-viewing Folk Religions and Re-visioning Christian Studies". *Indian Journal of Christian Studies.* Volume I/ 1 (January- July 2012), p. 82.

[8] Isabella Nobohov, *Religion against Self: An Ethnography of Tamil Rituals.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.5.

[9] Cf. K. James Ponniah, *The Dynamics of Folk Religions in Society Pericentralization as Deconstruction of Sanskritization,* (New Delhi: Serials Publications, 2011), pp.86-87.

of human dignity	disnity
Attributed purity based on one's birth	Achieved purity based on one's ethical performance
Obsession with not getting contaminated with permanent pollution	Gradual construction of purity from below with humanizing deeds
Construction of institutions of graded inequality as an inevitable necessity upheld by arbitrary, metaphysical and unethical principles	Construction of practical ways of democratization of power as an ethical necessity upheld by rational, practical and moral principles
Tendencies of absolutizing the divine aspects and relativizing the human dignity	Tendencies of relatizing the divine aspects and absolutizing the human dignity
Salvation as an individualistic process though community is needed for accumulation of power	Salvation as a communitarian process and community is needed for democratization of power

1.3 Interior Movements of the Marginalized

The expectations from, perceptions on and interior movements of the marginalized people during the pilgrimages to the shrines are quite complex with the constant interplay of multiple variables seem to be the admixture of the following aspects as indicated below:[10]

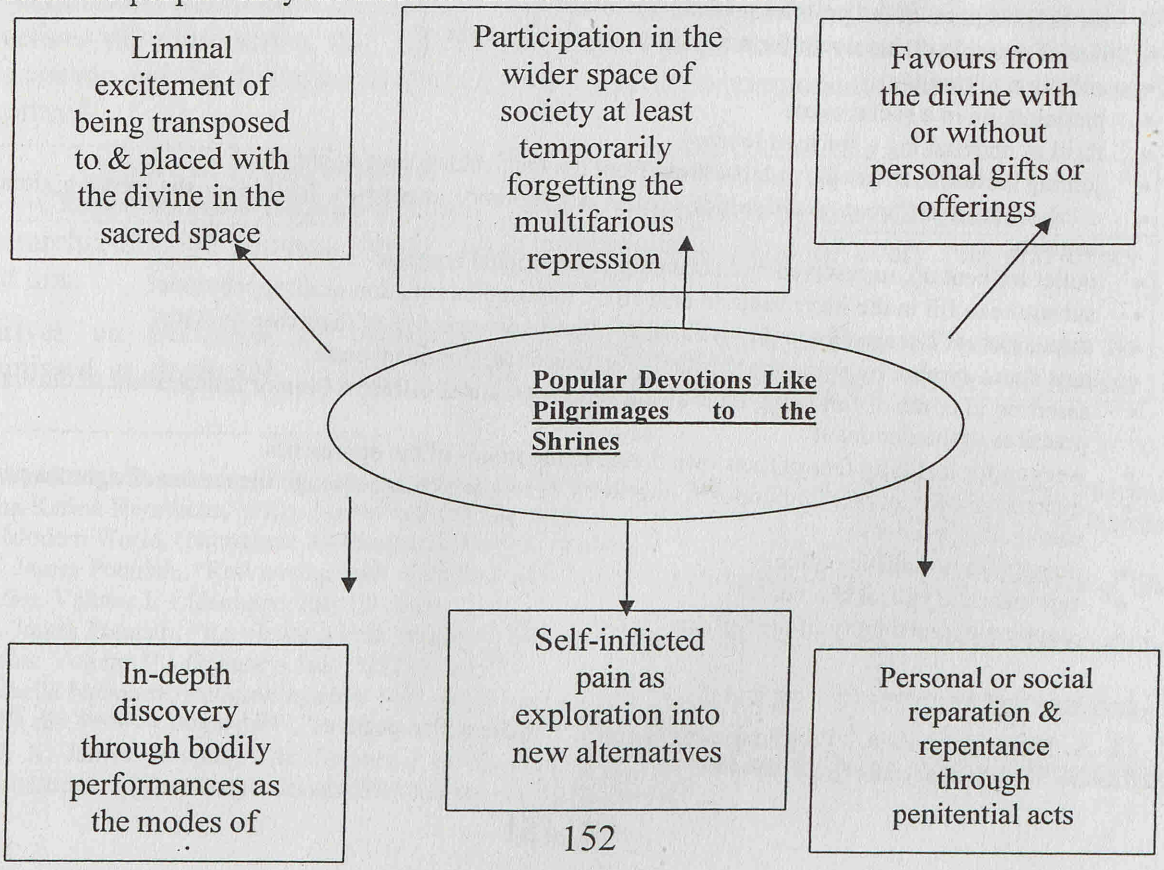
- endearment to the divine
- persuading the divine for certain favours
- act of fulfillment of the promise made to the divine
- fear of possible divine wrath for not fulfilling the same promise
- addiction to tradition
- participation in a social event
- thrill of undertaking a spiritual journey
- joining the world of people at large away from the local situation of oppression
- escape into a different world which creates a temporary anonymity for hiding the existing situation of anguish
- outlet for bent up, unresolved and accumulated emotional baggage
- substitute to fill in the inner vacuum created by imposed humiliation or disappointment
- acquisition of a sense of equality with other pilgrims irrespective of their case or status
- new status symbol by aping the spiritual practices of the dominant caste
- assertion in terms of following their own religious practices different from or independent of those religious practices of the dominant
- weapon for instilling fear of their own divine in the minds of the oppressors
- expressive ways of tackling imposed inferiority or low self-image through the means of rigorous penance or easy-going practices
- scrupulous moralistic outlook
- reprioritising ethical choices
- stepping up the dignity of the self and family

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[10] Cf. A. Maria Arul Raja, "Pilgrimages to Shrines: Subaltern Perspectives", *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 75/1 (January 2011), pp. 29-44.

- disciplining oneself from drinking, smoking, or extra marital affairs
- breaking the code of conduct expected of the pilgrims either deliberately or inadvertently
- entertainment with an all-out abandon with individual inebriation or community celebration with overeating and drinking
- excessive bodily expressions with colourful costumes, high decibels with noisy duels with emotional outbursts
- punishing both the body and the inner world
- deterrent to evil tendencies and sins
- prevention of committing a pattern of sins
- purification and exploration
- exemplary acts for the edification of others
- corrective measure towards rehabilitation
- restoration back to mainstream of society

Popular devotional practices like pilgrimages to shrines evoke the inner world of imagination of the marginalized as sites of religious aesthetics. Mere propositions on aesthetic objects or acts especially in the religious realm do not evoke active and activated response especially from the marginalized. But performances in the body evoke a lot in terms of chain of further acts. For the body or mind to be in a position of eliciting an effect, power, or capability from any other sources (venerable object, sacred place, holy person), it must manifest itself in a particular concrete way, which then becomes the triggering point or moment. This can only be done through the appropriate aesthetic performance. It is not what the object 'says' or 'expresses' by itself is the key issue here. But what it does and what forms of action and social relations the object elicits in significant here. And hence from the point of view of aesthetic fulfillment in the religious realm, we could identify some of the internal factors which seem to determine the various levels of contentment among the subaltern people. They are indicated in the illustration below:



The above aspects, though not exhaustive, seem to be at play when the Dalits undertake pilgrimages to the shrines. The interior processing of the negativities and deprivations experienced in their day-to-day life play a vital role in all the aspects of the above cultural representation.

Critical Appraisal

The popular religious devotional practices from the Dalit location have to be further probed with the following critical appraisal:

i. Since the Dalits have been placed in immediate proximity with the oppressive caste communities, the unique elements of Dalit religiosity cannot be easily isolated. Dalit religious practices with mass appeal are co-opted by the dominant or the dominant devotional practices are imitated by the Dalits with the hope of an upward mobility due to the so-called sanskritisation.

ii. Even amidst the points of convergence and divergence between the popular religious practices from the Dalit cultural soil and the dominant world, the core of the Dalit location is predominantly embedded with the ethical orientation for constructing purity of achieved performance of humanization rather than the metaphysical obsession for constructing purity of attributed status by birth.

iii. With their wounded psyche experimenting with various rites, rituals, ideologies, and religions for becoming co-humans with other humans, the attempts of Dalit agency seems to be "chaotically exploratory" in nature oscillating between the processes of imitation, transference, role-exchange even while constantly negotiating with official religions with love-and-hatred relationship.

iv. It is unethical on the part of the official religions with an attitude of doctrinal superiority to readily pounce on the popular religious practices as if they are irredeemably superstitious only worthy of lesser humans.

v. The popular religious practices of the Dalits could become effective instruments of transformation by way of wriggling out of possible ghettoization with the spirit of daring inter-cultural and trans-national dialogical attempts with various movements struggling for human rights across the globe both in the religious and civil spaces.

DALIT PRACTICES: HOME ALTARS

Mathew N. Schmalz, The College of The Holy Cross

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Home altars or shrines are a particular distinguishing quality of homes in India. Hindu homes will often have a room or at least an alcove dedicated to particular gods and goddesses, which will be honored by readings, songs, and food. Muslim homes as well often have at least a sign marking qibla, the direction to Mecca, and often have pictures of the kaba and the great mosque. So, to see a home shrine in India is certainly not something rare, but something that's common.

The situation is different, however, for those whose homes are one room mud huts. In places where cooking, sleeping, entertaining, and other family activities happen in a close space, it is often difficult to find a place for a shrine—one might very well have pictures, but they also have to be carefully placed.

So, what happens when people who at first did lived in mud and thatch homes like these, improve their conditions? How are the altars organized? What aesthetic do the altars reflect? What message do they convey?

Such is the subject of my presentation, which concerns a village called Jasdeopur. Actually, however, we won't be talking about Jasdeopur in its entirety, but focusing on the Dalit colony that lies on the outskirts of the village. The colony has a history that is fairly typical of what I am sure most of your are familiar with and of what life is like in this part of India—the Muhammadabad district, where the Ganges river divides Uttar Pradesh from Bihar.

The Dalits who live in this colony are primary invoved in manual laborer. While they do own the land on which their houses are built, they own no land for cultivation and thus work the fields owned by the landowning bhumihar caste. Periodically, the Dalits in the colony have attempted various forms of resistance, particularly banding together to renounce their caste based obligation to remove dead cattle. In response to this, the landowners took away crossing rights over their land—Dalits could no longer use the fields for their latrine or traverse areas necessary to collect dung or firewood. As one might imagine, the landowners eventually prevailed and the Dalits were forced to go back to their traditional caste based work. That was about twenty years ago, and a decade ago, the colony looked like this.

But now the situation is vastly different. Most Dalits have what are called "pakkha ghars," built of brick and concrete. Also, latrines have been built so that women no longer have to go to the fields. Dalits are given financial incentives to go to the doctor, so health levels are much higher. Even though many Dalits still work the fields as manual laborers, conditions—by their own assessment—have vastly improved.

This in turn has changed the significance of homes—they are larger, and thus have more space. Also, interreligious tensions have decreased over the years—outcastings leveled against Cathoic converts were recinded, and the political situation is somewhat calmer than it has been in recent years. So, there is space, both physical and symbolic, for more robust articulations of identity.

The Bishop of The Varanasi diocese, who has jurisdiction over Jasdeopur and surrounding villages, encouraged the building of home altars as part of the new evangelization, and Catholics responded.

Here is one altar in a home that has been renovated over the years. Here you see a picture that alternates between the sacred heart of Jesus and the Immaculate heart of Mary. There is a copy of the New Testament. Along with various travel or pilgrimage artifacts. In one sense, this is a static display that has an almost cluttered quality. On another level, however, it is filled with motion—a trajectory that points beyond the specific geographic locale. This notion of breaking boundaries is further emphasized by the fruit here—which is a pear and is not grown into the area. There's a replica of the Taj Mahal. Also the English words are significant—the heart in the box mirrors the sacred heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The English words convey a sense of difference and expansiveness. Most interestingly, on the wall facing the shrine, is a calendar with the image of Bhim Rao Ramji Ambedkar, as if you say look at what you have become, look at where you are going.

Nearby is the home of Gyan Prakash—he has always had difficulty finding work and his mother recently died, so he lives in this home. As you notice, over the threshold, there is a cross—interestingly the cross was an important symbol for the Dalit community in the area. It was often branded on to the body to protect from the evil eye. The cross bifurcates the Hindi phrase, "Ishwar Ko Danyawad" or "Thanks be to God."

Inside the home is an old water tank. And on it is a picture of Jesus's sacred heart with the words in Hindi. "What could be lacking where God is. There remains boundless peace—thanks be to God."

What is most interesting is a longer piece of text in Hindi that is situated below a picture of the crucified Jesus. The Hindi reads: Everyday you bow before God and everyday you say the rosary before Mother Mary. From 7:30 to 8:30 at my door on Thursday I know that you speak the truth and are not distracted and do not show off and give lessons about the path of God."

This was rather cryptic for me—especially the last part. But there are a couple of observations. First, Gyan Prakash lives in a very humble home—he was never able to take advantage of government schemes to renovate his home and he continually works as a manual laborer. The texts in his home are reminders to be grateful and also a kind of reminder to others to look beyond appearances to see God's peace and love in his home. The use of Hindi, along with English, gives a sense of authority—after all Gyan Prakash was the first person in his family to learn how to read and write. And it was in the charismatic movement that Gyan Prakash gained place as a healer and so he gives lessons, every Thursday.

So in the first case, the materiality is the object of the gaze that is directed to the home shrine—a materiality that is linked to mobility and a kind of otherworldly exoticism. In this second case, materiality is displaced by text—by words—that convey a deeper, hidden reality that the materiality conceals. In each case, there is a particular message that is being conveyed about the home in relation to its occupant.

The most elaborate display comes at the home of Ujagir, who is the nightwatchman at the mission. As you can see, he was in the process of renovating his home, which already was quite substantial with a inner courtyard, water buffaloes and an indoor latrine.

The layout of this home shrine is quite complex. At the top is a picture of Jesus as guru. On the second level, St. Alphonsa and Mother Mary, flank a picture of Jesus with his sacred heart exposed. Immediately next to Jesus is mother Mary—first a statue of her exposing her immaculate heart and then a bottle of water from Velankanni. On the third level, you also have a shifting picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Interestingly, this is where the incense is burned and where the bible and other sacred texts are stored.

Stepping back and looking at it, leads to a variety of ways in which it can be read. The first, and most obvious aspect of the composition is that it is cruciform. This cruciform structure then itself can be broken down or read in a number of ways. First, it is hierarchical. It is interesting that Jesus as a guru, as a renunciant is at the apex of the composition. Interestingly he is above a clock—symbolizing perhaps being outside of time. Christ as guru is not paired with Mother Mary or another saint. While on the second and third levels he his. But if you read the composition from bottom to top, you have textuality with the Bible and other texts, then purification, represented by the Velankanni water, then transcendence. When the incense is burned, is goes upward—like prayers to heaven or like the word that connects us to God. Also, each level has a different degree of weight. The bottom most level is the weightiest, with both pictures and text. The second level is somewhat lighter since there are no texts, only water and images. And of course, the image of Jesus as guru, is the least weighed down—it's also the least tactile of anything in the display.

Alternatively, you could read the cross as more of a metaphor for embodiment with the heart at the center, and Jesus as guru as the head—the texts on the third level then provide the foundation, the feet to stand on, as it were. There is also an implicit hierarchy of temperature, the hot incense, the cooling water above it juxtaposed to Jesus's flaming heart, and, above it all, Jesus the guru against an entirely white background.

The display, however, is positioned only so that people who enter the inside of the house can see it. So, to gaze upon it, you have to an be an insiders, as it were, someone who has a special position and thus has access to a special kind of knowledge and experience.

There is a tendency I think to dismiss Dalit culture as somehow incomplete or derivative. But I think what is interesting and quite striking about these displays is how they reflect the individual and collective creativity energy of the Dalit community. While the community is certainly much better off than it was even a decade ago, it is still a community that suffers poverty and caste exclusion. It is a work of significant agency to be able to create a space and bring together what might seem to be random pieces of materiality into a message that conveys something of what is its to be a Dalit Catholic. What we can see are diverse influences—Hindi and English, text to picture, traditional Catholic images that would be familiar back in the United States and images that are distinctive to India. All of this is very North India, very true to Dalit experiences of the world, and most certainly undeniably Catholic.

FASTING IN THE SYRO MALABAR CHURCH

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Introduction

Fasting is the willful abstinence for a period of time, from anything that pleases one through one's body. Willful abstinence gives the clear indication that what is available to please one through one's body is to be kept aside for a predetermined period of time. Abstinence can be total or partial, in quantity or in quality. Fasting is not abstinence for the want of something. It is not the celebration of the lack of opportunity. It is the most effective use of our free will in the midst of ample opportunities.

Biblically, the noun translated "fast" or "a fasting" is *tsom* in Hebrew and *nesteia* in Greek. It means the voluntary abstinence from food. The literal Hebrew translation would be "not to eat." The literal Greek means "no food."

Why does one abstain from certain things? Is there a spirituality that supports this action? Religions of all kind have one or other type of fasting. The rigour of fasts varies. Some fasts are public whereas some other fasts are private. There are many reasons behind fasting. Fasting has both physiological as well as spiritual aims. We discuss here only the religious relevance of fasting practised among *Mar Toma* Nazranis in the context of their existence.

Human existence in this world is experienced through body. God formed man from the dust of the ground (Gen 2: 7) and woman from the body of man. (Gen 2: 22) Minus body, human being is not of this world. However, plus body, human existence is an inferior existence according to St. Paul. He writes, "*Eesho* taking the mortal body was a humbling act by God." (Phil 2:7) For the church father Athanasius, "God became man that man might become God." *Eesho* says, "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me." (John 17:20-23)

Therefore every human being has two contradicting but complementing principles behind his/her existence, viz., body and soul. Soul is identified as spirit or mind which is the life principle. (Gen 2:7) In all philosophical and religious systems, there are substantial discussions that deal with the explanations on the body-soul dualism and monism.

This guides us to think that we need to look for a life beyond our mortal body because our mortal body is meant for the life on this earth. What about our life beyond this visible world? Do we have an existence beyond this world? Is there a life for us without our body?

Christianity is a way of life that teaches us to focus on a life beyond our normal sense and sensibilities. It urges us to strive for perfect union with God. "It is the spirit that gives life, flesh is useless."(John 6:63) We consider heaven as the abode of God, and *Eesho* clearly

teaches us that there are no bodily pleasures in heaven: "For, when they rise from the dead, men and women do not marry, but are like the angels in heaven." (Mark 12:25)

There is no eating, drinking and merry-making in heaven. Is it possible for us to have preparation for heavenly life, while living in this world? *Eesho* answers the devil," Man cannot live on bread alone." (Luke 4:4) In the heavenly life there is no pleasure as far as the body is concerned. Body is of this world. Soul is beyond this world. What we have in the other world is what the soul really requires now in this world. Any pleasure that is of the body alone may be a rider for enjoying the life in the other world. It is with this view that abstinence from bodily pleasures became a very important spiritual exercise among the followers of *Eesho Mishiha* from the beginning of Messianic Age. Though the Garden of Eden is a prototype of heaven, the three gifts given to the bodily existence of man in the paradise, viz., food, dominion and sexuality, are the things from which one abstains while fasting.

Fasts in the Syro Malabar Church

The Syro Malabar Church which is apostolic in origin has this clear vision. Her rule of prayer (*lex orandi*) is her rule of faith (*lex credenti*). They fast and pray and they pray and fast. Fasting is an integral part of the life of a *Nazrani*. Jesuit Dionisio wrote in 1578, "They are friends of fast by obligation." There are four pillars of the strong tradition of fasting in the Syro Malabar Church. Theologian Placid Podipara calls the Syro Malabar Church as Hindu in Culture, Christian in Religion and Oriental in Worship. This characterization of St. Thomas Christians of India is very significant. Apart from these three foundations of St. Thomas Christians, the Jewish background of Indian Christianity is worth exploring even though the Jewish root of Christianity might be included in the characterising of "Christian in Religion." Considering the fasting in the Syro Malabar Church we come across all the four inputs ie., Jewish, Christian, East Syriac and Hindu. Hence, one could characterize the Syro Malabar Church as Jewish in Origin, Christian in Religion, Syriac in Worship and Hindu in Culture.

On the fasting among the *Mar Toma Nazanis* can be discussed focussing three periods viz., pre – 1599, 1600-1896 and post-1897.

Pre-1599 Fasts

Pre-1599 list fasts among the *Nazranis* can be found scattered in a couple of documents viz.,

1. 1301 - The Kodungallur Calendar - Syriac
2. 1501 - The Testimony of Joseph the Indian - Latin
3. 1557 - The Letter of Fr Carneiro S.J.
4. 1557- The Annual Letter of Cochin College
5. 1578 - The Letter of Fr. Dionisio S.J.
6. 1579 - The document of a visitor of Malabar – Fr. Monserrate S.J.
7. 1590 - The Letter of Fr. Jerome S.J.
8. 1599 - The Document possessed by Fr. Kocheppu Peediekal

Fasts that are recorded in the above eight documents are the following.

Major Fasts:

1. The Lent - Period of Great Fast – except the first Sunday - 48 days.
2. The Fast of Annunciation - December 1-24 – 24 days.
3. The Fast of the Migration of Marth Mariam - August 1-14 – 14 days.
4. The Fast of (Rogation) of the Ninevites – 3 days
5. The Fast of the Apostles - Period of Apostles
6. The Fast of the Vrigins - September 1-8 – 8 days
7. The Fast of Elijah or the Fast of the Cross - Period of Elijah-Cross

8. The Fast of Wednesdays and Fridays

Minor Fasts:

9. The Vigil fast of St. Hormizdas
10. The Vigil fast of Ascension
11. The Vigil of feasts of the patrons of the Churches
12. The Vigil of Transfiguration
13. The Fast of 12 Fridays after Christmas, in honour of 12 Apostles

21st century Fasts

The fasts as per the Liturgical Calendar of the Syro Malabar Church, 2014-15 are:

1. 25-day Fast - December 1-24 – 24 days.
2. 3-day Fast - Rogation of the Ninevites – 3 days
3. 50-day Fast - Period of Great Fast – except the first Sunday - 48 days.
4. 15-day Fast - August 1-14 – 14 days – The Fast of the Assumption of Our Lady
5. 8-day Fast - September 1-7 – 7 days – The Fast of the Nativity of Our Lady
6. Friday Fast – All Fridays except the Fridays between Christmas and Denha, and the Friday immediately after the Great Resurrection – 38/39 days in a year.

There are many private fasts in the Syro Malabar Church such as:

7. The Fast in the family after the death a family member until the burial.
8. The Fast before administration and reception of Sacraments
9. The Fasts during retreats
10. The Fasts with specific purposes by individuals and groups.
11. The Fasts among the consecrated women.
12. The Vigil Fasts on the eve of a major feast.
13. The Fasts of penance.
14. The Fasts for a pilgrimage
15. The Fasts with a pilgrimage
16. The Fasts related to local festivals

Jewish influence of the Syro Malabar Fasting

Jews fast very rigourously even by avoiding water. There are six traditional fasts for the Jews of which the *Tisha B'Av* and the *Yom Kippur* are the most important ones and are observed from dusk to dusk. For *Yom Kippur* Jews spend almost 25 hours in the synagogue fasting and praying. Marriage is considered as a personal *Yom Kippur* and hence in the Ashkenazic tradition the bride and groom fast like that of the *Yom Kippur* on their wedding day before the official ceremony.

The three major purposes for fasting are (i) the achievement of atonement for sins and omissions in divine service, (ii) commemorative mourning, and (iii) commemorative gratitude. Abstinence from food and drink which are corporeal needs helps to provide a unique opportunity to focus on the non-corporeal life. Fasting can potentially elevate one to the exalted level of the ministering angels. By refraining from such basic physical indulgences such as food and drinig, one can more greatly appreciate the dependence of humanity on God. This in turn leads one to appreciate God's beneficence in sustaining His creations. Indeed, in Jewish philosophy, this appreciation is one of the fundamental reasons for which God endowed mankind with such basic physical needs. *Yom Kippur* is the only fasting is permitted (if if falls) on *Sabbath.*

Jewish fasts and related observances have direct and indirect influence on the Syro Malabar fasts. Some of them are follows:

1. The Syro Malabar fasts are observed from sunset to the following day's dusk.

2. The Fasts before the administration and reception of Sacraments.
3. Fasts during the mourning period. Unity with the dead in the family who is not eating.
4. The Rogation of the Ninevites
5. No fasts on *Sabbath* – No fasts on the Sundays
6. The Fast of Esther – The Fast of Virgins – 8 day fast.
7. The Passover Meal – The Fast of the Thursday of Pes'ha.
8. The Reading of the Psalms during the fasts – (Passion Week and 3-day Fast)
9. Three times of prayer during the fast –Evening Midnight and Morning.
10. Spending time in the Synagogue – Church during the fast.

Hindu influence of the Syro Malabar Fasting

Fasting is an inseparable aspect of the life of a Hindu. The vegetarianism that most Hindus keep is a type of fasting. There would not be a single Hindu woman who does not take some kind of *Vra*. The Ekadasi *Vrat* is the most popular one in the South India. On the days of Pradosha, Purnima etc and certain other auspicious days also many do fast. *Vrat* connotes to willingly abstain oneself from certain pleasures including that of eating. Men and women fast on personal conviction rather than a rule. In epics and legends, there are stories about people fasting for many years for pleasing particular deities. Associated with festivals such as Navaratri, Shivratri, Karva Chauth, there is fast in the Hinduism. Besides these, there are many weekly fasts in honour of deities.

According to the Hindu religious scriptures, fasting helps create an attunement with the Absolute by establishing a harmonious relationship between the body and the soul. One is expected to live piously, give charity and refrain from eating non-vegetarian food. Fasting is mostly goal-oriented in Hinduism. Religious scriptures state that fasting is not only a part of worship, but a great instrument for inculcating self-discipline too.

Hindu fasts are ascetical in nature. Hindu fasts and related observances have many influences on the Syro Malabar fasts. Some of them are:

1. One- time-eating (vegetarian) during the fast.
2. The Fasts before Feasts
3. The Fasts by the Hindu women – The Syro Malabar women have similar fasts.
4. Fast with special intention
5. Taking bath before fast – bodily cleanliness
6. *Bhajana* (Be with God) in temples – During 3-day fasts and 8-day fasts *Bhajana* is conducted
7. The Fasts related to death in the family
8. The abstinence from conjugal relationship
9. The Fasts for a pilgrimage – Sabarimala – Malayatoor
10. The Fasts related to local feasts
11. Day specific fasts
12. Abstinence from all animal products, alcohol, chewing betel, marital relationship, smoking etc.
13. Fast and Abstinence go together

The Christian (Western) influence of the Syro Malabar Fasting

Although *Eesho* was critical of many of the actions of the Jews, He did fast for forty days and nights,(Mt 4:2) He directed His followers to wash their face and be cheerful while fasting. For Eesho, fasting is not for appearances or for people, but for God the Father who sees beyond appearances, and God the Father, who sees what is kept secret, will reward those who fast (Mt

6:16-18). He asked His disciples to fast after His death. "But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day." (Mark 2:20) To His disciples he also said, "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."(Mt 17:19-21).

Apostles Barnabas and Paul joined with the Christians of Antioch for fasting and prayer. (Acts 13:3) When they appointed ministers to churches they did with prayer and fasting. (Acts 14:23) The Christians of the first couple of centuries had hoped that *Mishiha* was coming soon. Hence they lived a life of preparedness. (Mark 2:20) The major fasts of the first two centuries were more of personal than institutional. They are

1. The Paschal Fast (Friday of Passion to Easter Sunday Morning)
2. The Fast on Wednesday (betrayal of *Eesho*)
3. The Fast on Friday (crucifixion of *Eesho*) and
4. The pre-baptismal Fast.

Being a struggling community, in the first two centuries fasts were more or less individual piety with Fathers of the Church promoting it. But when the Church became a glorified church, this attitude slowly diminished. This was the reason why people started going to wilderness. Wilderness was not a place for bodily pleasures. They hardly had food and drink. They spent time in singing psalms and lived in total insecurity. Wilderness made them realize that everything in this world is passing. Monks of the deserts and monasteries trained themselves for a life in the other world.

The Ecclesiastical Fasts between 200 and 500 AD

1. Paschal Fast – 2-days to 6 days to 40days
2. The Fasts of Wednesdays and Fridays
3. The Fasts of Saturday – (burial of *Eesho*)
4. Prebaptismal Fasts
5. The Fast before Holy Communion
6. The Fast of the Penitents
7. The Pentacostal Fast
8. Voluntary fasts – monks

Post 500 AD Fasts

Apart from the above fasts, new fasts that came into the Roman church were

9. The Vigil Fasts of major feasts
10. The Ember days- some days at the beginning of each season
11. The Rogation (three days before Ascension) and
12. The Advent Fast
13. Private fasts by ascetics

Fasting is a training time for our life in the other world. It is nothing but a dress-rehearsal for the heavenly life. It is the perfect understanding of the spiritual significance of our existence in this world. It is neither because somebody else fasted nor because the Church insists us to Fasting that we fast, but by clearly knowing about our future that we observe fasting here on earth. Most of the ancient Christian (Western) fasts are observed in the Syro Malabar Church. Moreover, by the 17th century, the Fast on the Saturdays was introduced and the fast on Sunday was withdrawn. Strict vegetarianism and non-alcoholism during the Fasts were condemned. Host of dispensations and exemptions helped those who do not fast. In general,

the laity became more observant of fast than clergy due to the European influence in the local Church and the knowledge of the dispensations.

The Oriental influence of the Syro Malabar Fasting

The Greek and the Syriac oriental churches gave much prominence to fasting from the first century itself. Fasting plays a significant role in the Oriental Christian living. Fasts were observed strictly in the early Church by having a single meal that is just bread and water alone in the early evening. Public Fasts in the various Oriental traditions are listed below:

Fasts	Byzantine	Alexandrian	Antiochian	Armenian	East Syriac
The Lent	8 weeks	7 weeks	7 weeks	7 weeks	7 weeks
The Fast of Annunciation	40 days	40 days	40 days	1 week	25 days
The Fast of Assumption	15 days	15 days	15 days	1 week	15 days
The Fast of Wednesdays and Fridays	All except - Week of Easter - Week of Pentecost - Week of Carnival - Christmas to Epiphany	All except the Pentecostal Season	All except the Pentecostal Season Christmas to Epiphany	All except the Octave of Epiphany	All except the Pentecostal Season
The Fast of the Apostles	Pentecost to Feast of Peter and Paul	Pentecost to Feast of Peter and Paul	Pentecost to Feast of Peter and Paul	NO	Seasons Apostles
The Fast of the Ninevites	NO	3 days	3	1 week	3
The Fast of the Cross	1 day			1 week	NO
The Fast of Elijah	NO	NO	NO	NO	7 weeks
The Fast of the Virgins	NO	NO	NO	NO	3 days
The Fast of Transfiguration	NO	NO	NO	1 week	NO

Since the Syro Malabar Church comes under the Oriental Churches, it is worth exploring how oriental the Syro Malabar Church is in her observance of fasting. To know more about this, the very specific Oriental tradition the Syro Malabar Church belongs to is worth noticing. The traditional fasts in the Church of the East until the 17th century are listed below:

1. The Lent/40-days fast/Seven-weeks fast

Begins on the Monday after Sunday of the Entrance of the Great Fast and ends on the Thursday of Pes'ha except the Sundays

2. The Fast of the Apostles
3. The Fast of Assumption
4. The Fast of Eliajah and the Fast of the Cross
5. The Fast of Annunciation
6. The Fast of the Ninevites
7. The Fast of the Virgins
8. The Fast of Wednesdays and Fridays

In tune with the true traditions of the Church of the East, the *Mar Toma Nazrani* Tradition also gives utmost importance to fasts. Most of the fasts of the Church of the East were practised in the Syro Malabar Church. Hence, among all the external influences, the one that most influenced the Syro Malabar Church is that of the Church of the East. In some cases at least, the fast of the Virgins, the fast of the Ninevites and that of the Apostles, there were adaptations in the Malabar Church. Though the names were almost the same, they were observed in very different ways in India.

Significance of fasts in the Syro Malabar Church

In all the four seasonal fasts, the last days are the most solemn feasts of our tradition. At the end of the 50-day fast, we have the feast of the Great Resurrection. At the end of 25-day fast, we have the Nativity of *Mishiha*. At the end of the 15-day fast, we have the assumption of *Marth Mariam* and at the end of the 8-day Fasting we have the feast of the Nativity of *Marth Mariam*. These are the four most important events that happened in this world. Hence, in all these cases Fasting is a prelude to a great feast. In other words, Fasting is nothing but an advanced feast. The 3-day Fasting is an alarm which reminds us of the commencement of the Weeks of Great Fast after three weeks. Thursday following 3-day Fast is a great day of solemnity in places such as Kuravilangad and Pulincunnoo.

Sunday is the day of the Lord, whereas Friday is the day of the Church. It is not because *Eesho Mishiha* was crucified on Friday that we fast, but because it is the brithday of the Church. Church is heaven on earth and hence we celebrate the birthday of the Church by fasting. Similarly, Wednesday is the day to honour *Marth Mariam*. We fast on Wednesdays to symbolically participate in the heavenly life of *Marth Mariam*. For, *Marth Mariam* is the only human being who lived on earth and led a heavenly life even with her body.

Fasting is the nature of God. Hence, fasting has spiritual results only if we obey the commandments of God. Fasting is not an external action. It has to come from within, spread to all our actions and raise us to the heavens.

Fasting is not a period of sadness; it is a period of enjoyment. It is a period of enjoying heavenly bliss. It is a period for celebrating the Holy *Qurbana* and the Liturgy of the Hours in the most solemn manner possible. It is the time of being with God in His temple. A clear example is the arrangement of readings in the Syro Malabar tradition. During the seven weeks of great fast, in the first week, in the fourth (middle) week and in the seventh (last) week and on all Fridays, we have four readings from the Scriptures for the Holy *Qurbana*. An obvious indication of the solemnity of the celebration of the Holy Qurbana, is the number and length of the biblical readings.

Celebrating the feast using food and drink is not a typical Syro Malabar tradition. Rather, in the feast, the liturgical celebrations are more important. Lengthy and repeated readings and services and prayers add to the solemnity of the feast. They are nothing but the heavenly experience brought to the world. Food and drink come as the last item. Hence in the Fasting

also, more than not eating or drinking or taking part in any bodily entertainments, it is the spiritual entertainments that are more important.

Fasting is not a period of big NOs. It is a period of YES to the Liturgical celebrations. In the heavenly life there is no pleasure as far as the body is concerned. If Fasting in the Old Testament was a sign of repentance, in the New Testament it is for acquiring the divine qualities and is equal to the heavenly life.

Fasting is for purifying the heart. It is for humbling ourselves in the presence of God in the heavenly kingdom. We know the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18: 9-14). The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' But we know, the tax collector, rather than the other, went home justified before God. St Paul warns us not to be mistaken in thinking that contempt for the body is a sign of holiness.(Col. 2:20-25) Fewer kilos do not mean more Spirit!

Fasting is a precursor to heavenly life. It is a period of thrill and excitement. It is a time for purifying the body. It is the preparatory period for the heavenly life. How do we purify our body? To purify our bodies there is nothing on this earth that is comparable with the Holy *Qurbana*. The Holy *Qurbana* we celebrate is the experience of heaven on earth. It is not the linguistic styles or the instrumental music that is making *Qurbana* a heavenly experience, but rather the real and authentic celebration with clean hearts and pure thoughts. Styles and music are more related to sensual pleasures.

The purpose of fasting is not to suffer, but to guard against gluttony and impure thoughts, deeds and words. Fasting must always be complemented by charitable works and increased prayer. To engage in fasting without them is practically useless. The Holy *Qurbana* reminds us every day the purpose of fasting and leads us through the fruits of fasting, the heavenly life. In the first *Slotha* on Feasts of our Lord and other important Feast days the priest prays: "With clean hearts and pure thoughts may they (those who firmly believe in Your name and earnestly confess that faith) offer You priestly ministry and always praise You for the salvation that You have mercifully granted..."

FASTING IN THE MALANKARA SYRIAN CATHOLIC TRADITION

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Fasting is primarily an abstinence from certain food and drink for a specific period of time. The Syriac word *saumo* (fast) is derived from *sam* which means to abstain from food. An absolute fast is defined as abstinence from all food and liquid for a defined period, a single day or several days. But 'to fast' is not simply abstaining from food or 'not to eat', but from anything that hinders our communion with God. It is also a practise of self-denial.[1] Fasting must be accompanied also by prayer and acts of charity. To engage in fasting without them is considered useless or meaningless. To repent of one's sins and to reach out in love to others is part and parcel of true fasting. All religions have lent and fasting. In each one's religious life, there is a great importance for lent, abstinence and fasting.

Fasting in Hinduism

Fasting is an integral part of the Hindu religion. Hindus observe various kinds of fasts based on personal beliefs and local customs. They fast on certain days of the month such as Ekadasi, Pradosha, Purnima etc.. Vedic scriptures strongly recommend observing a complete fast on the day of Ekadasi (even without drinking water). Certain days of the week also are set aside for fasting. For example, devotees of Shiva tend to fast on Mondays, devotees of Vishnu fast on Thursdays, and devotees of Ayyappa fast on Saturdays. The devotees eat before sunrise and drink only liquids between sunrise and sunset. Fasting during religious festivals like Maha Shivaratri or Navaratri is also very common. Fasting in Hinduism is the denial of the physical needs of the body for the sake of spiritual gains. According to Hindu scriptures, fasting helps to create an intimacy with the Absolute by establishing a harmonious relationship between the body and soul.

Fasting in Islam

Muslims believe that fasting is more than abstaining from food and drink. It includes also abstaining from any false words, indecent behaviour, from having lustful thoughts and actions. Therefore, fasting strengthens and helps to develop good behaviour and moral life. Fasting in the month of Ramadan is one of the pillars of Islam, and thus one of the most important acts of Islamic worship.[2] During the month of Ramadan, believers strive to purify their body and soul

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[1] Cf. A. WALLIS, *God's Chosen Fast* – A Spiritual and Practical Guide to Fasting, Victory Press, London, 1972, p.13.

[2] Cf. T. RYAN, *Fasting Rediscovered*, Paulist Press, New York, 1981, P. 65. The five pillars of Islam are five basic acts which are the mandatory and foundation of Islamic life. They are **Shahadah** (belief that there is no god except

and increase *taqwa* (good deeds, charity and God-consciousness). On a moral level, believers strive to attain the most virtuous characteristics and try to show compassion, generosity and mercy to others. Fasting, in that sense, inculcates a sense of fraternity and solidarity. In Islam, fasting is also an act of worship, whereby a Muslim more closely draws to God by abandoning food and drink. The believer knows that Allah will love him when he or she is ready to abandon the things he or she most desires. The Quran teaches fasting as 'God-consciousness' and acts as a shield with which the Muslim protects him/herself from *jahannam* (hell).

Fasting in Judaism

Fasting for Jews means completely abstaining from food and drink, including water. The Jewish fasts normally begin at sunrise and end with the appearance of the first stars of the evening. The giving of charity on a fast-day, specially the distribution of food for the needy is encouraged. Traditional Jews fast six days during the year. Yom Kippur is considered to be the most important day of fast expected of every Jew. Fasting on Yom Kippur is considered more important than the prayers of this holy day and it is considered as having participated in the full religious service. The second major day of fasting is Tisha B'Av, the day approximately 2500 years ago on which the Babylonians destroyed the first Holy Temple in Jerusalem, as well as on which the Romans destroyed the second Holy Temple in Jerusalem about 2000 years ago. This is also the day when observant Jews remember the many tragedies which have befallen the Jewish people, including the Holocaust. Yom Kippur and Tisha B'Av are the major fasts and the remaining four fasts are considered minor. Judaism views three essential purposes of fasting. First one is the achievement of atonement for sins and omissions in divine service, the second purpose is commemorative mourning and the third is commemorative gratitude.

Fasting in Christianity

Fasting is an integral part of the Christian life and divine worship. Fasting is a discipline of the body with a tendency to humble the soul. It is a natural sequence as we move from self-humbling to a level of repentance and contrition. Thereby, we enter into a spiritual level.[3] The fasts help us to move away from self-centering to a God-centering life. They help us to grow in our relationship with God and lead us to a deeper union and intimacy with God.

There are many reasons given in the Bible for fasting. When Jesus teaches his disciples about fasting, he prefers to talk about the attitudes and essential meaning of fasting (Mt. 6:16-18). For him, fasting is a sign and symbol of the conversion to God that takes place in the heart.[4] It is seen as an act of sacrifice that reminds Christians, through fasting, the soul and spirit are strengthened and purified.[5] Paul also taught the necessity of fasting when he spoke of 'frequent fastings' (2

God), **Salat** (five times prayer every day), **Zakat** (giving 2.5 percent to the poor and needy from each one's savings), **Sawm** (fasting during the month of Ramadan) and **Hajj** (pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in life).

[3] Cf. A. WALLIS, *God's Chosen Fast* – A Spiritual and Practical Guide to Fasting, P.37.

[4] Cf. T. RYAN, *Fasting Rediscovered*, P. 41, 71. Fasting and abstinence are very important during lent. In the Malankara tradition, all who are between the age of 21 and 60 have to fast on the 2nd day of Three Day fast, first Monday and all Fridays of Great fast. The sick, aged and the pregnant are not obliged to fast. Abstinence: Meat is forbidden on all Fridays, 25 Day fast, 3 Day fast, and Great fast. Besides meat, fish and egg also are forbidden during 3 day fast, first Monday of Great fast (*subkono*), and from *Nalpatham velli* to Easter. On Good Friday, milk and all its products also are not allowed to use.

[5] Cf. Valiyanombileyum moonunombileyum Prarthanakramom, (Prayer Book of Lent and Three Day Fast), Catholicate Centre, Trivandrum, 2012, p. 78, cf. also p. 252.

Cor. 11:27; 6:5). The early Christians, following the example and teachings of Christ and Apostles (Mt 6: 16- 18; Mk 9:28; Lk 5:33-35; Acts 9:9; 13:2-3) considered fasting a part of Christian life. We have seen that the fasts were part of the rich religious heritage of the Jewish community also. Jews fasted on Mondays and Thursdays by remembering that Moses entered Mount Sinai on Monday, and he came back from the Mount on Thursday. Following the Jewish custom of fasting two days per week, the early Christians also fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays by remembering that the Jewish court sentenced to kill Jesus on Wednesday and killed on Friday.[6] This custom is still maintained in the Christian churches as a part of adaptation.

Fasting in the Malankara Syrian Catholic Tradition

Syro-Malankara liturgy belongs to the family of West-Syrian or Antiochene liturgy. One of the important characteristics of Malankara liturgy is that there is a deep sense of unworthiness and repentance. In the West-Syrian tradition, the remission of sin is experienced not only through the sacrament of reconciliation but also through various prayers and rituals such as *Subukhono*[7], Lent, fasting and so on. The *Nomocanon* of Bar Hebraeus mentions about various fasts observed among the West Syrian Churches.

According to the West Syrian spirituality, the great pillars of lent are fasting, prayer and charity – the so called 3 interlocked wheels of spiritual life. They go together and move in such beautiful harmony with one another[8] (Acts 13:2-3; 14:23). These three components work together to pull us away from ungodly influence and to strengthen us to a new life in Christ.[9] Thus, fasting becomes highly acceptable when it is joined with humility of hearts, charity towards people and continuous prayers. Fasting is not simply avoiding food, but also giving to those who do not have to eat. The Lenten prayers express the same idea: "nalpathu nombathu nokkuka nee, theettuka theenillathavane".[10] Please note some extracts from the prayers of Great Lent:[11]

- "Nombu nallathakunnu, sneham koodatheyum vay niyanthrikkatheyum oruvan nombacharikkunnuvenkil avante vratham kondu prayojanamilla. Prarthana snehikkapettathakunnu. sneham athine karettunnillenkil, athinte chiraku balaheenamayirikkum".[12]
- "Sudhamulla nombu jayathinte adayalavum, sathruvaya dushtanu nere tholkatha ayudhavumanu".[13] "Nombu vijayathinte aayudhamakunnu. Athu upayogichu poradunnavan thottu pokunnilla"[14]
- Vedippulla nombu ithakunnu.... Ninte appam aavasyakkarkkayi vibhajikkukayum, ninte bhavanathil paradhesikale sveekarikkukayum cheyyanam".[15]

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[6] Cf. A. WALLIS, *God's Chosen Fast* – A Spiritual and Practical Guide to Fasting, P.27.

[7] On Monday, the beginning of the Lent, there is a special service called the service of reconciliation (*Subukono*). The purpose of this service is that the faithful should enter the season of fast by reconciling with all. This means that the fast is holy, and it would become meaningful only if it is observed with reconciled heart.

[8] Cf. T. RYAN, Fasting Rediscovered ..., P. 50.

[9] Cf. Valiyanombileyum moonunombileyum Prarthanakramom, p. 69.

[10] Cf. Valiyanombileyum moonunombileyum Prarthanakramom, p. 30; cf. also p. 101.

[11] Since the Text is in Malayalam, I quote the prayers as they are in the text.

[12] Cf. Valiyanombileyum moonunombileyum Prarthanakramom, p. 83; cf. also p. 75, 142, 180.

[13] Cf. Valiyanombileyum moonunombileyum Prarthanakramom, p. 130, cf. also p. 131, 254.

[14] Cf. Valiyanombileyum moonunombileyum Prarthanakramom, p. 93; cf. also p. 105, 166.

- "Upavasikkukayum dharidrarkku dhanam nalkukayum cheyyunnavan valiya prathibhalam praapikkunnu. Karthavu avante nombu sveekarikkunnu".[16]
- "Thante appathe visakkunnavarkkum avsarkkum nalkukayum, aavsyakkarkku vasthram kodukkukayum cheyyunnavanu njerukkamundakukayilla".[17]
- "dharidran vannu muttumbol karthavu ninne pularthikkollum ennu nee parayaruthu...nee bhakshanam koduthukondu aa vachanam paranjal athu ninakku dhoshamalla".[18]

The above prayers indicate the real meaning, nature and purpose of lent and fasting. Fasting is considered a medicine that heals the mind, soul and body the faithful. It is the root by which all the fruits of sanctity are sustained and maintained. Fasting dispels immodesty, controls the lust and offers the body as a holy temple of God. Therefore, the Church exhorts the faithful to love and practice fasting as highly acceptable form of each one's spiritual life. The following are the main fasts observed in the Malankara Syrian Catholic Church. The first three are the obligatory fasts and the other three are optional fasts.

1. The Fast before the Nativity of our Lord (*Saumo d'Yaldo*)

The Nativity Fast is in preparation for the Feast of Yaldo, commonly called Christmas. The season of this fast is to give thanks to God the Father remembering his selfless love by giving His unique Son for the salvation of the world. In the Malankara Church, this fast lasts for 25 days, from the first of December till the Christmas day. The faithful are bound to observe it with great vigour and enthusiasm.

2. The Fast of Ninevites (*Bo`utho d'Nineveh*)

This fast lasts for three days beginning on the Monday, the third week before the beginning of the Great Lent. It is also known as the fast of Jonah since it commemorates the conversion of Nineveh through the preaching of prophet Jonah. It is time for the penitential practice for the whole Church and the Church does her penance and prayers like that of the Ninevites.

3. The Great Fast (*Saumo Rabo*)

Lent or the Great Fast is a season for fasting, meditation and celebration of the memory of the passion, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a time set apart for silence, prayer and meditation. The Church prescribes the forty days of fast which ends on Friday (*Nalpatham Velly*) before the Passion Week. The fourty days are celebrated as a memory of the 40 days of fasting of Jesus in the wilderness of Judea (Mt. 4:2; Mk. 1:13; Lk. 4:2); Moses prayed 40 days and nights before receiving the Commandments of God (Ex. 34:28 ff..), Elijah fasted and prayed for 40 days before the anointing of Elisha (I Kings 19:8 ff)[19].... The Lenten prayers extol this kind of fasting by giving these Old Testament figures as good examples. But the Great fast gets completed only with the Easter and therefore it is also called fifty days Lent (*Anpathu Noimbu*). These ten days from the 40th Friday to Easter is particularly set apart to meditate on the passion, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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[15] Cf. Valiyanombileyum moonunombileyum Prarthanakramom, p. 101.
[16] Cf. Valiyanombileyum moonunombileyum Prarthanakramom, p. 131.
[17] Cf. Valiyanombileyum moonunombileyum Prarthanakramom, p. 150.
[18] Cf. Valiyanombileyum moonunombileyum Prarthanakramom, p. 238.
[19] Cf. Valiyanombileyum moonunombileyum Prarthanakramom, p. 59; cf. also p. 59, 88, 92, 95, 131, 145, 171, 173, 220, 241, 243.

4. The Apostles' Fast (*Saumo d'Sleehe*)

The Fast of the Apostles is now observed for 13 days (June 16-29) corresponding to the number of 12 apostles and St. Paul. This fast makes aware of the responsibility of the faithful in the Church and missionary activities like the apostles.

5. The Assumption Fast (*Saumo d'Shoonoyo*)

The Assumption Fast is a preparation for the Feast of the Assumption of Virgin Mary. This fast starts from 1 August and ends with the *Shoonoyo* feast on 15 August. It is a time for the faithful to prepare themselves for their death by remembering Mary's death (migration) as an exemplary death for all.

6. The Fast before the Nativity of St. Mary (*Ettu Noimbu*)[20]

This is an eight days fast observed only by the Syrian Christians in India. It is observed as preparation for the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (September 8th) and begins on 1st September.

The fast of Wednesdays and Fridays

Besides the above mentioned fasts, there was the custom of fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays. The Significance of Wednesday is that it was on this day that the Jews made plot to crucify Christ and Friday to commemorate His passion, crucifixion and death.

Conclusion

The Syrian Churches especially the Antiochian tradition gives much importance to Lent and fasting. Fasting is understood as seeking God, drawing near to God, remaining with God and deepening a life in Him. Fasting is the feast of the soul and it is like medicine that cures our soul and mind, and along with other virtuous works, it leads us to the eternal life. In our spiritual battle, fasting protects us from the evil one. It not only resists the attack, but also trains our body and mind for the battle. For Mar Ephrem, fasting is a great weapon against the evil one. Many extracts from the prayers mentioned in this article express fasting as a great weapon. Through fasting Christ defeated the Satan and He has given us also this weapon to overcome the evil. In this sense, Lent and fasting are the two virtuous weapons for defeating the Satan and leading a genuine Christian life.

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[20] *Ettu Noimbu* is only a devotional fast and this fast originated in connection with the Islamic invasion and the subsequent fall of the famous Christian centre Kodungallur. The Christians vowed to observe a fast so that God might protect their women from the invaders. But this fast is not considered as an obligatory and hence it is not in the official canonical list of the Church.

HISTORICAL AND STRUCTURAL EVOLUTION OF SYRO-MALABAR LITURGICAL YEAR

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Introduction

Liturgical year as a guide to the heavenly pilgrimage is the celebration of the salvation mysteries of Christ arranged in seasons or periods with feasts and fasts providing Christ experience through the living up of those mysteries in day-to-day life. The very functioning of the liturgical year differs in different Churches according to distinct theological views of different communities. Each Church with Her own ways of arranging the liturgical year, the whole Christendom represents different types of liturgical calendars. Here our concern is about the East Syrian liturgical year used today by the Chaldeans, Assyrians, and Syro-Malabarites.

1. Origins

We do not know much about the early history of the East Syrian Liturgical Calendar, because of the unavailability of manuscripts prior to the seventh century reform of Iso-Yahb III. The available sources are that of later origins used in cathedral (Secular) and monastic system of prayer. The ancient Jerusalem Liturgy gives some hints towards the evolution of the East Syrian liturgy. It was in 312 the liturgy in general started to flourish with the ecclesiastical freedom movement of Constantine the Great (d. 337). Jerusalem was the very first liturgical centre, and the Jerusalem liturgy was the cradle of all other liturgies until fifth century when it became extinct due to Jewish-Muslim conquests, which affected the Christian life negatively in Jerusalem. Anyhow one can assume that the early Syro-Malabar liturgical year of East Syriac tradition might have been formed in the model of Jerusalem version because of its close affinity between the Iso-Yahb's reform and the Jerusalem liturgy.

a. Jerusalem Liturgy

In Jerusalem developed the earliest Christian liturgy. Egeria in her fourth century pilgrim travelogue diary 47: 4-5 speaks about the earliest known Jerusalem liturgical situation of the Church calendar. *Codex Jerusalem Armenian 121* (1192 CE) is seemed to be the earliest extant lectionary system of Jerusalem liturgical year, prepared by James and completed by Cyril of Jerusalem in the 4th century. The important feasts that form the different liturgical periods in this calendar are arranged in seven seasons. They are 1) The feast of Nativity-Epiphany with the period of Nativity-Epiphany, 2) The feast of Pascha with the period of Great Fast, 3) The Feast of Resurrection and Ascension with the period of Resurrection, 4) The feast of Pentecost with the period of *Shliha*, 5) The feast of the Cross with the period of *Sliba*, 6) The feast of Elia with the period of *Elia*, 7) The feast of the renewal of the dedication of the Great Church of Jerusalem with the period of *Hudat edta* (Renewal of the Church). A comparison of the East Syriac Calendar with the Jerusalem Calendar manifests the uniqueness kept among them. The present East Syriac Calendar is the developed form of the less developed earlier system of Jerusalem Calendar. Hence the East Syriac cathedral and

monastic offices might have followed a Jerusalem pattern of arranging the seasonal prayer system in the *horarium*.

b. Cathedral Liturgy

The East Syriac cathedral usage started at the Great Church of Kokhe, the cathedral church of Chaldean Patriarchs of Celeucia-Ctesiphon. This was the ancient Patriarchal Metropolitan headquarters of Celeucia and Ctesiphon dioceses situated on the either banks of the River Tigris in Mosul about fifty kilometres south of Baghdad in the present Iraq. It was Timothy the Great (780-823) who transferred the Patriarchal See from kokhe to Baghdad. So far there is no evidence available to show the exact structural form of the early cathedral hourly offices. Since it was Iso-Yahb III, the Patriarch of Kokhe (647-657/58), who unified the cathedral and monastic usages into one system in the seventh century, we may fix the date of the cathedral usage of the liturgy of the hours of Kokhe to the sixth or even earlier century in accordance with Jerusalem liturgy.

c. Monastic Liturgy

The East Syriac monastic tradition took place in two monasteries at Mosul. They were the Upper Monastery situated on the upper (Right) bank of the river Tigris at the north-west of Mosul, and the Monastery of *Beth Abhe* (The house of forest) situated on a forest mountain at the north-east of Mosul. The Upper Monastery (*Daira Ellaita*) came to be known also as the Convent of Mar Gabriel (d.738/9) and Mar Abraham (d. 9th century), the famous superiors for their contribution towards the growth of the monastery. Patriarch Iso-Yahb III, the great liturgical reformer of the East Syriac Church, had his residence in this monastery during his patriarchate in 647-657/58. The founder of the monastery of *Beth Abhe* is considered to be Rabban Yahqob (d. 6th century), a monk of the Mount Isla Monastery. Iso-Yahb III was a member of this monastery. A comparison of the extant manuscripts of these two monasteries with the present usage shows a substantial agreement between them, and no remarkable differences are found. This might be perhaps due to the influence of the seventh century liturgical reformation of Iso-Yahb III upon the later manuscript tradition.

d. Cathedral-Monastic Liturgy

The present codified East Syriac cathedral-monastic usage is the result of the reformation of Iso-Yahb III in between 650-651 in the Upper Monastery. He unified the cathedral and monastic liturgies completing the renewal suggested by the synod of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in 410. With the help of the monks in the Upper Monastery, and the assistance of Hananiso from the monastery of Mount Isla, a fellow student of Iso-Yahb III, he reorganized the whole prayer system into nine liturgical seasons. For this purpose he collected all the then extant cathedral and monastic manuscripts known as *Hudra* (Cycle –offices for Sundays, weekdays, feast days), *Gazza* (Treasury –additional vigil prayers for the monastic use), and *Kaskol* (Collection –incepts of Sunday texts from *Hudra* for the ferial use). Then he rearranged the cathedral and monastic commemorations into one system removing all the significant differences found in the lectionary system for those commemorations, and added certain proper parts for the use of the Eucharist celebration.

Further he divided the whole liturgical year into nine seasons arranging them into one unit called *Hudra* (Cycle) retaining the manuscript titles with different settings as, *Hudra* for Sundays and moveable feast days, *Gazza* for fixed feast days, and *Kaskol* for weekdays. This made the use of the text much easier.

e Revision

The first revision of *Hudra* (Cycle) took place at the Upper Monastery in 1250 though no extant evidence available in this regard. The second revision was done by Patriarch Patros Elias XII (d.1894) who abridged the office removing all Nestorian theological errors from it in accordance to the decision of the Chaldean Synod of Alqosh in 1835. For this purpose he

appointed Mar Abbdiso Kayyath metropolitan of Amede, later patriarch (d.1899), and Paul Bedjan (d.1920), a Chaldean Vincentian (Lazarist) priest in Persia.

They rearranged the whole prayer system into three volumes known as *Hudra* , the choral prayer service book for the various liturgical seasons of the year, and published in three volumes for the first time at Leipzig (France) in 1886-1887. The first volume contained the office for the periods of Annunciation and *Denha*, the second volume for the periods of Great fast and Resurrection, and the third volume for the periods of *Shliha*, *Eliya-Sliba*, *Muse* and *Qudas eta* (Dedication of the Church). Each volume contained three parts, 1) Common part for every day, 2) Proper part for different occasions, and 3) The Psaltar. The Oriental Congregation, Rome, reprinted this text in 1938 with some corrections by J.M.Vosté and the calendar updating by E.Rassam. The preface of Cardinal Tissarant to this edition declares it for the official use of the Syro-Malabar Church also. The same Congregation reprinted its latest revised one volume edition in 2002.

c. Malabar Usage

Up until the 16th century the Syro-Malabar Church followed up the East Syrian liturgical year. Three Syriac manuscripts from Malabar, *Vatican Syriac 22* of 1302 AD –cathedral office copied at Scengala (Kodungallore) in Malabar; *Cambridge 0o.1.17* of the 16th century AD – cathedral epistle lectionary and the upper monastic gospel lectionary used in Malabar; and *Vatican Syriac 85I* of 1562 AD – *Kaskul* (Weekdays' divine office) written at Angamaly, give credence for the Malabar usage of East Syriac liturgical year before Diamper Synod (1599). The canons 8, 9, and 11 of Diamper synod decreed the use of the Latin Calendar in Malabar. It was Mar Jacob (1503-1547) who under Latin pressure modified the East Syrian liturgical year to the Latin Calendar, and bishop Roz, the first Latin bishop in Malabar (1599-1524), implemented it.

In 1959 and 1960 the Oriental Congregation published respectively the *Ordo celebrationis* and *Supplementum Mysteriorum* as guide lines to promote the restoration of the liturgical year. The restoration process of the proper parts of the Eucharist in Malayalam was done in ----. The restoration of the lectionary system in Malayalam was done in 2014. A partial translation of the liturgy of the hours into Malayalam in three volumes for the whole year was done in 1982 with its revised edition in one volume in 1986.

2. Structure

The structure of this calendar with nine systems (Periods) of which the first and last periods with four weeks each and the other seven periods ideally with seven units (Weeks) each forms a scheme (Year). This setting of the structure seems to be influenced by the West Asian *Pentecontad* calendar, which counts the scheme (Year) not by months but by systems (Periods) and units (Weeks). One system (Period) with seven units (Weeks) plus one day = 50 days is known as one *Pentecontad.* Seven *Pentecontads* plus fourteen intercalated dates forms a *Pentecontad* year of 364 days (50x7+14=364). The skilful arrangement of the liturgical year into this framework of ideally seven units (Weeks) each for seven systems (Periods) out of nine in a scheme (year) is shown bellow:

Yearly Plan

Systems (Periods)	*Scheme* (Year)	*Units* (Weeks)
1. Annunciation-Nativity	Nov.,Dec.,Jan.	4 Obligatory +2 Not oblig.
2. *Denha*	Jan.,Feb.,March	7 Not obligatory
3. Great Fast	Feb.,March,April	7 Obligatory
4. Resurrection	March,April,May	7 Obligatory
5. Apostles	May,June,July	7 Obligatoryy
6. *Qayta*	July,Aug.,Sept.	7 Not obligatory
7. Elia-Cross	Aug.,Sept.,Oct.	7 Not obligatory

8. Moses	Oct.,Nov.	7 Not obligatory
9. Dedication of the Church	Oct.,Nov.	4 Obligatory

Even though the seven out of nine periods have ideally seven weeks each, in actual practice except for the seasons of Great Fast, Resurrection and Apostles, all other seasons have longer or shorter periods. The arrangement of four weeks in the beginning (Annunciation period) and the end (Dedication period) of the liturgical year might have been planned by Iso-Yahb III in order to maintain the seven-week principle of *Pentecontad* calendar in seven periods (seasons).

a. Seven Week Symbolism

George of Arbel, the anonymous author, explains the importance of seven-week principle applied in this Calendar. According to him the number seven indicates the importance of Seven-Sunday events with seven new beginnings in the salvation history as follows:

Seven-Sunday Events of Salvation History

Sundays-Events	Seven New Beginnings
1. Beginning of creation (Gen 1:3-5)	The beginning of the world
2. Dedication of the tent of testimony by Moses (Ex 40:17)	The beginning of law and sacrifice
3. Annunciation to Mary –the first coming of the Lord (Lk 1:26f)	The beginning of God with us
4. Resurrection (Jn 20:1f)	The beginning of future eternal life
5. Resurrection experience of Apostle Thomas (Jn 20:26f)	The beginning of faith in the risen Lord
6. Pentecost (Acts 2:1f)	The beginning of the power of the Holy Spirit
7. Our own resurrection (the second coming of the Lord)	The beginning of entry to an everlasting age“

This division of the liturgical year is practically based on three feasts days of the Lord such as the feast day of *Denha* on January 6, the Easter Day on the Sunday following the full moon after March 21, and the feast of the exaltation of the Cross on September 14. The adjustments of weeks in seasons are made accordingly to maintain the annual cycling of the civic year of 365 days. The nine seasons of the year are fixed systematically beginning with Christ's arrival on earth and ending with our own arrival in heaven as shown below.

b. Nine Seasonal Significance

(1) Annunciation-Nativity (*Subara-Yalda*)

The period of Annunciation-Nativity begins a new era of peace and hope in salvation with the mystery of Incarnation. In order to have four Sundays before Christmas (December 25), the season should begin on a Sunday in between November 27 through December 3. The two weeks after Nativity are unstable, because in the years when Christmas falls on Monday or Tuesday there will be only one Sunday in between the feasts of Nativity (December 25) and *Denha* or Epiphany (January 6). It is probable that it might be Iso-Yahb III who added two Sundays after the Nativity in commemoration of Jesus' flight to Egypt and his presentation in the temple for completing the more developed East Syrian cycle.

(2) Epiphany (*Denha*)

The period of *Denha* (Epiphany) reveals the great mystery of Triune God to humankind. *Denha* is a fixed feast on January 6. Therefore if it falls on a Sunday, that Sunday will be the feast day,

and the following Sunday will be the first Sunday of the season. If the January 6 falls on Monday through Thursday , then the Season begins on the previous Sunday; and if it falls on Thursday through Saturday, then the season begins on the following Sunday.

Though the weeks in this season are seven in principle, they may vary in number depending on the change in the date of Easter in each year. If the Easter comes earlier then there will be less than seven weeks, and if it comes later then there will be more than seven weeks, because the following period of Great Fast should have seven Sundays before Easter. The text provides eight weeks of prayer system in this season in order to give ample provision for the adjustments in the yearly plan.

(3) Great Fast (*Sauma Rabba*)

The period of Great Fast invites to participate in the mystery of passion and death through prayer, fast, penance and repentance. There should always have Seven Sundays in this season before Easter. There is no excuse for eliminating any of them, because this period is divided into the "weeks of mysteries" (First, fourth -Middle week- and seventh -Holy Week) and "ordinary weeks" (Second, third, fifth, and sixth weeks).

(4) Resurrection (*Qyamta*)

The period of Resurrection celebrates the mystery of redemption through the victory over death and sin acquiring new life in Jesus. The resurrection being the central point of salvation history (1 Cor 15:14) this period also should always have seven Sundays.

(5) Apostle (*Shliha*)

The period of the Apostle manifests the mystery of the power of the Holy Spirit. The Pentecost being the powerhouse of the Church and the fullness of Easter (Lk 24:49, Jn 15:26, 16:7-11, Acts 2:1-4) this period also should always have seven Sundays.

(6) *Qayta*

The period of Summer (*Qayta*) meditates upon the mystery of the growth of the Church through faith, love, and sanctity. Whenever Easter comes very late, then the sixth and seventh Sundays of *Qayta* are combined to celebrate together, so that the first Sunday of Elia shall be celebrated before the feast of the Cross on September 14. Therefore the number of weeks in *Qayta* shall never be more than seven, but less in those years of late occurrence of Easter.

(7) *Elia-Cross* (*Elia-Sliba*)

The period of *Elia*-Cross manifests the mystery of the final return of Christ to the Church with Elia. Since the fourth Sunday of Elia must immediately follow the feast of the Cross, sometimes the second and the third Sundays of Elia are suppressed in order to count the Sunday after September 14 as the fourth of Elia. Thus practically there may be only five Sundays for the period of Elia-Cross. If anyhow there happens to have four Sundays for Elia before September 14, then the sixth Sunday of Elia is anticipated to the fourth of Elia. For this purpose the prayers suitable for the period of Elia are given in appendix in *Hudra*. The Sunday following September 14 should always be the first of Cross. In order to give in principle seven weeks for the period of Elia, the weeks of Cross are integrated with the previous counting of Elia.

This season onwards an integral system of counting of weeks is followed up in other seasons too, so that the periods of Elia, Cross, and Moses shall have seven weeks in principle and the Dedication of the Church will get its fixed four weeks. Why this uncertainty in counting is followed up in these seasons? According to Bik-Iso, it is to symbolise the uncertainty of the day of His second coming to the world (Mt 24:36).

(8) Moses (*Mushe*)

The period of Moses manifests the mystery of the Second Coming of Christ with Moses to pronounce the final verdict upon the world. Actually this period gets only four or fewer number of weeks in order to give the fixed four weeks to the period of Dedication of the Church before the beginning of the fixed four weeks of the Annunciation period. In order to get in principle seven weeks for the period of Cross, the weeks of Moses are counted integrally with the previous week-counting of the period of Cross.

Elia **1**
Elia **2**
Elia **3**
Sept. 14: Exaltation of the Cross
Elia **4**, Cross **1**
Elia **5**, Cross **2**
Elia **6**, Cross **3**
Elia **7**, Cross **4**
Cross **5**, Moses **1**
Cross **6**, Moses **2**
Cross **7**, Moses **3**
Moses **4**, Dedication **1**
Moses **5**, Dedication **2**
Moses **6**, Dedication **3**
Moses **7**, Dedication **4**

(9) Dedication of the Church (*Quddash-Edta*)

The period of the Dedication of the Church meditates upon the mystery of the final glory of the Church at the right hand of Christ in His heavenly Kingdom. This period should be given four Sundays before the beginning of the four Sundays of the period of Annunciation. In order to get in principle seven weeks for the period of Moses, the weeks of Dedication are integrated with the previous counting of the period of Moses.

The period of the Dedication of the Church seems to have been formed later in the seventh century by Iso-Yahb III who probably separated four Sundays of Moses and gave shape to this period by instituting four Sundays of Dedications in imitation of the four dedications of the tabernacles in the Old Testament.[1] Thus the heavenly pilgrimage of the Church (the Spouse) comes to an end with Christ (the Groom) in heaven enjoying the celestial glory forever and ever.

Conclusion

The formation of the liturgical year of the Syro-Malabar Church is based on the East Syriac tradition. The East Syriac Calendar is the more developed form of the Jerusalem calendar that was in use between 4-5 centuries in Jerusalem. The patriarch Isho-Yahb III in the 7th century unified the early systems of Cathedral and Monastic usages in the East Syrian milieu into one scheme as Cathedral-Monastic usage. This liturgical year follows the West Asian *Pentecontad* calendar of seven-week units of seven periods out of nine periods. Seven-week symbolism stresses the importance of seven Sundays in salvation history. The fixation of four-week units in the first and last seasons might have been planned to keep up the seven-week units in other seven seasons.

The practical application of number of weeks in each season is based on the days of three such feasts of the Lord as the feast day of *Denha* on January 6, the Easter day of the Resurrection Sunday, and the feast day of the Exaltation of the Cross on September 14. Around these three such feasts the weeks are set in motion in order to arrange fifty or fifty-two Sundays of 365 days of a year in between the periods of Annunciation and the Dedication of the Church. The nine seasons of this calendar manifests the mysteries of salvation beginning from the incarnation of Christ to His Second Coming for the crowning of the Church as His Holy Bride in His heavenly chamber. Thus through this liturgical year the whole salvation history is fully re-enacted orderly in every year.

[1] The tabernacle by Moses (Ex 40), the tabernacle at Shiloh by the people of Israel (Josh 18:1), Jerusalem Temple (1 King 8) and the tabernacle by Joshua and Zerubabel (Ezra 3:2f). A. BAUMSTARK, *Syrische Pericopenordungen*, p. 58; *Anonymi auctoris expositio* I, p. 25.

FOOD AND CELEBRATIONS OF THE SYRO-MALABAR CATHOLICS

Jose C. C., CMI

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Incarnation of the Christian faith in the socio-cultural milieu of Kerala found its varied expressions in the unique and interesting varieties of food and celebrations of Syro-Malabar Catholics. Taking clue from the local culture, many people with a creative and innovative bent of mind introduced and invented many types of food items and celebrations based upon their religious beliefs and solidarity. Cardinal Tisserant gave the opinion that the Thomas Christians of Kerala, being the most ancient Christian community, is the perfect example of thorough assimilation to the milieu.[1] An attempt is made here in this paper to understand the assimilation of the Indian culture by the Syro-Malabar Catholics in the field of food and celebrations. Oral tradition becomes the most important form of informationin this aspect.

1. Celebrations

Faith of the Syro-Malabar Catholics got expressed in different ways in their lives and practices. Many of these customs and practices got developed into celebrations of different kind. Feasts and celebrations have a better meaning more than that of mere external expressions ofjoy and togetherness but a way of experiencing the faith.[2]

Among the common celebrations of importance, *Puthujnayar* (New Sunday) on the Octave of the Easter gains special mention. The day is remembered for the public profession of faith in Jesus by St. Thomas, the apostle of India (Mathew 24:45-47, 25: 14-23). The celebrations include *Raza*, novena prayers, *nercha* or supply of special food or snacks as an offering, pilgrimage to Malayattoor etc.[3]

Dukranathirunal, Feast of St. Thomas on July 3 is the most significant celebration connected with their Christian faith and expressed in the local culture. It is also called as *Jatiyadina*, referring to the uniqueness of their faith originated by the preaching of St. Thomas. There is a mention about this celebration here on 21 November by the early Portuguese accounts.[4]

Mar Thoma Sliba day is celebrated on 18 December commemorating the miraculous stone Cross at St. Thomas Mount Church in Mylapore, Chennai in the state of Tamilnadu.

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[1]Cardinal Tisserant, *Eastern Christianity in India*

[2] Thomas M Kottoor, *Akhozhangal Aradhanopadikal*, in Jacob Vellian, (Ed.) *Aradhanakrama Vijnakosam*, Kottayam, 2003, p. 77.

[3]Malayatoor, located on a hill in the Ernakulam district of Kerala, was visited by St. Thomas for prayer on his way to Mylapore where he was martyred.

[4]James Puliurumpil, *Practice of Mar Thoma Margam in the Day-to-day life of the Mar Thomas Christians*, in Andrews Mekkattukunnel, *op. cit.*, p. 716.

Nercha or the offering of a food item to the saint or to the church in general constituted a very pious aspect of the celebrations in the life of St. Thomas Christians.[5] The rich and the poor had equal treatment during the serving of *nercha*. The *nercha* usually is blessed by the bishop, in his absence the eldest priest or any one of the priests. [6]There is mention about Archbishop Menezes not able to attend the *nercha* distribution function and he was provided the *nercha* items by two priests which included branch of figs, *apams* and *filhos com mel* (cake like edible with honey), cooked rice and items prepared in the Malabar style.[7]

Other than these we find a lot of celebrations connected with the life of an individual and celebrated in the family.Here special mention may be made about the celebrations connected with the birth of a child.

i. ***Jathakarma*:** Birth of a new born baby is marked by a ceremony known as *Jathakarma* or feeding of the new born with gold, honey and *vayampu.*The lead during the ceremony is taken by child's father or the eldest member of the family.[8]He whispers the words *Maran Iso M'Siha* (our Lord Jesus, the Messiah) into child's ear immediately after birth.[9]It is believed that this will bring God's protection on the child.[10]

ii. ***Namakarna:*** Taking inspiration from the Bible where calling the sheep by name (John 10:3), the naming ceremony of the new born child is done in the family. The solemn function involves the father of the child starting the function with a prayer invoking the Holy Trinity, lighting the lamp, instruction and the naming.[11]

iii. **Nishkramana**(Outing Ceremony):Father of the child holds the child, in his right hand outside his home, and a lamp in his left hand pronounces the Biblical words, "How wonderful are your works oh Lord: you have created them for humanity. Let this child look at them in order to know, love and praise you". After the distribution of sweets, the child is taken to Church for baptism. [12]

iv. ***Annaprasam***(first feeding with rice): The ceremony is done in the Church in the presence of the priest. The father keeps the child on his lap and gives a pinch from the mixture of sweet rice, plantain and jiggery in the mouth of the child.[13]

v. ***Vidyarambaor Ariyiliruthu***: Introduction to the world of wisdom and learning is marked by making the child to write the first alphabet, the letters *Ee Ma Yow* (JMJ; Jesus Mary Joseph) and a cross in rice spread in a plate.

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[5] Pius Malekandathil(ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 196.
[6]Ibid, p. 196.
[7]Ibid, p. 197.
[8] John Moolan, *Sacraments of Initiation, Syro-Malabar Church*, Kottayam, 2013, p. 230.
[9] A Cherukarakunnel, Indianization among the St. Thomas Christians of Kerala, in George Menacherry, (ed.) *TheThomapedia*, Ollur, 2000, p. 175.
[10]Ibid, p. 230.
[11]Ibid, p. 232.
[12] John Moolan, *op. cit.*, p. 233.
[13] A Cherukarakunnel, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

2. Food

One of the areas of the assimilation to the local cultures and the use of local resources for making unique tastes and tradition was in the field of food.[14] Down through centuries the Syro-Malabar Catholics hadperfectedthe inherited tradition of the families with great enthusiasm.[15] It is interesting to notice that the female members of the family had learned the preparation of food varieties from their mothers.

The Syro-Malabar Catholics had the style of expressing their faith through food. A common saying "*chorumchollumkodukkuka*" (*choru*= rice preparation, *chollum*= instruction, *kodukkuka*=give) is relevant here. Instruction during the serving of food had a kind of receptivity which is expressed in emotional relationship.

The different varieties of food items among the Syro-Malabar Catholics were part of their identity and uniqueness. Although these were adaptations from local culture, the different dishes in one way showed their difference from other communities and beliefs.

As we understand from *Jornada,* the Syro-Malabar Catholics, had more of vegetarian food. It was the influence of the Portuguese that made them to start consuming meat.[16] Their staple food consisted of boiled rice and curry. Extensive use of milk and butter for making most of the dishes also finds mention in this early seventeenth century work.[17] The method of eating, imitating the high caste Brahmins, by folding the plantain leaves into two, showed their aspiration to be of important status in the society.[18] Mattresses were used for sitting on the floor to eat with their fingers.[19] Pure vegetarian meals were used for fasting days avoiding fish, egg, and milk products.[20]

The daily food had more of rice preparations: breakfast consisted mainly of *canji* (rice porridge) and curry, lunch and dinner were again with rice and curry.[21]

The Syro-Malabar Catholics had some particular customs like wives not eating along with their husbands and children not sitting in the presence of their father and permitting only men of same social status to eat in the house.[22] There was a practice of fasting in preparation for Sunday's

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[14] The Kerala state (formerly the kingdoms of Travancore, Cochin and the British administered Malabar) had acres of paddy fields cultivating rice, vegetables and cattle so as to sustain the population. St. Thomas Christians were famous for cultivating different spice varieties and making a good living. In the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries they had a lucrative business of spice trade with the European traders mainly with the Portuguese and the English East India company.

[15] Thressi John Kottukappally, Salim Pushpanath, *Syrian Christian Favourites, A Personal Collection of Authentic Kerala Syrian Christian Recipes*, p.

[16] Pius Malekandathil(ed.), *Jornada of Dom Alexis De Menezes: A Portuguese Account of the Sixteenth Century Malabar*, Kochi, 2004, p. 251 and Msgr Paul Pallath, Inculturation among the St. Thomas Christians, in Andrews Mekkattukunnel, *Mar Thoma Margam, The Ecclesial Heritage of the St. Thomas Christians*, Kottayam, 2012, p. 848.

[17] Pius Malekandathil, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

[18] Paul Pallath, *op. cit.*, p. 848.

[19] D. Ferroli, Malabar Christian Customs and Manners, in George Menacherry, (ed.) *The Thomapedia*, Ollur, 2000, p. 127.

[20] Paul Pallath, *op. cit.*, p. 848

[21] D. Ferroli, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

[22] Ibid, p. 127.

celebration of Holy Qurbana which ended with the agape served in the Church after the Holy Qurbana. [23]

Pachoru made of cooked rice with coconut and sweet is given as an offering (*nercha*) during the feasts and other celebrations.It isconsidered to be the agape of the early Church. *Penpachoru* (female *pachoru)* is given during the previous day of the marriage in the home of the bride.[24]

During *shradham*, memorial celebration for the dead, one of the special snack provided was*neyyappam*. The items used to prepare this snack included plantain and rice powder with coconut. Plantain, it is said, represented the fruit taken by Adam and Eve, in the garden of Eden, leading to sin. *Appam* here is the sanctifying item representing the Eucharist.

There were also other traditional practices which are being followed even today. Mention may be made about *muthioottu*, ie feeding a family as mark of devotion to holy family. It is said that St. Kuriakose Elias Chavara, who had special devotion to Holy Family, started it in Mannanam in the nineteenth century. It is being continued even today by Christian families.

On the Palm Sunday, a decorated chair used to be kept in the dining hall for the unseen guest. Unseen guest here refers to Jesus Christ. On Maundy Thursday, there was the practice of giving *appam* and towel for the 12 people, who represented the disciples, whose feet were washed as part of the ceremony.

Connected with any of the functions in the family, there was a system of giving food to twelve children and parish priest, in the house itself. It was a representation of Jesus Christ along with twelve disciples. A food item known as *puzhukku* (a combination of different items cooked together) used to be given during the grand festivals in some old Churches.

Feast of St. Joseph on 19 March had lot of very traditional celebrations. One such is the *ootunercha*(supply of food as an offering).*Ootunercha* was also practiced in connection with the feast of Blessed Virgin Mary. The Church at Kuravilangadu offers rice porridge every first Friday of the month. The Church at Kudamaloor used to offer *thamukku* (made of plantain and rice powder) on Maundy Thursday as an offering.

Main and Side Dishes

Palappam: This soft bread is prepared in rice, coconut and toddy (yeast is also used these days). The name for this dish is derived from *pal* (milk ie the juice from the coconut) and *appam* (bread).[25] One of the Christian beliefs connected with this is the representation of rice used in this preparation as the divine element of Jesus Christ and toddy as the human element.

Other dishes were: *Idiyappam, Kallappam,Vattayappam, Meen Pollichathu, Meen Moilee, Karimeen Varathathu; Meen Vattippattichathu; Onakka Meen Vevichathu, Chemmeen Ularthiyathu*(masala salted fresh prawns), *Panni Ulathiyathu* (Pork masala fried), *Aadu Stew*(mutton stew),*Kozhi Piralan,Kozhi Mappas*(country style chicken stew), *Tharavu Roast*(duck roast), *Kadukumanga*(mango pickle), *Vedi Irachi*(dry game meat), *Chundum Payarum*(lentil and banana flower preparation). *Ulli Varatharacha curry*(shallot curry prepared with fried coconut), *Chakkakuru Manga curry* (Green Mango curry prepared with jackfruit seed),

[23]Xavier Koodapuzha, *Marthoma Nazrani Sabha Vignanakosam*, Kottayam, 1999, p. 55.
[24]Ibid, p. 567.
[25]Thressi John Kottukappally, SalimPushpanath, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

Pazha Manga curry(Curry with ripe mango),*Uppu Manga Chalichathu*(salted mango with shallots, chillies and oil), *Pavakkaularthiyathu, vanpayarularthiyathu, shimachakkaularthiyathu, chakkakuruularthiyathu, ullithoran, cheera thorn, muringakkathoran, vazhakkathoran, idichakkathoran, paripputhoran, cherupayarthoran, vazhakkapurattiyathu, manga pachadi, uppumangapachadi, kaithachakkapachadi, morukachiyathu, kalan, kumbalangamorukari, chakkakuruvummangayum, chenaerisseri, ullitheeyal*and *neychoru.*[26]

1. ***Acharukal*** **(Pickles)**

Kadumanga (mango pickle), *adamanga* (mango pickle), *uppumanga* (pickle), *cherunarangaachar*(small lemon pickle), *vellanarangaachar* (white lemon pickle), *ambazhangaachar*, *ilumbipuliachar*, *veluthulliachar*, *pavakkaachar*, *karinellikkaachar* and *nellikkaachar.*[27]

2. ***Chammanthikal*** **(side dishes prepared in coconut)**

Nellikkachammanthi, unakkamulakuchammanthi, uppumangachammanthi, mangachammanthi, thengachuttachammanthi and thengachammanthipodi.[28]

3. **Snacks**

*Chakkakumbu, Ela Ada, Neyyappam, Thamakku, Kozhukkotta, Pidiyumkozhiyum, Pidiyappam, neyyappam, unniyappam, avalosupodi, avalosunda, ariunda, avalvilayichathu, avalvilayichathu, avalnanachathu, ethakkappam, sarkarapuratti, ethakkahalwa, chakkahalwa, chakkavilayichathu, kumbulappam, achappam, uzhunnada, kuzhalappam, puttu, orotti*etc.[29]

4. ***Payasangal***(**desserts)**

Cherupayarpayasam, adapradhaman, pachoru, paladapradhaman.[30]

Conclusion

Elements of Indian culture, assimilated and adapted, finds its best expressions from the community of Syro-Malabar Catholics through their day to day activities and beliefs. The spontaneous movement had taken different forms of expressions over the centuries with greater creativity and dynamism through their food and celebrations. The inventions of these were not restricted and thus emulated in different ways. The Indo-oriental identity of this individual Church found its better meaning and expression in different celebrative occasions and food varieties.

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[26]Bhava R Luckose, Suriani Pachakam, Kottayam, 2013, pp. 51-68.
[27]Ibid, pp. 71-78.
[28]Ibid, pp. 81-84.
[29]Ibid, pp. 87-106.
[30]Ibid, pp. 109-111

RELIGION OF THE GAROS OF NORTHEAST INDIA AND THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY

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Historiographers, anthropologists, ethnographers and social scientists of postmodernism are still fascinated and mesmerized by the great ethnographic and geographical diversity in Northeast India which is home to a number of enviable tribal groups who belong predominantly to Mongoloid race migrating to this beautiful region at different times from different directions.[1] Moreover, Northeast India is reckoned as one of the twenty-six 'biodiversity hotspots' in the world due to anthropogenic threats.[2] The Linguistic Survey of India 2011 has identified about 420 languages living in the "seven sisters" of Northeast India, and most of them are tribals.[3]

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[1] P.A. Augustine, "Message," *Tribal India's Traditional Wisdom and Indigenous Resource Management*, ed. G,K, Bera & K. Jose, New Delhi: Abhijeet Publications, 2014, v.

As per estimates there are more than 370 million self-identified indigenous groups in some 70 countries of the world and 70% are found in the Asia-Pacific region. India alone has some 461 ethnic groups recognized as 'scheduled tribes'. They are India's indigenous peoples. In the mainland, they are called as 'adivasis'. With an estimated population of 84.3million, they constitute 8.2% of the total population. There are other unrecognized groups of 635. See also V.S. Sahay, "Enigma of Indigenous Population in India," *Tribal India's Traditional Wisdom*, 69, 77; full article: 66-81. *India 2014*, New Delhi: Government of India, 2014, 999. A. Playfair, *The Garos*, Tura: D.J. Publications, 1909, 2011[2rpt], 8. For our consideration in this paper, 'Garo Hills' would mean all the 5 present-day Garo districts of Meghalaya. M.S. Sangma, *History and Culture of the Garos*, New Delhi: Books Today, 1981, 267. Interestingly, scholars find mention of the Garos in the Hindu Scriptures, viz., the vedic-aryans call them *kiratas* (Yajur Veda, Vajasaneyi samhita XXX.16; Atharva Veda X.4.14). Ramayana calls them *mandeha* (Garos call themselves *a'chik mande*) and their habitat *Manda Saila*. Mahabharata refers them as *garudas*.

[2] *Forest Survey of Northeast India 201*1: There are 51 forest types, 60 out of 110 species of bamboos, 25 out of 56 species of canes, etc. The list can be endless. It is an accepted fact that traditional indigenous lands and territories contain some 80% of the planet's biodiversity. Yet, it is obvious that the indigenous peoples are among the world's most vulnerable, marginalized and disadvantaged groups. P. Biswas, "Homelands in the Mountains and Rivers: Re-identification of the idea of 'Northeast India'," *Journal of Northeast Indian Cultures* 1(2014)2, 11-24.

[3] C. Marak (ed.), *Garo Literature: Documented and Translated into English by C. Marak*, New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2002, 2005[rpt], 3. Playfair, *The Garos,* 8, 26, 84-87, 195-202: Appendix B: "Comparative Grammar of the Kachari and Garo language." They are not dialects as some scholars opine, although written script is lacking. They use Roman script. Recently the Central Government of India has made the 'seven sisters' adopt Sikkim as their 8[th] sister.

In the background of Christian and Indian culture, our interest of reflection deals with one of the important matrilineal Mongoloid tribal groups of Meghalaya, namely, the Garos of the Tibeto-Burman family (who call themselves *a'chik mande* = hillmen) who today belong mainly to two adherents of faith: *Songsarek*, the tribal primitive or primal religion, and Christianity (American Baptists 1863, Roman Latin Catholics 1930 and the Adventists1954).[4]

The analysis of *Songsarek* Religion ("pertaining to the world of nature") brings out its religious aspects, beliefs and practices, festivals and ceremonies.[5] It is a belief system in the existence of a benevolent Supreme Being - *Dakgipa Rugipa Stugipa Pantugipa* or *Tatara Rabuga Stura Pantura* – the Creator God. There is also the existence of a multitude of benevolent and malevolent inferior *mites/spirits* together with 'constellation *mites*'.[6] *Mites* are immortal, present everywhere and in everything and some are objects of dread, fear and superstitions and need to be appeased periodically by sacrifices to win their good will. Creation is attributed to some, to others the control of natural phenomena and the destinies of humans from birth to death (rites of passage, marriage, cremation, ancestor worship, priesthood).[7]
Songsareks believe in numerous transmigrations, devoid of concepts, like sin-merit-heaven-hell, but believe in the 'abode of the spirits' after death (a sort of purgatory) where they do penance till their reincarnation. Morality consists in not hurting the feelings and sentiments of others and being regular in his sacrifices to *mites* and sin is against this.[8] Daily life is also regulated by numerous fully binding codes of laws, as: *asimalja* ("absolute donts"), *dakmalja* ("donts" - moral, civil, criminal and penal codes) and *nima* ("not alloweds", daily etiquette laws).[9]

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[4] Playfair, *The Garos*, 8. There are many conjectures regarding the origin of the name 'Garo'. In the southern portion of the district (also in Mymensingh of Bangladesh), there exists a sub-clan called *Gara* or *ganching*. The Europeans and the Bengalis had their first contact with them and called them '*gara*' which gradually corrupted to '*Garo*' applying to the whole tribe. Another theory of migration says that one of the original leaders was '*Garu*' and he called the tribe by his name. Old folksongs speak of the country of their origin as *Garu-a'song* (country of the *Garu*). Something of interest is that traditionally, the Garos used to take an oath/promise by biting the earth and to break an oath/promise was a taboo/a great shame/crime. Therefore, by calling themselves *A'chik* (*a'a* = earth/soil; *chika* = bite), they claim to be ever faithful to their oath/promise. See also S. R. Marak, *Liberation in the Garo Religious Tradition*, New Delhi: Lakshi Publishers, 2013, 1 [henceforth *Liberation*].

[5] S.R. Marak, *Liberation*, 8. *Song* = village/nature, *sarek* = worship, sacrifice. Some contend that it derives from Bengali = 'worldly', 'domestic'. Christians criticized it as non-spiritual, worldly and of an inferior kind. Myths, legends, folklore, etc, had been handed down by oral traditions (*katta agana*).

[6] *Dakgipa* being benevolent does not need propitiatory sacrifices. Interestingly, T. Sinha in his book, *The Psyche of the Garos* (p.48), collected as many as 230 names of Garo *mites* but still says that the list is not an exhaustive one, as cited by M.S. Sangma, *History and Culture of the Garos*, New Delhi: Books Today, 1981, 227, 220. This has led many scholars and researchers (Garos, Non-Garos) to wrongly appellate the tribe as 'animists, backward race, ignorant, uneducated, uncivilized, inferior, etc'. Playfair, *The Garos*, 80. S.R. Marak, *Liberation*, 6. *Mite* is an inclusive term meaning gods, goddesses, lesser spirits and imps.

[7] Appeasement sacrifices (of fowls, cow, pig, egg) are performed by the priest, *kamal*, at various socio-religious festivals. Bamboo-altars are erected. Blood is always smeared on the altar. *Wangala* harvest festival, usually celebrated in October/November, is the biggest to worship, honour and thank *Saljong* (sun-god), who provides humankind with Nature's bounties and ensures their prosperity. S.R. Marak, "Nature and Culture: The Garo Perspective," *Rationality and Tribal Thought*, ed. S. Miri, New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2004, 145-154.

[8] Playfair, *The Garos*, 88. M.S. Sangma, *History and Culture*, 226, 228.

[9] G. Costa, "The Garo Code of Law," *Anthropos* 49 (1954) 1041-1066. The oral traditional laws have been collected and published as 'Garo Customary Laws' by various authors. The mites will punish anyone who does not observe such laws. *Asimalja* is i) failure to observe the days of general purification/ceremonies which regulate such functions, ii) marriages within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity, iii) marriages within the forbidden degree of affinity, iv) cutting down the jungle/grove being the haunt of the mites, v) cutting and using wood, bamboo from the

Moreover, every *Songsarek* is bound by religious customary laws: i) to observe the days of public sacrifices, ii) *Saana Kritani*, the practice of charity towards those in misfortune by contributions, being present at sacrifices and offer help to drive away any other misfortune, iii) *Mangona*, ceremonies performed for the benefit of a departed soul requiring the presence of every member.[10]

Songsarek Religion in actual practice has variants regarding some details in some clans and sub-clans, otherwise it represents the most popular religious beliefs and observances. Postmodernism has brought about many changes today: the British rule, spread of Christianity with its English education, and the new agricultural techniques, especially of wet-rice cultivation.[11] In a way, two parallel Garo societies are in vogue today, viz., the *Songsareks* and the Christians. Some pertinent questions can be asked: How far are the Garo Christians/Catholics inculturated as 'Garo Tribal Christians" especially in the context of new evangelization, postmodernism and globalization? Has Christianity seeped into their blood or just remained on the skin level?

Hence, a critique sums up the reflection in the following lines:

i. *Songsarek* Religion's Neutrality at the Advent of Christianity: The core traditions (*dakbewal*) basically remain unchanged, viz., Kin-system (clan, inheritance, matriliny), customary laws, eco/geo-spirituality, cosmology with its magico-religious rites, primal worldview heritage, etc.[12]

ii. *Songsarek* Religion's Fears about Christianity: 'Christianization/Christian character' meant 'westernization' undermining its ethnic roots of holistic vision, fragmented denominationalism (Baptists/Catholics/Adventists), ideology of development creating a 'Garo elite' of consumerism, desacralization of nature, patriliny leanings, song-music-festivals as evil, threat to polygamy, rise of insurgency,[13] changes in physical and spiritual life, facing a multi-faceted alienation of individual-social-cosmic, etc.and,

iii. *Songsarek* Religion's Positive Outlook towards Christianity:[14] In a span of 151 years (from 1863), Christianity has emerged as a major religion by giving a written language

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kosi – designated place from where such things can be procured only on fixed days, vi) desecration of *kosi*-stones, vii) trivial usage of the consecrated objects of the *nokma*, viii) perjury on the head of one's son, and ix) eating of 'first-fruits' without first offering to *mites*. *Dakmalja* consists of moral and religious laws, civil, criminal and penal laws, marriage laws (engagement, forms), and inheritance laws (landed property, movable goods, classification of property, men/women possession rights, loss of possession rights).

[10] M.S. Sangma, *History and Culture*, 186.

[11] *Songsarek* age-old traditional agricultural method is *a'sua* (*a'a* = ground, *sua* = burn), 'slash and burn', jhum/shifting cultivation. D.N. Majumdar, *A Study of Culture Change in Two Garo Villages of Meghalaya*, Gauhati: Gauhati University, 1980, 148, brings out the negative bearings of jhum cultivation on the economy of the people.

[12] C.R.Agera, "The Spoken and the Written: Tribal Religions liberate the Scriptures," *Rationality and Tribal Thought*, 195-202.

[13] State Government Home Ministry alleges about 21 such insurgent groups that are operational today. M.C. Behera (ed.), *Tribal Religion: Change and Continuity*, New Delhi: Commonwealth, 2000. The relevant articles therein are: S. Manish, S. Sharma & J. Sarma, "Tribal Religion: Change and Continuity," 93-101. B.S. Behera, "The Myriad World of Religion of the Tribals of Northeast India," 196-212. N. Das, "Tribal Religion in Northeast India – Changing Syndrome," 213-220. A. Mukherjee, "Worldview about the tribal Vs Tribal Worldview: Some Moral Issues," *Rationality and Tribal Thought*, 111-120.

[14] F.S. Downs, *Christianity in Northeast India*, Delhi: ISPCK, 1983, 3, 280, 165. Other notable works which view favourably the impact of Christianity on the *Songsarek* Religion are: F.S. Downs, *Essays on Christianity in Northeast India*, eds. M.S. Sangma & D.R. Syiemlieh, New Delhi: Indus Publishing, 1994. H.K. Barpujari, *The American Missionaries and Northeast India (1836-1900 AD)*, Guwahati: Spectrum Publications, 1986. A. Chase-

and instilling a new cultural identity and solidarity of tribalism and universalism (political, social, economic, culture, religious),[15] English education, holistic worldview, new nationalism for Garoland, deconstruction of myths-legends-folklore, women empowerment, realignment of tribal value system, decline of jhum-cultivation, etc.

Conclusion

The ancient *a'chik mandes*' splendid isolation was broken by the Hindu zamindars and the Mughals. The British Rule with its Christianity and education brought some relief to the *Songsareks*. In the wake of postmodernism and globalization, instead of reverting to 'pre-scientific consciousness', one needs to go with the signs of the times and recover the symbiotic relationship with nature, God and other humans.[16] This will lay the foundation to a 'tribal spirituality' (in line with the biblical foundations): eco-logical, eco-spiritual, eco-sophical and eco-theological. This will be a tribal spiritual paradigm wherein one does not study nature but breathes it, one does not look for God in it but experiences it, one does not make logical or theoretical complications of sacred-profane-religion-culture-mundane-terrestrial-spirit-matter because everything is sacred. This sacrality of nature will create a Garo liberative culture in their own eco-spiritual environment. The present world is in crisis due to ecological imbalance resulting in global warming. Last but not the least, 'outsiders' have no right whatsoever to engulf the cultures and languages of the Garos. Everyone has a 'right to existence,' a right to preserve his culture and one should never judge other cultures by one's own standards.[17] We can however facilitate them to adapt to postmodern context. It should not be the policy of others or the government to keep them 'backward'. They also have the right of benefits of the postmodern developments.

Roy, *American Baptist Women Missionaries in Northeast India (1836-1950)*, Guwahati: Christian Literature Centre, 2011. C. Becker, *The Catholic Church in Northeast India 1890-1915*, revised edn by S. Karotemprel, Shillong: Becker Institute, 2007. M.S. Sangma, *History of American Baptist Mission in Northeast India*, Vol.1, New Delhi: Mittal Publishers, 1987. M.S. Sangma, *History of American Baptist Mission in Northeast India*, vol.2, New Delhi: Mittal Publishers, 1992.

[15] *Census India 2011*: "Literacy rates 2011": Meghalaya, persons 75.48, male 77.07, females 73.78. B.L. Mawrie, *Tribal-Christian Spirituality: A Quest for Identity*, Shillong: VIP, 2011.

[16] S.R. Marak, *Liberation*, 6. M.S. Sangma, *History and Culture*, 263-266. R. Burling, *Rengsanggri: Family and Kinship in a Garo Village*, Tura Book Room, 1963, 1997[2], 312-322. D.N. Majumdar, *The Garos: An Account of the Garos of the Present Day*, Guwahati: Lawyer's Book Stall, 1956, 22. S.A.B. Sangma, *Rites of Passage in the Garo Oral Literature*, New Delhi: Akansha Publishing House, 2012, 198. M.S. Sangma, "Impact of Christianity on the Garos," *Impact of Christianity on Northeast India*, ed. J. Puthenpurakal, Shillong: VIP, 1996, 242-247.

[17] UNO on 13 Sept 2007 made the 'declaration of the rights of the indigenous people' thus: 'Indigenous peoples have rich and ancient cultures and view their social, economic, environmental and spiritual systems as interdependent. They make valuable contributions to the world's heritage thanks to their traditional knowledge and their understanding of ecosystem management.'

EVOLUTION OF EPIPHANY AND CHRISTMAS TOGETHER WITH CERTAIN MALABAR CUSTOMS

Rev. Prof. Dr. John Moolan

Introduction

The evolution of the feast of Epiphany as the baptism of Christ and of Christmas as the nativity of Jesus is a complicated matter, since these feasts had a unified entity in the beginning stage and later a separate entity as we have today. The calculation of the date of Epiphany on January 6 and of Christmas on December 25 started with the 2/3rd century AD, whereas the celebrations took place later in 4/5th centuries.

1. Epiphany-Christmas

Since there is no documental evidence for the birth-date of Jesus, in the beginning stage, the feast of *Denha* (Epiphany) on January 6 was also the feast of the Nativity, because the birth of Christ was considered also as the manifestation of God among men. Thus, until the 4/5 centuries, baptism (Epiphany) and Nativity (Christmas) of Jesus were celebrated together on January 6 until when the Nativity was shifted to December 25.

a. Origins

The origin of this feast is considered to be in the fourth century, somewhere in between 311 and 325. The year 311 was the beginning of Donatist schism. Donastists retained all the ancient traditions and was unwilling to make any change in their traditional practices. Since Augustine says that they never observed this feast, it probably did not exist in the West at least before this schism.

The year 325 was the beginning of Aryanism. Since the Arians, who separated at the Council of Nicea in 325, seem to have known this feast, it must have existed before Nicea. Gregory of Nazianzus relates the observance of this feast by the heretical Arian Emperor Valens in 372.

(1) Evidences

The following evidences show that even at the height of Montanist, Marcionite, and Basalidian heretical controversies, we see orthodox writers like Clement of Alexandria, Ephrem, and Epiphanius who assigned the birth of Jesus to January 6, the day of His manifestation at Jordan baptism. Since each group followed its own way of calculation, a mutual borrowing of this feast is not credible. The conclusion is that the Christian dating of the birth of Christ on January 6 antedates these schisms and thus goes back to the beginning of the second century.

a. Montanists

The 2nd century Montanism by Montanus in Phrygia considered Holy Spirit as their direct guidance and wanted to restore the Church to its primitive simplicity. Montanists celebrated the baptism of Jesus on January 6, the manifestation day of the god Dionysius born as the Aeon from a virgin called Kore.

b. Marcionists

Marcionism, a Gnostic sect of the 2nd century, founded by Marcion (d.160) in Sinope, considered Old Testament unconvincing and unattractive, regarding Jesus as Messiah foretold by the Prophets.According to Tertullian the Marcionites, being adoptionists like the Basilidians, might have chosen January 6 as the day of baptism or of the birth of Christ.

c. Basilidians

This 2nd century Alexandrian heretical sect founded by Basilides taught that Jesus is the natural son of God and the divinity was induced to him at His Jordan baptism. They celebrated the baptism of Christ on January 6.

d. Clement of Alexandria

The early catholic 3rd century evidence with regard to the anniversary of the birth of Christ on January 6, 2 BC is found in Clement of Alexandria (d. ca. 215).

e. Ephrem

For Ephrem (+373), Mary's conception was on April 10, and Jesus' birth was on January 6. He does not give any indication for his calculation of this date. Therefore, the conclusion is that the Christian calculation of the birth of Christ on January 6 goes back to the beginning of the second century.

f. Epiphanius of Salamis

Epiphanius in Cyprus at the end of the 4th century linked the dates of Mary's conception and Jesus' death. For him the conception of Mary took place on April 6 (the death of Jesus), which is exactly nine months before January 6, the birth of Christ.

(2) Malabar Customs

Rakuli Thirunal (Ritual bath at night) or *Pindikuthi Tirunal* (Ritual lamp lighting at night) are the two Malabar Christian customs on the eve of January 5 in preparation for the baptism of Jesus on January 6. In the southern part of Kerala, the practice of *Rakuli* (A ritual bath in river or pool on the eve of this feast) commemorates the baptism of Jesus in Jordan River. In the middle part of Kerala, the practice of *Pindithelikal* (Lighting of torches attached to the plantain tree) commemorates the manifestation the Lord, in His baptism, as the Light of the world. For this ceremony on the eve of *Denha* they put up a mature plantain tree in front of their houses and attach lighted torches to them. The children dance around the lighted plantain tree singing *El payya* (God is magnificent) proclaiming the manifestation of God as the great light shown to the humanity (Is 9:1 = Lk 1:79).

2. Christmas

Later transference of birth of Christ from January 6 to December 25 took place because of its fourth century separate celebration in Rome to safe guard faith against sun-god worship, and of another system of biblical calculation by Agustin, Chrysostom, and Cosmas Indicopleustes in the fifth century.

a. Date of Christmas on December 25

Since the birth date of Jesus is documented nowhere, the attempt to calculate it started to take place very early in the Church, perhaps during the second or third century, though the celebration of it took place later.

(1) Patristic Tradition

The Gospel does not give any specific information for the date of birth of Christ. However, the date of death is specific in Gospel. For John, Jesus died on the Cross when the Passover lambs were being sacrificed on Nissan 14 (Jn 13:1), just before the Jewish holiday began at sundown. Whereas, for the Synoptic, He died on Nissan 15, because the Last Supper was held after sundown on the beginning of the 15th, and Jesus was crucified the next morning, still the 15th (Mt 26:17; Mk 14:12; Lk 22:7).

From this relatively fixed point, one can arrive at the approximate birthday of Christ, because the ancients assumed Jesus' earthly circle to form a perfect cycle, and so His death took place on the anniversary of His conception, which was later recognized as the Feast of the Annunciation, the commemoration of Mary's conception of Jesus. Thus, we get Jesus' birthday by adding the normal nine-month period of gestation to the date of Nissan.

Accordingly, for Tertullian (160–225) of Carthage, Christ died "in the month of March, at the time of the Passover, on the eighth day before the calends of April (March 25), the first day of the unleavened bread, on Which they slew the lamb at even, just as Moses did." Hippolytus of Rome (170-235) was the first person to assign Christ's birth to December 25, a Wednesday. Augustine (354-430) too believed that Jesus was conceived on the 25th of March, the day of His death, symbolising the womb of the Virgin (Mary) to the new grave in which he was buried, but was born, according to tradition, upon December 25.

(2) Roman Practice

The Roman emperor Aurelian in 274 ordered to celebrate the birthday of the unconquered sun god (*Natalis* solis invicti) on December 25, the longest day of the year when the sun reaches the farthest south of equator at the winter solstice. His aim of this celebration was to unite and strengthen his vast empire. Thus during the reign of Aurelian (+275) the worship of sun god became the highest official sun-cult of the empire. He dedicated a temple to sun-god on December 25, 274 and declared "sol" (sun) the single official divine protector of the empire and the emperor. He identified himself as the personification of the god "sol" and became the first emperor to declare himself as god, "*roi soleil.*"

Since it was a national feast, Christians also took part in all the solemnities and revelries connected with it. This affected the Christian faith. Therefore, considering Christ as the Sun of justice (Mal 4:2;3:20), the true Light that enlightens every one (Jn 1:9), creator of light (Gen 1:3), and the light of the world (Jn 8:12), the early Church formalised *Natalis Christi* on December 25 in 350 AD by Pope Julius I, to immunise Christians against the pagan worship of sun-god.

The Pope Liberius (352-366) in his calendar of the lists of death anniversaries of Roman bishops (depositio episcoporum) and Roman martyrs (depositio martyrum) prepared in 336, gives December 25 as the feast day of Nativity. Thus in the West, Rome became the earliest documented evidence for Christmas celebration on December 25. Though the pagan festivities might have paved the way for the selection of this day for Christmas, it was not a sudden

happening, since we see the earlier ascribing of it to December 25 by Hippolytus as mentioned above.

(3) Biblical Calculation

The biblical system of calculation by Chrysostom (+407) and Agustine (+431) in the fifth century fixed the date of Christmas on December 25. In the sixth century Cosmas Indicopleustes, the Church historian, confirmed this date as the day of Christmas in the whole Christendom. They based their calculation mainly on the two Gospel data such as Lk 1:36 (the Elizabeth in her sixth month) and Lk 1:39 (Zachary's entry to the temple to burn incenses). The entry of Zachary to the temple is considered as on the tenth of the seventh month of the Jewish year (Lev 16:29-34), a reckoning from Nissan. The tenth of the seventh month (October) + another two, three, or seven days until Zachary reach home + six months = the beginning of the month of Nissan (March 25), Mary's conception day + nine months, the period of gestation = December 25, Jesus' birth.

(4) Establishment

In the East, the feast of Nativity on December 25 started to spread from the end of the 4th century onwards. The Antiochians began to celebrate this feast before 386. The Chaldeans started to celebrate Nativity on December 25 probably from fifth century onwards. Among the Byzantines, this feast might have been originated in between 379-381. In the Alexandrian Church the first celebration of the Nativity on December 25 seemed to be taken place most probably in 432. The Armenian Church introduced the Feast of the Nativity on December 25 in their liturgical calendar in the middle of the 14th century.

In Jerusalem, the birthplace of Jesus, the feast of Nativity on December 25 found its access twice. The first access was only for a temporary period in the 5th century during the episcopate of Juvenal (424-458). The final and permanent adoption of this feast in Jerusalem took place during the 6th century by the decree of the emperor Justin II (565-578). In this regard, Antonius of Plaisance (+ca.570) gives witness to the feast of Nativity on December 25 and Epiphany on January 6 in Jerusalem.

b. Malabar Custom

Among the Mar Thoma Christians, at the beginning of Christmas day (December 25) during *Ramsha* (evening prayer) after the *Onita d'batar* (The hymn after), a special ceremony of fire (*thiyuzhalicha*) proclaiming Christ as the light of the world is found celebrated according to tradition. All go in procession with candle to the portico of the church where a bonfire of dry wood is prepared in triangular form with three oil lamps set on its three corners symbolizing the revelation of the Holy Trinity through the Son. Then the priest facing the church sings in a loud voice, "Glory to God in the highest" at each corner of the firewood lighting each oil lamp there, and the faithful respond each time, "And on earth peace and tranquillity and good hope to men".

At the end of thrice-angelic hymn and the lighting of lamps, all pray-together "Our Father" followed by the *slota d'basalique* (Prayer of the royal hymn) requesting God's mercy for the acceptance of prayers. After the prayer the priest casts incense into the fire. Imitating the priest, all the present cast into the fire the incense kept with them and walk thrice around the fire singing the *Onita d'basalique* (Royal hymn), and then making procession around the church all enter the church for the concluding part of *Ramsha*.

From 2009 onwards, the Syro-Malabar Church of East Syrian tradition has shifted this ceremony of fire to the beginning of the midnight Christmas Eucharistic celebration.

Conclusion

Two separate issues must be distinguished here as that of the calculation of the date of this Epiphany-Christmas feast and the institution or celebration of it later. It is one thing to believe that Christ was manifested and born on that day, and another thing to celebrate them together on January 6. Even though the calculation of the date is found in the second or third century, we have no evidence for the celebration of the feast of Epiphany up to the third century.

Later transference of Christmas to December 25 took place due to the fourth century Roman practice and the fifth century biblical calculation.

"ART AND ARCHITECTURE" BY PROF. GEORGE MENACHERY

George Menacherry

[**Prof. George Menachery**, well known historian, was one of the very first to study many aspects of the history of Kerala and its peoples through his forays into the fields of Archaeology, Anthropology, Place Name Studies, Numismatics, and Epigraphy. As vice-president and secretary general of CHAI; as vice-chairman Institute of Asian Studies (Chennai); member Archaeology Advisory Board, Kerala Government; member Senate and Statutory Finance Committee, and governing body Christian Chair, Calicut University; executive member and chief editor Kerala Sahitya Academy; Vice President Newman Association of India, president Kalasadan,; Exec. Committee member Census of India Publications (Kerala); Visiting Professor Sacred Art Pontifical Institute, Alwaye (1984-2014); office-bearer Kerala History Association, Kerala History Congress, Founder Director Leadership Training Institute (from 1967), founder president Kerala historical research society, vice-chairman Sahridaya Vedi, editor Christian Orient, Dukhrana, Journal of St. Thomas Christians he was able to bring to the field of historical research a new enthusiasm. The St. Thomas Christian Encyclopaedia (ed.)(1973, 1982, 2009) and the Indian Church History Classics (ed.)(1998) are best known works.]

1.0 Two statements in the "objectives" part of this seminar have guided the selection of data presented in this paper: One, Inculturation has been taking place in the Church in India integrating elements of the local cultures, although within the basic framework of the particular rite concerned. And Two, to study how the rites relate to the experience and cultures of non-Christian Indians. While there are enlightening examples of these aspects to be met with in different Christian communities in India, say those of Goa, of Tamil Nadu, or those of the Seven Sisters, here, for paucity of time and space, we examine examples from Kerala only, and that too only from the so-called Syrian Churches, which have a long history in the sub-continent. And there again only their art and architecture are scrutinised, excluding many other fields which are equally illustrative of the inculturating trends in the Church.

2.00 Let us think of architecture first.

2.01 Vasco da Gama and his companions, as we have all heard, after they first set foot on the soil of Kerala and India during their journey from Kappad to the Zamorin's seat at Calicut (Kozhikode) and on their arrival at Calicut mistook a Hindu temple for a Christian church, because such was the similarity between the art and architecture of churches and temples here in the fifteenth century. I must share an eye-witness account with you:

"They took us to a large church and this is what we saw: The body of the ***church is as large as a monastery***, all *built ofhewn stone* [Laterite] and ***covered with tile*** [*Kurodu*. Company tiles become available only after 1865 with the Basel Mission initiative]. At the main entrance rises ***a pillar as high as a mast***, [Garuda- dwaja, flagstaff, ***dwajasthamba*** as seen in front of old churches at Kudamaloor, Chambakkulam, Edathua, Alapuzha, Pulinkunnu, Changanassery – and now popularised by the Encyclopaedia in many churches] on the top of which was perched a bird, apparently a cock [actually an Eagle, Garuda]. In addition to this there was ***another pillar as high as a man, and very stout*** [*Balikkallu*, sacrificial altar stone – like the pedestal of rock crosses supporting the "Sacrifice Maximus" e.g. at Niranam, Chengannur, Changanassery, Angamaly (all three churches), Malayattoor, Kothamangalam,

&c. and now popularised by the Encyclopaedia]. In the center of the body of the church, rose a chapel, all built of stone [may be granite], with a bronze door sufficiently wide for a man to pass, and stone steps leading up to it [*Sopanam*]. Within this sanctuary stood a small image which they said represented Our Lady [Bhagavathy in fact]. Along the walls, by the main entrance, hung several small bells. In this church the captain-major said his prayers, and we with him. We did not go within the chapel, for it is the custom that only certain servants of the church, called *quafees* should enter. The quafees wore some threads [*Poonool*] passing over the left shoulder and under the right arm, in the same manner as our deacons wear the stole. They threw holy water over us, and gave us some earth, [sandal paste?] which the Christians of this country are in the habit of putting on their foreheads, breasts, around the neck and on the forearms. They threw holy water upon the captain-major and gave him some earth which he gave in charge of someone, giving them to understand that he would put it on later. Many other ***saints were painted on the walls*** of the church [murals], wearing crowns. They were painted variously, with teeth protruding an inch from the mouth and four or five arms. Below the church ***there was a large masonry tank*** [as at Mattom church &c.] similar to many others which we had seen along the road." *(Ravenstein (1898), 1998 53 – 54).*

The above is a quite authentic and detailed eye-witness account of some of the architectural and artistic features of Kerala temples of the year 1498. What is to the point is, even had Gama and companions visited some Kerala churches of the time they could have still mistaken the temple for a Church because many of the features of the temple he would have come across in the churches also. Joseph the Indian's description of Kerala churches and the occasional descriptions of churches in the Jornada may be referred to. By the way in 1599 there were already more than 100 structural churches in Kerala as shown by the documents of the Synod of Diamper (Udayanperoor) and the narrative of the visits made by Archbishop Alexio de Menezes before and after the Synod.

[Here is one such list]

Church locations	**Year of Foundation**
Saint Thomas the Apostle builds churches or communities (Palayoor, Kodungaloor, Parur, Kokamangalam, Niranam, Nilackal, Kollam)	c. 52-72 AD
Martyrdom ofÂ Saint Thomas the Apostle at Mylapore, India	July 3rd. 72 Â AD
Kuravilangadu Â Church founded	c. 105 AD
Pallipuram Church founded	c. 290 AD
Ambazhakad Church founded	c. 300 AD
Aruvithara Church founded	c. 301 AD
North PudukadÂ Church founded	c. 400 AD
Puthenchira Church founded	c. 400 AD
Chambakulam Church founded	c. 427 AD
Akaparambu Church founded	450 AD
Angamali Church founded	450 AD
Mattam Church founded	c. 480 AD

Muttuchira Church founded	c. 510 AD
Kaduthuruthy Church founded	c. 510 AD
Enammavu Church founded	c. 510 AD
Udayamperoor Church founded	c. 510 AD
Edapally Church founded	c. 593 AD
Chalakudy Church founded	c. 600 AD
Mylakombu Church founded	c. 600 AD
Kolenchery Church founded	c. 650 AD
Moozhikulam Church founded	c. 650 AD
Kayamkulam Church founded	c. 824 AD
Kothanalloor Church founded	c.826 Â AD
Athirampuzha Church founded	c.835 AD
Kottayam Church founded	890 AD
Nagapuzha Church founded	900 AD
Manjapra Church founded	943 AD
Mavelikara Church founded	943 AD
Kadamattom Church founded	950 AD
Pazhuvil Church founded	960 AD
Arakuzha Church founded	999 AD
Nediasala Church founded	999 AD
Kottekad Church founded	999 AD
Kunnamkulam Church founded	999 AD
Kadaplamattom Church founded	10th century
Kanjur Church founded	1001 AD
Kaduthuruthy Cheriapally founded	c. 1001 AD
Pala Church founded	1002 AD
Muttam Church founded	1023 AD
Cherpunkal Church founded	1111 AD
Vadakara Church founded	1096 AD
Bharananganam Church founded	1100 AD
Changanacherry Church founded	1117 AD
Thripunithara Church founded	1175 AD

Cheppadu Church founded	c. 1175 AD
Chengannoor Church founded	c. 1175 AD
Kudamaloor Church founded	c. 1175 AD
Ernakulam Church founded	c. 1175 AD
Mulanthuruthy Church founded	1225 AD
Kothamangalam Valiapally founded	1240 AD
Karthikapally Church founded	c. 1240 AD
Kuruppumpady Church founded	c. 1240 AD
Alengad Church founded	1300 AD
Muthalakodam Church founded	1312 AD
Njarackal Church founded	1341 AD
Koratty Church founded	1381 AD
Poonjar Church founded	c. 1381 AD
Alleppey Church founded	1400 AD
Kanjirappilly Church founded	1450 AD
Ramapuram Church founded	1450 AD
Kothamangalam Cheriapally founded	1455 AD
Kudavechur Church founded	1463 AD
Elanji Church founded	1522 AD
Poonjar Church founded	1542 AD

1.02 The witness for example specifically says: **One,** The body of the church is as large as a monastery,**Two** all built of hewn stone and **Three,** covered with tile. **Four,** At the main entrance rises a pillar as high as a mast, on the top of which was perched a bird. **Five**, In addition to this there was another pillar as high as a man, and very stout. The similarities between churches and temples forced the Portuguese to introduce the facades in churches to give them a "Christian" appearance and to distinguish them from temples.

1.03 Together with this let us look at the **chief cultural symbols of the Pooram festivals of Kerala**, f.i. the Thrissur Pooram which by the way is only 200 odd yrs. old): The following are the most talked about features of thePooram Festival:

- 1. The Majestic Caparisoned **Elephants**
- 2. The Colourful Umbrellas – ***Kudamaattam*** **with**

Aalavattom **and** ***Venchamara***

- ***3. Kodiyettu***
- ***4.*** **Procession or** ***Pradahakshinam***
- ***5. Melams*** **and** ***Vadhyams***

- **6. Fireworks - *Vedikkettu***

We can find that ***all*** these features of the great Pooram festivals are also characteristic of many Nazraney church festivals of Kerala.

2.01 Antiquity of Non - Christian Devalayas in Kerala:

Let us examine the age of structural places of worship - be they temples, *ambalams*, *pallies*, or even masonry *kavus* - constructed in Kerala and their models, sizes, materials used, and style of Architecture. Structural temples had been in existence at least by the eighth century CE . Of the twentynine pictures of temples given under architecture in the *Arts and Crafts of Travancore some* half a dozen are attributed to the first millennium all post-eighth-century. Of the dozens of sculptures shown in C. Sivaramamurti, *Royal Conquests and Cultural Mirgrations in South India and the Deccan*, Calcutta, 1955 none is from before 6th Century in the whole of South India, and hardly any appears from Kerala. The available inscriptions from the temples of Kerala – or the Jaina and Budhist relics - also indicate the earliest date for structural or even rock-cut temples to be ca.7th Century. Apart from architecture and sculpture all other plastic art forms like painting in Kerala temples must have originated at a later date.

2.02 Antiquity of Christian Devalayas i.e. Churches or *Pallies* in Kerala

There is at one end the tradition that seven royal churches established by Apostle St. Thomas in Kerala at (from north to south) Palayur, Kodungallur, Parur, K(G)okkamangalam, Chayal, Niranam, and Quilon. At the other end we definitely know about the wooden church that Fr. Fenecio s.j. demolished at Palayur at the very beginning of the 17t century. More than hundred churches sent their representatives to the "Synod of Diamper" in 1599. Before this date we have the letters of the four bishops (1504) and the narrative of Joseph the Indian (ca.1500) for the existence of churches and for the renewed efforts in church building in Kerala. In the middle at the commencement of the ME we have the Tarisappalli Plates of 849 A.D. which speaks of the granting of 72 royal privileges to the *Pally* and *Palliars* and refers to a previous grant of 825 A.D. It is interesting to note how these plates (now preserved at Devalokam, Kottayam and at the Pulatheen, Thiruvalla) show how the Kingdom, the Christians, the Jews, and the Arabs were together responsible for the upkeep and preservation of the rights and privileges of the church. There is also the Thazekkattu *Sasanam* (rock edict). All this would indicate that there were structural churches certainly at least by the end of the 8t century, esp. because many of the objects made available in the 849 grant were essential only for a structural edifice. Christians might have started assembling for prayers and an agape even in the first centuries in the palaces or mansions of the princes and members of the aristocracy who had taken an interest in Christian teachings if they had not been already "converted" outright. Thomas himself was an architect (who it is said was brought by the representative of King Gondaphares to design and build a palace in earthquake torn Gandhara, and the early Christians who had close contacts with Egypt, Jerusalem, and Roman and Persian cities could have started building structural churches even in the first centuries CE. The first known structural church at Duro-Europos and in the jail compound near Jerusalem (as reported in 2005) would have been perhaps well-known to early Kerala Christians. The investigation of mother churches also takes us to early churches: The Ollur church (1718) considers the Pazhuvil church of the 10t century as its mother church , both the people of Ollur and Pazhuvil consider the Enammavu church (500) as their mother church, which church in its turn admits its *kurisupally* at North Pudukkad to be 100 years older, which church in turn accepts Palayur as its mother church (see the article in Mathrubhoomi Weekly, March, 1978 by this writer entitled "*Pallikalile Kala*"). In the same way every church in Kerala traces its origin to one of the seven churches of St. Thomas. In every

revenue district in Kerala between River *Bharatappuzha* or *Nila* and River *Pampa* there is at least one church claiming its origin to almost every century from the commencement of the Christian Era (see Menachery, Kerala History Assn. Seminar Paper,1983).

All the 32 Brahmin *Gramams* have in them or near them an ancient Christian church (see the list of Brahmin *Gramams f.i.* in Veluthat Kesavan, fully quoted in *Glimpses...*(2005). We find the gabled Kerala style of the earliest *puras* and *kooras* continuing in Kerala church architecture until the 20th century without any break. In domestic and civil architecture the common Kerala style of construction of house including *Naalukettu* and *Ettukettu* houses are frequently found among Christians also (though mostly being demolished of late).

2.03 Architecture of Churches

Ever since 1969 when this writer became interested in the history and culture of Christianity in India, church architecture, sculpture, woodwork, metalwork &c. have fascinated him, and prompted him to take literally tens of thousands of related photographs and publish a few thousands of them in the Thomas Encyclopaedia(Vol.I, 1982; II,1973; III. 2009), ICHC I, 1998 and other works. The Encyclopaedia has two definitive articles by Dr. James Menachery and Andrews Athappilly c.m.i. on Kerala Christian architecture in addition to innumerable illustrations and their (often) long descriptive captions by the present writer.. This writer's *Pallikkalakalum Mattum, 1984* contains a number of articles on the topic including a long article published by the *Mathrubhoomi Aazhchappathippu* in early 1978 with forty illustrations. The Trichur Diocesan Centenary volume ca.1987 and other souvenirs and booklets contain related articles and hundreds of photographs.

2.04 But almost all the churches and other buildings existing today, except a few ruins, must have been constructed within the last five or six hundred years, i.e. in and after the 15th C. That cannot be taken to construe that the Nazraney churches are Portuguese built or are Portuguese inspired. Even today when the episcopal authority is much stronger than in the pre-Diamper days it is the Palli Yogam that decides what portion of the church should stand and what must be demolished. Hence, in spite of what little western influence there was on most of the day to day affairs of the parish and church, church architecture had continued to follow until say 1950 the time honoured patterns of Kerala. As far as architecture is concerned the chief Portuguese contribution has been the facade, introduced by the Portuguese to dilute the "un-christian" appearance of the churches on account of their similarity with "Hindu" temple architecture (Remember Gama's fate). This was achieved by them by merely extending upwards the thick, strong wall separating the Nave (*Hykala*) from the Portico (*Nadasaala* or *Mukhamandapam*). By and large most other aspects of church architecture were left intact by them. Inside the church building however many things did change. In the case of the temples also we notice that even when a temple is rennovated or even reconstructed the age old prescriptions which have come down to us through the *Thanthrasamuchayam* or *Kuzhikkattu Pacha* or *Vishnudharmottara* or such other works are generally adhered to.

2.05 The church at Kallooppara may be taken to exemplify the dominant features of Kerala Church Architecture from around the turn of the first millennium, though it does have a facade. (Plate facing page 88, STCEI, II, 1973; a doublespread colour plate is given in IC HC, Vol. I, "*The Nazranies*". "Malabar churches did not have facades before the arrival of the Portuguese. Due to Portuguese compulsion even old churches often were forced to erect facades. According to Col.Yule all churches were perverted in the 17th century and since, by a coarse imitation of a style of architecture (he considered) bad enough in its genuine form." (George Menachery, caption on plate facing p.200, STCEI, II, 1973).

The old church at Parur shown by Yule/Cordier (given at the top right hand corner of the back inner page of STCEI, II, 1973) with a single hall and a small belfry/cancel may be the

prototype of the first millennium churches of Kerala. The picture of the old Karingachira church, also from Yule/Cordier with its triple (three-tier) roofing, outward projecting rafters supporting the roof, and the portico might represent the transition from the first millennium to the second. The fact that there were many churches in the east and the west by the middle of the first millennium and the fact that Kerala Christians had close contacts as traders with Egypt, Persia &c. could have inspired them to build structural churches even before other communities started in Kerala to build structural houses of worship. This tendency is noticed also in the case of rock sculptures, such as the Persian Crosses.

3.00 Sculpture in Churches

3.01 Granite Sculpture in Churches

A very detailed study of t he granite objects in churches has been made by this writer in his *Glimpses of Nazraney Heritage*, Essay Four, and most of the writer's thoughts have been represented there in detail, it is not perhaps necessary to go into all that again, especially because that paper *mutatis mutandis* had been presented once in this very hall, and secondly because already a good deal of the allotted time has expired.

3.02 Rock art in churches is mainly represented by the Nazraney *Sthambam* or rock obelisk cross, the rock *Deepa Sthambam*, or lamp-stand, rock pedestal of the copper-sheathed *Dwaja Sthambam* or *Kodimaram* / flagstaff, which are all found in front of the typical early Nazraney churches. There is also the exquisitely carved baptismal font or *Mammodisakkallu* in the baptistery, often situated at the west end of the nave, immediately after the portico or *Mukhamandapam*, beyond the main door called in Malayalam *Aanavathil*, which last often with granite doorposts and architraves. (However of late, especially in the west-Syriac tradition of Kerala, the baptismal fonts are to be seen near the altar to the right of the congregation, in keeping with the universal trend, where more and more Churches are allowing unbaptised persons to come near the altar.) There are also a few statues, doorposts, *Gopurams*, pillars and tablets with reliefs, and architraves all in stone which deserve our attention. The inscriptions in rock of course are not considered here.

3.03 Persian Crosses or Indian Crosses

Of the crosses in churches the so-called Persian Crosses or Pahlavi Crosses are undoubtedly of the first millennium datable to the 7th century CE at the latest. There are Pahlavi Crosses at Kottayam (two nos.), Kadamattom, Alangad, Muttuchira, and one at the St. Thomas Mount. All these surely belong to the first half or early second half of the first millennium. The cross at Goa, which the writer had opportunities to examine many a time in the past three years appears to be a late copy of the St. Thomas Mt. Cross. The Portuguese lettering at the bottom of the slab only adds to this surmise.

3.04 These crosses are perhaps the earliest rock sculptures of Kerala. The lotus and the peacock first appear in Kerala art on these rock crosses. The Christians might have learned rock sculpture from their Egyptian or Persian connections. Some of the open air outdoor rock crosses also might belong to the first millennium.

3.05 The open-air rock-cross of Malabar is an obelisk, a tall stone column, with four, sometimes decorated, but without inscriptions,slightly tapering sides, with arms added. Rome has many obelisks (all carried away from Egypt) which have been often made into cross-bearing structures decorating the piazzas and squares (e.g. in front of the St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican). Others are near the Lateran, in the Piazza dell' Esquilino, in Piazza dei Cinquecento, in the Piazza del Quirinale, near the Piazza di Spagna (near the Propaganda Fide), near the Piazza del Popolo, near the Piazzo di Montecitorio, and in the Piazza Minerva. London has one on the banks of the Thames (Cleopatra's Needle) as one gets down from the Houses of Parliament; Paris has one at the place d' la Concorde; and even New York

has one in the central park (the twin of the London needle). Many memorials like the Washington Memorial are obelisk-shaped. The Asoka Pillar and other such Indian pillars must have been inspired by the Graeco-Parthians. under Egyptian-Persian influence. The *Nazraney Sthambam*is a direct descendant of the obelisk, and much closer to it than the other Indian pillars - in shape, method of construction and transportation, method of erection, function, and solar symbolism. The Roman obelisk, bearing crosses today, have been converted to Christianity, while Kerala's cross-shaped obelisks were born Christian. The *obelus* and the double-dagger reference marks in printing may be profitably recalled here. The Celtic rock crosses with their peculiar shape and intricate carvings are in another category.

3.06 The three-tier gabled indigenous architecture of Kerala churches, which lacked facades until the coming of the Portuguese, immensely gains in richness, symmetry, and beauty because of the open-air rock crosses, some of them more than 30 feet in height including the intricately carved pedestals, and monolithic shafts. No other community in Kerala has such a huge monu- mental stone structure, and no other Christianity has such a universal and huge emblem in front of the churches, except the obelisks of the Vatican and Rome which of course were not originally Christian symbols, but were later Christianized by the addition of crosses at their top. The three-tiered roofs of old churches with wooden rafters, tie rafters, and beams, covering three or four thound sq. feet without a single pillar between the walls are a great improvement on the thousand-pillared temples of Madura, Chidambaram, and Kancheepuram, architecturally speaking.

3.07 The Pahlavi Crosses: It has been said that there existed no rock carving in South India prior to the period of these indoor crosses. The motifs, message, and images on these crosses and their pedestals display a remarkable degree of Indianness and Malayalee Thanima or identity. Vedic Hindu Gods and Goddesses like Ganesha, Vishnu, Shiva, Sapthamathas, Jeshta etc. appear in the art of the central Guruvayoor/Palayoor-Quilon part of Chera country only after the 11th-13th centuries, and even in the Salem-Erode section, and the Trivandrum-Cape Comorin section Vedic Hindu deities appear in art only as late as the 9th century A.D.(K. V. Soundara Rajan, ***Art of South India: Tamil Nadu and Kerala***, Delhi, 1978).

4.00 As I might be running out of time there is no time to discuss the many other media, genres, and items which make up the great wealth of Kerala's church art and architecture. Had there been time and space we should have dealt with in an equally detailed manner many other things. Suffice it to say the works of art & architecture in wood, metal, ivory, stone, colours, plaster, shells, cloth, etc. in Thomas Christian churches and households form a considerable proportion of art objects in Kerala and their position qualitatively and quantitatively in the heirarchy of Kerala's art tradition cannot be questioned. Among the objects in these churches which contribute much to the artistic superiority of Kerala may be counted the huge pillarless roofs and roof decorations, the belfrys, the altarpieces (reredos), the ceilings, the wooden rostra (Pushpakkoodu, pulpit), the processional RoopaKkoodu (palanquin), the wooden candlesticks, the open-air granite crosses, the copper-sheathed flagstaffs in teakwood, the rock lampstands and the array of rock (chuttuvilakku) lamps on the huge Aanamathil, facades and their plaster images, baptismal fonts, bronze bells and vessels, wood and ivory statues, wooden boxes, gold and silver crosses, colourful processional umbrellas, multicoloured mural paintings, wooden panels, goldcoated woodcarvings, Nakaarams and other drums, and a thousand and one other items. True some of these are of post-Portuguese origin. But typologically and from the point of view of the techniques used most of these are typically Keralite and often typically christian in origin and use.

5.00 Already too much space have been taken up. Let us look into other aspects of Indianisation, indedenisation, and inculturation some other time.

HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURING OF THE SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH

Jose Chiramel

Introduction

This paper briefly explains the Church administrative system at the Syro-Malabar *sui iuris* Church level, at the eparchial level and also at the parish level. When the Oriental code was promulgated on 18 October 1990 the juridical status of the Syro-Malabar Church was anomalous that it could not fit into any of the four types of hierarchies/*sui iuris* Churches envisaged in the Code. There was the need and necessity of an express decree from the part of the Roman Pontiff to raise this Church to the second category of sui iuris Churches envisaged in the Code, that is, to the Major Archiepiscopal *sui iuris* Church level. When this Church was raised to a Major Archiepiscopal status the administrative system envisaged in the CCEO pertaining to the Major Archiepiscopal Churches apply to Syro-Malabar Church. The Syro-Malabar Church comprises of eighteen eparchies within the *territorium proprium* and thirteen eparchies outside the *territorium proprium* and hence the administrative set- up of the eparchies is explained. Parish is the basic level of the Church and hence the administrative system of the parish also is briefly discussed. The Oriental Code has imbibed the spirit of Yogam which is unique institute of the St. Thomas Christians for the governance of the Church. Though Yogam was a decisive body, the model bodies of the Yogam envisaged in the code are only consultative bodies.

I. The Oriental Code and the Syro-Malabar Church

One of the remarkable features of the Oriental Code (*Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*) is that in it the constitutional law of the Oriental Catholic Churches has been codified with greater fidelity to the Oriental traditions than was done previously in the *motu proprios*. Such fidelity has been insisted on by the Second Vatican Council and was the first requisite of the guidelines for the codification of Oriental Canon law.[1] This fidelity has led, among other things, to the recovery of the genuine Oriental hierarchical structure. From October 1, 1991 the old regime enunciated in the *motu proprio "Cleri sanctitati"* gave way to the new code.

The new constitutional law of the Eastern Catholic Churches enunciates four types of hierarchies, namely: (1) Patriarchal *sui iuris* Churches; (2) Major Archiepiscopal *sui iuris* Churches; (3) Metropolitan **sui iuris** Churches; (4) and other *sui iuris* Churches. The fourth type of *sui iuris* Churches recognized in the Oriental code is not given any specific name like the previous three, but is called rather vaguely "other Churches *sui iuris*. The Churches that cannot be grouped under any of the three juridical entities given above are placed under a fourth category called "Other *sui iuris* Churches", in such a way that all the Oriental Churches can be configurated in one or other juridical figure of these *sui iuris* Churches[2]. Canon 174 of CCEO describes a Church of the

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[1] The Pontifical Commission for the Revision of the Code of Oriental Canon Law prepared the guidelines and it was approved in the plenary session held between 18-23 March 1974.

[2] Cfr. George Nedungatt, "The Syro-Malabar Church under the New Oriental Code" in The Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches, eds. Jose Chiramel and Kuriakose Bharanikulangara, Published by St. Thomas Academy for Research, Alwaye 1992, pp. 276-300.

fourth kind as a *sui iuris* Church, which is neither Patriarchal, Major Archiepiscopal nor Metropolitan, but is entrusted to a Hierarch who presides over it according to the norm of common law and of the particular law established by the Roman Pontiff.

Though all the above mentioned categories of Churches are called *sui iuris*, the amount of autonomy they enjoy is different. The first category of Churches enjoys greater autonomy while the second category also enjoys autonomy to a large extent. The third category of Churches actually enjoys only little autonomy and the fourth category of Churches has practically no autonomy. Still they are called *sui iuris* Churches in the Oriental Code. Hence the definition of the notion of Ecclesia *sui iuris* can be a risky business and it has been clearly admitted by the chief architect of the Oriental code, Fr. Ivan Zuzek, the secretary of the code commission.

Each of the above mentioned *sui iuris* Churches is headed by a single hierarch, whether a Patriarch, a Major Archbishop, a Metropolitan or another hierarch who represents it juridically. It was the intention of the code commission to bring all the Oriental Catholic Churches under one or another of the four categories of *ecclesia sui iuris*. The case of the Syro-Malabar Church came up for special consideration during the codification. Both the Syro-Malabar and Malankara Churches were headed by Episcopal conferences of the Latin model, a model that was absent from the schema of the future code. In short, the Syro-Malabar Church, perhaps the most vibrant Church among the Oriental Churches could not be fitted into the code. The Syro-Malabar Church does not belong under any of the four categories of *ecclesiae sui iuris* envisaged in the Code. Therefore the structure of this Church had to be normalized. It has to be done through an administrative act by the competent ecclesiastical authority. It means that the Holy See will have to recognize this Church either expressly or tacitly in order to be qualified as an *ecclesia sui iuris*.

Though a tacit recognition was enough for the Syro-Malankara Church to be qualified as an *ecclesia sui iuris* to be fitted into the third category, a tacit recognition was not enough in the case of the Syro-Malabar Church which was divided into two metropolitan provinces. Here an express recognition of the Holy See was essential. This did not happen even after the promulgation the *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium* on 18 October 1990. However, on 16 December 1992 Pope John Paul II raised the Syro-Malabar Church to the status of a Major Archiepiscopal *sui iuris* Church with the title Ernakulam-Angamaly. Mar Antony Padiyara, the then Archbishop of the Archeparchy of Ernakulam, was appointed the Major Archbishop. The powers of the Major Archbishop were given temporarily to Archbishop Mar Abraham Kattumana, a special delegate of the Roman Pontiff. When Archbishop Kattumana expired in 1995, Mar Antony Cardinal Padiyara was given the powers of the Major Archbishop.

II. Administration of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Sui Iuris Church

1. The Origin of the Major Archiepiscopal system

The eighth canon of the Council of Ephesus held in 431 AD is said to be the canonical foundation of Major Archiepiscopate. The Council of Ephesus by declaring the autonomy of the Church of Cyprus and its Archbishop established the principle that any province or nation could have its Archbishop irrespective of its political allegiance. The acts of the council refer to the petition presented to the council by the Metropolitan of Constantia, Rheginus, and two of his suffragans. Their goal was to stop the Bishop of Antioch from trying to intervene in the affairs of Cyprus.

The canonical discipline of the Eastern Catholic Churches was regulated through the four *motu proprios* promulgated by Pope Pius XII during 1949 to 1957. Among these *cleri sanctitati* which

deals with Oriental rites and persons issued 16 canons on the institution of Major Archbishop. Actually the *motu proprio, cleri sanctitati* does not use the term "Major Archbishop".

2. Major Archbishop in Vatican II

The institution of the Major Archbishop[3] is dealt with in the council's decree on the Eastern Catholic Churches, *Orientalium Ecclesiarum*, more specifically the article 10 of the decree which is included in the section on patriarchs[4]. The decree after stating the general principles about patriarchs added: "what has been said of patriarchs[5] applies as well, under the norm of law to Major Archbishops who preside over the whole of some particular Church or rite. In article 10 of the OE, the council established the basic equality of Major Archbishop with patriarchs. As a result what is stated in articles 7-9 about patriarchs applies also to Major Archbishops.

3. Major Archbishop in CCEO

CCEO canon 151 gives a definition to Major Archbishop. Accordingly Major Archbishop is the metropolitan of a see determined or recognized by the supreme authority of the Church, who presides over an entire Eastern Church that is not distinguished with the patriarchal title. According to this canon, the Major Archbishop is head of a non patriarchal *sui iuris* Church. The expressions, particular Church or rite, used in *cleri sanctitati* and *Orientalium Ecclesiarum* is replaced by the new term *sui iuris* Church. Canon 152 of CCEO further states that whatever is said in CCEO about patriarchs applies also to major archbishops, unless the common law provides otherwise or it is evident from the nature of the matter. A different provision in common law is with regard to election, that is, requirement of confirmation from the Roman Pontiff. Another difference between patriarchs and major archbishops is regarding honorary privileges. Again the patriarch needs only a See where he is the local ordinary whereas the Major Archbishop has an archdiocese where he is the local ordinary. The patriarchal dignity is always superior to that of Major Archbishop according to Oriental tradition.

Major Archbishop and Metropolitan

There are three types of metropolitans in the Oriental code. They are: (1) metropolitan who is the head of the Metropolitan Church *sui iuris*; (2) Metropolitan who is the head of an ecclesiastical province within the territory; (3) Metropolitan who is the head of an ecclesiastical province outside the territory.

The major archbishop, according to canon 151, is also metropolitan of an ecclesiastical province and eparchial bishop of an Archeparchy, and governs them according to canons 133-139 and cc. 177-233 of CCEO.

Election of the Major Archbishop

The most important difference between a patriarch and a major archbishop in CCEO is that the election of a major archbishop requires confirmation of the Roman Pontiff whereas such a requirement is not needed for the election of a patriarch. We know that the two important powers

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[3] For a detailed study on the matter refer to the unpublished thesis of George Thanchan "The Juridical Institution of Major Archbishop in Oriental Canon Law, Rome 1998.

[4] OE =Orientalium Ecclesiarum, Decretum de Ecclesiis Orientalibus Catholicis Concilii Vaticani II, AAS 57 (1965) 76-89; art. 7-11.

[5] For a detailed study on the patriarchal system see the book by Jose Chiramel, The Patriarchal Churches in the Oriental Code, Alwaye 1992.

were reserved by Rome when the Syro-Malabar Church was raised to the major archiepiscopal status. They are: (1) Episcopal election and, (2) the liturgical order. Although no explicit reason was given for this, it was clearly an indication of the disagreement among the Syro-Malabar bishops on the question of priority: liturgical renewal or hierarchical structure? Hence the first Major Archbishop Mar Antony Padiyara and the second major archbishop Mar Varkey Vithayathil were all appointed by the Roman Pontiff. Later Rome revoked the reservation and granted the Syro-Malabar Church these two powers also. As a result the synod was able to elect the present Major Archbishop after the death of Major Archbishop Varkey Cardinal Vthayathil.

Major Archbishop is elected by the synod of bishops of the major archiepiscopal Church in accordance with the norm of canons 63-74. The synod of bishops must be convoked within one month of the vacancy of the See in the major archiepiscopal residence or in other place designated by the administrator with the consent of the permanent synod. The senior bishop of the Major Archiepiscopal curia, and if there are no curial bishops the senior bishop of the permanent synod, becomes the administrator during the vacancy. Once the convocation has been made legitimately, if two thirds of the bishops who are obliged to be present at the synod are present, the synod is canonical and it can proceed with the election (c. 69). The president of the electoral synod is the one who is elected by those present in the first session. A two-thirds majority is required for one to be elected major archbishop. If the synod is not able to elect a candidate within 15 days time the matter devolves upon the Roman Pontiff.

Once the election has been accepted by the person elected, the synod of bishops must inform the Roman Pontiff by a Synodal letter about the canonical conduct of the election. At the same time the person elected must, through a personal letter, petition the confirmation of his election by the Roman Pontiff (C. 153/2). If the one elected is confirmed, the synod of bishops can proceed with his proclamation and enthronement. The elected major archbishop must request ecclesiastical communion from the Roman Pontiff and only after getting this communion can the major archbishop exercise his two important powers such as convocation of the synod and the ordination of bishops[6].

Nature of Major archiepiscopal Power

The apostolic constitution, *sacri canones* clearly stated that patriarchs/major archbishops participate in the supreme authority of the Church. Hence the power of the major archbishop is exercised according to the norm of law approved by the supreme authority of the Church (*ad normam iuris a Suprema Ecclesiae auctoritate approbati*).

The power of governance of the Church is divided between the Major Archbishop and the synod. The Major Archbishop exercises administrative powers while the synod exercises the legislative and judicial powers. The power of the Major Archbishop can validly be exercised only within the territory of the Church. Outside the territory the Major Archbishop has practically no power.

He represents the major archiepiscopal Church in all its juridic affairs. Acts of the Roman Pontiff for the major archiepiscopal Church are normally communicated through the major archbishop[7]. The major archbishop issues encyclical letters, decrees and instructions for the major

[6] CCEO. C. 77 /2
[7] CCEO. C. 81

archiepiscopal Church. He can make canonical visitations to the eparchies[8]. He is competent to ordain and enthrone metropolitans and bishops and to give them canonical provision[9]. He has the right to exercise vigilance over all clerics of his Church[10]. The promulgation of particular laws, their authentic interpretation, resolving controversies between bishops, vigilance over eparchial bishops, establishment of the Major Archiepiscopal Tribunal etc. belong to the competence of the major archbishop. He has also powers to dispense from matrimonial impediments and impediments to sacred orders (c. 767). He can hear recourse of a religious against his or her dismissal[11]. He must be remembered in divine services by all bishops and clerics of the major archiepiscopal Church[12]. Though he has vast powers, most of the important powers can be exercised only with the consent or counsel of the synod of bishops or the permanent synod.

We have already seen that the synod of bishops exercises legislative as well as judicial powers. It enacts laws for the major archiepiscopal Church. The laws enacted by it are to be communicated to the Roman Pontiff not for approval but for information. The laws enacted by the synod will have binding force only within the territory and the liturgical laws enacted by the synod will have force everywhere. The judicial powers are exercised by the synod of bishops either directly or indirectly. The synod also has certain elective role. It elects the major archbishop and other bishops of the Church. Thus we can say that major archbishop and the synod are mutually interdependent: major archbishop functions in the synod and with the synod and the synod functions with the major archbishop. This resembles the system of synodal governance in the Oriental tradition (cfr. Apostolic canon 34).

Major Archiepiscopal Curia

It comprises of the permanent synod, bishops of the curia, major archiepiscopal tribunal, the financial officer, chancery, liturgical commission and other commissions[13].

1. Permanent synod

There will be five members in the permanent synod including the Major Archbishop as the head. Out of the four members three are elected and one is nominated by the Major Archbishop for a period of five years. There are substitutes to all the four members of the permanent synod. When the Church is small the synod can elect two member bishops and constitute the permanent synod, but this can be done only after notifying the matter to the Roman Pontiff.

2. Bishops of the Curia

There can be maximum three bishops to assist the Major Archbishop in the curia. The senior most among will become the administrator when the Major Archiepiscopal See becomes vacant.

3. Major Archiepiscopal Tribunal

This tribunal is competent to exercise the ministry of justice in the entire territory of the Syro-Malabar Church. It is competent to judge cases in the second and further instances. The Major

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[8] CCEO. C. 83
[9] CCEO. C. 86
[10] CCEO c. 89
[11] CCEO. cc. 501/3; 553
[12] CCEO. c. 91
[13] CCEO c. 114

Archiepiscopal tribunal consists of the President, judges, promoter of justice, defenders of the bond, notaries etc. The officials are chosen representing the entire territory of this Church. The officials are nominated by the Major Archbishop with the consent of the permanent synod.

There is also finance officer, chancellor and various commissions in the curia of the Major Archbishop.

Metropolitans of the Major Archiepiscopal Church

There can be metropolitans in the Major Archiepiscopal Church constituted both inside and outside the territory. Presently the Syro-Malabar Church does not have any metropolitan constituted outside the territory, but there are four metropolitan provinces and one metropolitan without a province in the Syro-Malabar Church. The metropolitans of the Syro-Malabar Church can ordain and enthrone bishops of his province. He can convoke metropolitan synod, erect metropolitan tribunal etc[14]. Therefore the metropolitans of the Major Archiepiscopal Church enjoy more powers compared to the Latin metropolitans.

The major archiepiscopal assembly

It is an assembly where all sections of Christian faithful are given representation in the affairs of the Church. It was a later addition to the Oriental code. It did not exist in the *motu proprio, Cleri sanctitati*. When the draft was ready it was noticed that all the powers in the Church were divided among the bishops. There was no role for the laity and hence this institution of assembly was added at the last moment. Though it is the replica of the ancient Yogam of the Thomas Christians, it is a consultative group which has to be convoked once in five years. Here the entire Christian faithful are given representation. Its deliberations become law when the synod of bishops accepts them.

The Institute of Yogam

Taking the system of Yogam[15] among the St. Thomas Christians as a model the CCEO has devised such assemblies at three levels for all the Oriental Catholic Churches, that is, at Intermediary Church level, Eparchial level and Parish level. Yogams are decision making bodies, but the model bodies envisaged in CCEO are all consultative bodies. On the Church *sui iuris* level: this type is the highest yogam of the Church *sui iuris*. In the major archiepiscopal level it is the major archiepiscopal assembly. At the eparchial level it is the eparchial assembly (cc. 235-242). At the parish level it is the parish Pothuyogam. In the Syro-Malabar Church, Yogam at the parish level has two bodies, namely Pothuyogam (general body) and Pratinidhiyogam (representative body).

In the present code as I have said the Yogams at the Church *sui iuris* level, eparchial level and the parish level are made consultative only. But this is not according to the immemorial tradition of the Church of the St. Thomas Christians. Of course there was a break of the tradition during the three centuries of rule by the Latin bishops. But according to *Orientalium ecclesiarum*, this was an undue defection from the proper heritage of this Church[16]. Though we can find fault with the Latin Church for the defection whom shall we blame for the non restoration of this system?

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[14] CCEO c. 133

[15] For details see the article "The Institute of Yogam in the Oriental Churches" by Jacob Kollaparambil in Kynanaya Light: A Festschrift in honour of Dr. Jacob Kollaparambil, Bangalore 2009, pp. 656-667.

[16] Fr. Jacob Kollaparambil, The Institute of Yogam in the Oriental Churches, p. 665.

Particular Law

The Particular Law of the Syro-Malabar Church was promulgated on 3 December 2013 by the Major Archbishop. We know that the common code (CCEO) includes only those things that are common to all Oriental Churches leaving to the competent authorities of the *sui iuris* Churches the power to regulate other matters through particular law[17]. According to canon 1493/2, by the term "particular law" is meant all the laws, legitimate customs, statutes and other norms of law which are not common either to the universal Church or to all the Eastern Catholic Churches.

III. The Administration At The Eparchial Level

From the history we are given to understand that Emperor Diocletion divided the Empire into dioceses and each one of them was further divided into numerous provinces, which were called eparchies[18]. Later in order to indicate the ecclesiastical area of the local Church entrusted to the governance of a bishop, the West adopted the term diocese and the East accepted the term eparchy.

The second Vatican Council defined eparchy in terms of the people of God. It says that a diocese is a section of the people of God entrusted to a bishop to be guided by him with the assistance of his clergy (CD, 11). This definition was drawn up from the dogmatic constitution on the Church which said about the eparchy as a portion of the people of God assigned to the eparchial bishop, over which he exercises his pastoral office and not over other Churches or the Church universal. Eparchies are constituted after the model of the universal Church. The universal Church exists in eparchies (LG, 23).

The CCEO gives the definition for the eparchy in the following words: "An eparchy is a portion of the people of God that is entrusted to a bishop to shepherd, with the cooperation of the presbyters, in such a way that, adhering to its pastor and gathered by him through the Gospel and the Eucharist, it constitutes a particular Church in which the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church of Christ truly exists and is operative"[19].

Eparchies are not to be understood as sub divisions of the universal Church. Universal Church also is not a federal union of eparchies after the model of civil states. It is a communion of different eparchies in which subsists its configuration and fullness. When we erect a new eparchy we are creating a new Church. The major archbishop with the consent of the synod of bishops is competent to erect an eparchy within the territory of his Church. Prior to the erection of an eparchy the major archbishop should consult the Apostolic See. The major archbishop after having obtained the consent of the synod of bishops and after consulting the apostolic see can also modify an eparchy. In a similar way the major archbishop has the right to suppress an eparchy inside the territory.

Bishops in the eparchy

There are two types of bishops in the Catholic Church. They are eparchial bishops and titular bishops. All those bishops to whom eparchies are entrusted for the governance are called

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[17] I. ZUZEK, "Particular Law in CCEO", in J. Chiramel & K. Bharanikulangara, eds., The Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches: A Study and Interpretation, Alwaye 1992, pp. 39-56.
[18] For further studies see the book of Mathew John "Role of Curia in the Governance of Eparchy" published at St. Peter's Pontifical Institute, Bangalore 2008.
[19] CCEO. c. 177/1

eparchial bishops and other bishops to whom an eparchy has not been entrusted are called titular bishops. By divine right, the eparchial bishops as the successors of the Apostles enjoy proper, ordinary and immediate powers which are necessary to govern the eparchy.

Election of the bishops

It is the exclusive right of the synod of bishops to propose the names of possible candidates for episcopacy. If the bishop considers it necessary he may consult with priests and other Christian faithful who are outstanding in prudence and Christian life. Once the list is ready, after proper scrutiny, the major archbishop sends the list to the Roman Pontiff for his assent. Once the assent is obtained it is valid until it is revoked. When there is a vacancy the synod of bishops will be convoked for the election and the candidate to be elected two-third majority is required. The bishops are free to elect a candidate either from the list which has the assent or somebody from outside the list. In the second case the election news has to be kept secret until the assent of the Pope is obtained.

Eparchial Assembly

It is an assembly that assists the eparchial bishop in the governance of the eparchy. The eparchial assembly can convoke this whenever it deems necessary after consulting the presbyteral council of the eparchy. It is only a consultative body of the bishop. It has certain similarities with the Yogam of the St. Thomas Christians. The deliberations of this assembly to be laws, has to be accepted by the eparchial bishop since he is the only law maker in the eparchy.

Members of the Curia

The eparchial curia consists of the *protosyncellus*, *syncelli*, judicial vicar, eparchial finance officer, the finance council, chancellor, eparchial judges, promoter of justice, defender of the bond, notaries and other persons included by the eparchial bishop to discharge properly the offices of the eparchial curia[20].

One person cannot be entrusted with two or more offices which are incompatible except in the case of true necessity (an accommodation not found in CIC c.152). It would seem that the material incompatibility, that is, the difficulty one person would have in exercising two demanding positions, might be overlooked in consideration of the paucity of the qualified personnel today. However, legal incompatibility, that is, an incompatibility established by law itself cannot be ignored unless the law provides otherwise[21].

We have already seen that the Latin code gives only a general mention of the curial persons saying that the curia is composed of institutes and persons assisting the bishop in the administration of the diocese (CIC c. 469) whereas the Oriental code specifically mentions who are all the essential members of the curia in canon 243§2. They are the following:

***Protosyncellus* (Vicar General)**

In the East the custom evolved that the bishops were taken from among the monks and those bishops would continue to maintain their monastic life by taking a companion with them. This companion who shared a cell or apartment with the bishop would naturally have great influence

[20] CCEO c. 243 § 2.
[21] CCEO c. 1086 § 2.

in the local Church because of his proximity to the bishop. He represented the bishop in ecclesiastical affairs.

In the Latin Church the figure of Vicar general was introduced, according to some historians, to replace the figure of the Archdeacon or originally another companion of the bishop. When the Eastern Catholic Churches came into contact with the juridic figure of the vicar general, the *syncellus* was endowed with the same responsibility. Among the Eastern Orthodox Churches, a priest is appointed as an Episcopal representative of the bishop, with the title of *syncellus* or *protosyncellus*, but such titles are also conferred merely as honorifics[22].

The office of the *Protosyncellus*/Vicar general is an obligatory office in the diocesan curia. The *motu proprio, Cleri sanctitati* canon 431§1 recommended the appointment of a *syncellus* if the proper governance of the eparchy recommended it, while CCEO requires that a *protosyncellus* be appointed for every eparchy[23]. The *Protosyncellus* is freely appointed by the bishop. He can be appointed either for a determinate time or for an indeterminate time. But if there is a coadjutor bishop or auxiliary bishop, he is to be appointed as *Protosyncellus* for an indeterminate time.

The power of the *Protosyncellus*/vicar general is ordinary and vicarious. It is exercised in his own name but on behalf of the bishop. He is endowed with all powers of governance of the bishop. However the Vicar general does not enjoy any legislative and judicial authority. The judicial authority is exercised by the judicial vicar, who should not be the same person as the *Protosyncellus* unless the lack of clergy or the number of cases would indicate that the same person could be appointed *Protosyncellus* and judicial vicar[24].

With regard to the number of Vicar general, CCEO says that there can be only one *Protosyncellus* but more than one *syncellus* in an eparchy (CCEO c. 245) whereas CIC canon 475 says that ordinarily one vicar general, but in special circumstances perhaps more than one is possible. If the eparchy has a coadjutor bishop, he must be appointed protosyncellus[25]. In the same way if the eparchy has an auxiliary bishop, he is to be the *Protosyncellus*, or if there is more than one auxiliary, one is to be appointed *Protosyncellus* and the others are to be appointed to the office of *syncellus* (CCEO c. 215§2). In the recently held Annual seminar of the canonists there was a discussion whether the auxiliary bishops and coadjutor bishops are assistants to the bishops or to the dioceses. People always say: *the auxiliary bishops of certain diocese or Archdiocese.* But it must be understood that both are given directly to the diocesan bishop in order to assist him in his pastoral ministry, but are indirectly linked to the diocese because of their relationship with the pastoral needs of the diocese and for this reason the diocesan bishop cannot dismiss or transfer his coadjutor or auxiliary. Hence, it is quite logical to think that coadjutor or auxiliary is an assistant to the bishop and strictly speaking not to the diocese or eparchy.

***Syncellus* (Episcopal Vicar)**

The office of *Syncellus* / Episcopal Vicar was introduced by the Second Vatican Council. The juridical figure of *syncellus* is similar to the juridical figure of the episcopal vicar in the Latin Church. A diocese can have more than one *syncellus* or Episcopal vicars according to the need of

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[22] John D. Faris, Eastern Catholic Churches, p. 516.
[23] *Christus Dominus*, no. 27.
[24] CCEO c. 1086 § 1.
[25] CCEO c. 215 § 1; CIC c. 406 § 1.

the diocese. However, it is not a mandatory office in the diocese as that of the vicar general or *Protosyncellus*.

The function of the *syncellus* is identical with that of the *Protosyncellus* with the exception that his authority is restricted. The letter of appointment should indicate the specific scope of the authority of the *syncellus*.

Both CCEO and CIC provide that members of a particular *sui iuris* Church can be entrusted to the pastoral care of the hierarch of another *sui iuris* Church and that a *syncellus* can be appointed to cater to their needs[26]. Although the faithful are entrusted to the hierarch of another Church *sui iuris*, they do not change enrollment in their Church *sui iuris* because of that arrangement (CCEO c. 38).

In the appointment of a *Protosyncellus* or *syncellus*, certain qualifications and disqualifications of persons are to be taken into account. He must be a validly ordained priest, celibate, at least thirty years old, possess a doctorate or licentiate in sacred sciences, should have sound doctrine, integrity, prudence, experience in handling issues etc (CCEO c. 979). A person related by blood to the eparchial bishop up to fourth degree is a disqualification to be appointed.

Judicial Vicar

We have already seen that the *potestas regimini* is divided into 1. Legislative; 2. Executive; and 3. Judicial. Hence, in each diocese the bishop holds ordinary judicial power. The judicial power of the bishops and the power to adjudicate cases are part of the divine law in the Church. In the Acts of the Apostles we read as follows: "He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that He is the one ordained by God to be the judge of the living and the dead"[27]. Jesus Christ handed over this authority to the Apostles and his successors. By Episcopal ordination the bishop obtains this authority to judge in the Church. The bishop exercises it either personally or through the judicial vicar. It is the duty of the bishop to appoint a judicial vicar who must be a priest and who has either a doctorate or a licentiate in canon law.

After the Second Vatican Council, however, interest spread in permitting lay persons as well as clerics to function as judges. In 1971 *Causas matrimoniales* permitted a layman but not a laywoman to serve as judge. But the present codes permitted lay persons also to serve as judges[28]. Hence, a lay person can be appointed judge in the tribunal of the patriarchal Church for which the patriarch can grant permission after consulting the permanent synod. Likewise, the metropolitan, having consulted two eparchial bishops senior by episcopal ordination, can permit the appointment of non-clerical judges.

The question whether the metropolitan of a patriarchal Church constituted outside the territory of that Church is competent to permit other members of the Christian faithful to be appointed is a matter of discussion among canonists. Some canonists argue that the lack of a reference to the extra-territorial metropolitans in CCEO canon 1087 § 2 must be an inadvertent omission since such mention was already made in the initial formulation of the canon and that the reference was included in another procedural canon (CCEO c. 1084 § 3) in which patriarchs, extra-territorial

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[26] CCEO cc. 193 § 2, 207; CIC c. 383 § 2.
[27] Acts. 10: 42.
[28] CCEO c. 1087 § 2; CIC c. 1421 § 1.

metropolitans as well as metropolitans presiding over a Church sui iuris are all given the faculty to entrust cases to single clerical judge when it is not possible to establish a collegiate tribunal.

Canon 1084 § 3 of CCEO prescribes that "if it happens that a collegiate tribunal cannot be established in the first grade of the trial, as long as this possibility lasts, the patriarch, having consulted the permanent synod, can permit the eparchial bishop to entrust cases to a single clerical judge who is to employ an assessor and an auditor where possible. The same can be permitted by a metropolitan who presides over a metropolitan sui iuris as well as a metropolitan of a patriarchal Church constituted outside the territorial boundaries of the patriarchal Church, in both situations having consulted the two eparchial bishops who are senior by Episcopal ordination; in other instances, the Apostolic See is to be approached".

The argument would then follow that the inadvertent omission or lacuna in CCEO canon 1087 § 2 could be filled by the formula used in CCEO canon 1084 § 3, a procedural norm made to cover a similar circumstance or eventuality. This undoubtedly relies on the general norm of interpretation found in CCEO canon 1501. CCEO canon 1501 states that if an express prescript of law is lacking in a certain matter, a case, unless it is penal, must be resolved according to the canons of the synods and the holy fathers, legitimate custom, the general principles of canon law applied with equity, ecclesiastical jurisprudence, and the common and constant canonical doctrine. It would therefore seem erroneous to argue that an inadvertent omission or lacuna in CCEO canon 1087 § 2 can be remedied by interpretative recourse to CCEO canon 1501.

The qualifications to be appointed an eparchial judge are the same as those of the judicial vicar and adjutant judicial vicar except that no age requirement is given for the eparchial judge. Outside the territory permission can be granted by the Apostolic See (CCEO c. 1087 § 2). The judge who is not a cleric can form only a collegiate tribunal. The statute of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal tribunal states that only priests can be appointed judges to this tribunal[29].

According to CIC canon 1421 § 2, the Conference of Bishops can also permit the appointment of lay persons as judges; when it is necessary, one of them can be selected to form a college.

Finance Officer and Finance Council

The institution of fiscal officer or *economus* arose when the Church attained a public status in the Roman Empire and its right to own property were recognized by the civil government. Canon 26 of the Council of Chalcedon (451) required each bishop to appoint an economus who was to administer the temporalities of the eparchy under the supervision of the bishop[30]. The institution also conforms to the apostolic tradition in so far as it relieves the eparchial bishop of temporal responsibility and affords him the freedom to fulfill his spiritual and pastoral responsibilities (cf. Acts 6: 2).

Finance officer and finance council are the two bodies that assist the diocesan bishop in the administration of the temporal goods of the diocese. The office of finance officer is an obligatory office in the curia[31]. It is the prerogative of the bishop to appoint the finance officer. The term of office of the finance officer is not determined in common law but is to be determined by particular law of each Church sui iuris. He may freely make the choice, but is bound to consult

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[29] Code of Particular Law of the Syro-Malabar Church, Mount St. Thomas 2013, art. 17 § 1.
[30] John D. Faris, Eastern Catholic Churches, p. 533.
[31] Marie Breitenbeck, "The Requirements for Experts in Church Law", *The Jurist* 50 (1990), p. 272.

the college of consulters and finance council. If the bishop neglects this, the appointment will be unlawful (CCEO c. 269 § 2).

Why Finance officer and Finance council?

There are four purposes. They are the following:
1. The bishop becomes free from temporal administration; 2.Service of experts can be made use of; 3.better transparency can be assured and hence the bishop will be above suspicion; 4.bishop can spend more time for pastoral ministry.

Finance council is also a part of the curia. It is the only collegial body which is part of the curia. It is a consultative body of the bishop to deal with financial matters. The council has to examine and approve the annual financial report prepared by the finance officer (CCEO c. 262 § 4; CIC c. 494 § 4).

Though the bishop requires only consultation, for an extraordinary administration mentioned in CIC canon 1277, the bishop needs the consent. The Oriental code also says that the eparchial bishop may impose taxes upon all juridic persons subject to him with the consent of the council of financial affairs. On the other hand no tax may be imposed upon the offerings received at the time of the celebration of the Divine Liturgy (CCEO c. 1012§1). Taxes may be imposed on physical persons only if the particular law of a Church *sui iuris* authorizes (CCEO c. 1012§2). Again the Oriental code specifies that when the value of the ecclesiastical goods whose alienation is proposed falls between the minimum and the maximum established by the synod of bishops of a Church sui iuris or by Apostolic See, consent is required (CCEO c. 1036§1).The bishop is the ex-officio president of the council, but not a member of this council.

The Chancellor

The bishop is obliged to appoint a chancellor to serve in the curia (CCEO c. 252 § 1). Although the canon determines that the principal responsibilities of the chancellor are the collection, arrangement and preservation of the acts of the curia, the phrase "unless particular law determines otherwise" affords the bishop the possibility to define the role of the office in accord with the specific needs of the curia. In order to be appointed to the office of chancellor, one must be either a priest or a deacon (CCEO c. 253§2). The Latin code in canon 482§1 makes no mention of priest or deacon. Therefore, in the Latin Church even a lay person of either gender is qualified to be appointed chancellor. If it is deemed necessary, a vice-chancellor can be appointed whose responsibilities are to assist the chancellor.

Since the curia is responsible for a wide range of administrative and pastoral functions in the eparchy (CCEO c. 243) the amount of correspondence and records can be quite extensive. No definition is given for the phrase 'acts of the curia'; hence a determination must be made regarding what material must be put in the eparchial archives. Any documents that have a juridic effect must be retained.

Both chancellor and vice chancellor, if any, are *ipso iure*, notaries and no special appointment is needed for this. CIC canon 482§3 speaks about the chancellor as the secretary of the curia. But CCEO does not speak about it.

Judges

It is the prerogative of the bishop to appoint judges to the tribunal. The judge need not be a priest (CCEO c. 1087). Nothing is also mentioned about the minimum age of the judges in the code as

in the case of the judicial vicar. The bishop is also free to appoint anybody as judges who are clerics. This means that he can appoint even deacons who have the required qualification. The Oriental code prescribes that lay judges also can be appointed in the tribunal. In the patriarchal Church, the patriarch after having consulted the permanent synod can permit bishops of his Church to appoint other members of the Christian faithful as judges. Likewise, the metropolitan, having consulted two eparchial bishops senior by Episcopal ordination, can permit the eparchial bishops to appoint non-clerical judges in the eparchial tribunal.

The qualifications to be appointed an eparchial judge are the same as those of the judicial vicar except that no age requirement is given for the eparchial judges. However, the statute of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal tribunal states that only priests can be appointed judges to this tribunal (Art. 17/1). In the Latin Church the Conference of Bishops can decide this matter.

The judge must act both as an interpreter of law and justice. Pope John Paul II underlines what must be the total objectivity of the process of instruction, if truth is to be attained with moral certitude[32]. He must also show respect to people. He has to avoid all formal and substantial errors from the acts and procedure. As a judge, he should have the required qualification and experience. He must be an expert in marriage laws, procedural laws, and jurisprudence especially of the Roman Rota. The words of Pope Benedict XVI to the Apostolic Tribunal of Roman Rota on January 29, 2010 pertain to all who are dedicated to the administration of justice in the matrimonial tribunals of the Church. According to him, the judge must always guard against the risk of misplaced compassion, which could degenerate into sentimentality, which is pastoral only in appearance[33].

Defender of the Bond

The office of the defender of the bond is part and parcel of the ecclesiastical tribunal. He is the one who officially defends the bond of marriage in the ecclesiastical court. Pope Benedict XIV through the Apostolic Constitution "*Dei miseratione*" of 3 November 1741 introduced a number of reforms in the marriage nullity process. The first among them was the introduction of the office of the defender of the bond in tribunals. He has to attend the entire trial to defend the marriage bond[34]. Later the *motu proprio* "*Sollicitudinem nostram*" of Pope Pius XII in 1950 incorporated these norms and later in the present codes.

The bishop is to appoint a defender of the bond in the tribunal. He could be appointed either for particular cases or for all cases (CCEO c. 11002/2). The defender of the bond can be a lay person, religious or cleric. To be appointed as defender of the bond the person should have a doctorate or licentiate in canon law (CCEO c. 1099/2). The defender of the bond prepares the questions to be submitted to the judge for the examination of the parties and witnesses. He cannot directly examine the parties or witnesses. When the evidence stage is over he writes his animadversion and presents it to the court. The judge has to study and evaluate it. If the case is settled without the involvement of the defender of the bond, the case becomes irremediably null and void. The tribunal cannot see his role as something inferior. This will affect the administration of justice in the Church.

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[32] John Paul II, Allocutio, 1980, 174, 3. English translation: W.H. Woestman, Papal Allocutions, 160, 3.
[33] Benedict XVI, Allocutio, *Ad Sodales Tribunalis Romanae Rotae*, 29 ianuarii 2010, in *AAS*, 102 (2010), p. 112.
[34] Benedict XVI, Constitutio Apostolica, Dei miseratione, 3 novembris 1741, in P. Gasparri (ed.), Codicis Iuris Canonici Fontes, vol. I, Romae-1926, pp. 695-701.

Like all other tribunal officials, the role of the defender of the bond also is to find out the truth, that is, whether the marriage under consideration is valid or invalid. The search for the truth is impeded when the defender of the bond is absent through negligence and passivity, which in effect deprives the process of an important voice in the judicial debate. The Instruction *Dignitas connubii* makes it clear that the defender is to participate from the beginning of the process[35], possibly even before the acceptance of the *libellus*[36]. The defender of the bond has no right to say that the marriage in question is invalid. It is not his responsibility to see whether the case has been proved or not. It is the role of the judge who considers the case. The defender of the bond is bound by obligation to propose and clarify everything which can be reasonably adduced against nullity or dissolution (CCEO c. 1096; CIC c. 1432). Hence it is irresponsible to say from his part that the marriage in question is invalid.

Lay Persons in the Curia

Catholic Church is highly hierarchical in its structure. Of course the Church is a communion of the faithful animated by the Holy Spirit. All baptized persons share in the mission of the Church. There is a radical equality between all members of the Church.

Pope John Paul II urged the laity to foster a feeling for their own diocese and be always ready at their bishop's invitation to participate in diocesan projects[37]. CCEO canons 408 and 409 and CIC canon 1421 concern particularly services to which laity may be called. When lay people are appointed, they have the right for a just remuneration for their service keeping in tune with the provisions of civil law. They have a right for suitable insurance, social security etc.

Moderator of the Curia

The office of the moderator of the curia is mentioned in CIC canon 473/2. This office has not been mentioned in the CCEO. This does not mean that the Oriental bishops are prohibited to appoint somebody as the moderator of the curia. They also can appoint a moderator to the curia because the code says that the bishop is free to establish other offices in the curia which are not mentioned in the common law.

This office is new in the CIC 1983. Normally the bishop may appoint his protosyncellus (vicar general) as the moderator of the curia. The main role of the moderator is to coordinate the activities of the curia. However the moderator cannot supervise or coordinate the activities of the protosyncellus and syncellus. He also will not have competence over the tribunal.

IV. Parish Administration

The parish without any doubt one of the most important and basic institutions in the Church designed for the care of the souls. This institution existed in the Church from the early centuries wherever the good news of salvation was preached. Canon 279 defines the parish as follows: parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis in the eparchy, whose pastoral care is committed to a pastor. Hence the following elements are to be noted in the definition of the parish: (1) parish is a definite community of the Christian faithful; (2) The community of parishioners should be constituted in a stable way within the eparchy by the competent authority, through a decree of the eparchial bishop; (3) parish is established within

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[35] Instruction, Dignitas connubii, 25 january 2005, English translation from Bangalore 2005, art. 56 § 2.
[36] Dignitas connubii, art. 119 § 2.
[37] John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, Christifideles laici, 30 December 1988 in AAS 81 (1989), no. 25.

the eparchy; (4) pastoral care of souls is another element of the parish; (5) The parochial community must have a priest as its proper pastor to take care of the spiritual needs of the community.

Pastor of the parish

According to canon 281/1, the pastor of a parish is a priest to whom the care of souls in a given parish is committed as to its own shepherd; he is the foremost collaborator of the bishop in the parish under the authority of the same eparchial bishop. A pastor of a parish possesses all the faculties necessary to provide pastoral care for his people with all the rights and obligations. He is not a mere delegate of the bishop. He exercises his office as the principal collaborator of the bishop and in his name (C. 281/1). Canon 285 describes the qualifications and characteristics essential for a priest to be appointed as pastor. The bishop has the freedom to appoint a pastor. The good of the faithful in a particular parish should be the ultimate criterion in the choice of the pastors. As the bishop has in the eparchy, the pastor in the parish has the functions of teaching, governing and sanctifying .

The Eastern code speaks that appropriate councils are to be established dealing with pastoral and financial matters, according to the norms of particular law of its own sui iuris Church. In accordance with canon 295 of CCEO, the synod of bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church on 16 January 1998 approved and decreed its particular law on this matter with the title "The Palliyogam-Proceedural Rules". As per the particular law of this Church, at present in every parish there shall be two forms of palliyogam to provide assistance and advice to the pastor. They are known as Pothuyogam and Pratinidhiyogam. Both are consultative bodies. In every parish there shall be two forms of palliyogam to provide assistance and advice to the pastor. They are known as pothuyogam and pratinidhiyogam. These councils work in cooperation with the pastor, in matters of pastoral ministry and administration of the finances of the parish. In small parishes, however, the palliyogam may function as pothuyogam alone with the permission of the local hierarch. Similarly for grave reasons or in large parishes the palliyogam may function as pratinidhiyogam alone with the permission of the eparchial bishop. In the latter case pothuyogam has to be convened at least once a year for a general review.

The particular laws of the Syro-Malabar Church on palliyogam give details regarding the membership, objectives, rights and obligations, and the manner of functioning etc. of pothuyogam and pratinidhiyogam. The pastor of the parish is the president of both yogams. He has the right and obligation to decide whether a person should be excluded from a meeting of pothuyogam in accordance with the rules. However, the matter is to be referred to the eparchial curia prior to the settlement. The head of the family who has enrolled as a family in the official parish register has the membership in the pothuyogam whereas pratinidhiyogam is a smaller body and its members are selected at three levels, that is, elected members, ex-officio members and nominated members. The pastor of the parish should get the approval from the hierarch on the recommendations of the council as per the norms of law[38].

It is true that particular laws, eparchial statutes and statutes of various councils provide provisions to punish the faulty and guilty members[39]. However, the pastor may make use of these penal measures only as a last weapon[40].

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[38] CCEO. cc. 1014, 1015, 1022, 1024, 1035, 1036, 1045 and 1046.
[39] See Synodal News 11 (1998), pp. 62-63.

The Pastor and the Exercise of Executive Power of Governance

As a principle, the power of governance is to be exercised only over one's own subjects. In CCEO there are some particular circumstances and specific conditions in which a pastor of a parish can exercise the executive power of governance:

1. The faculty to dispense from marriage impediments: This is explained in canons 828-830. According to canon 790/1, a diriment impediment renders a person unqualified to celebrate marriage validly. Impediments are those of divine law and ecclesiastical law. In ordinary circumstances, a dispensation from the impediment of prior bond, impotence and consanguinity in the direct line and in the second degree of the collateral line is not granted. The Apostolic See may grant dispensation from the impediments of sacred order, perpetual profession of chastity for a religious of pontifical right and conjugicide. For the Eastern Churches the Patriarch/Major Archbishop can dispense from conjugicide and perpetual vow of chastity made in congregations of any juridical condition (c. 795/2). The local hierarch can dispense from other impediments (age, affinity, consanguinity in 3rd and 4th degree of collateral line, disparity of cult, perpetual vow of chastity of the religious of the eparchial right, public propriety, abduction and spiritual relationship. This dispensing power of the hierarch is ordinary and hence it can be delegated to any priest. In short, it is very clear that a pastor of a parish can dispense from the impediments of marriage in danger of death and *omnia parata sunt* situations.

Obligation to keep the records

The pastor of the parish is responsible for the care and accuracy of all records in the parish. He should also maintain parish registers regarding the administration of the sacraments and the status of persons. CCEO canon 296 requires that the parish registers be kept according to the norms of the particular law of the Church sui iuris. According to the particular law of the Syro-Malabar Church, all parishes should maintain the following registers, records, books and files. They are: (1) Baptism register; (2) Confirmation register; (3) Betrothal register; (4) Marriage register; (5) Death register; (6) Atamsthiti register (parish register); (7) Minutes book of the Pothuyogam and pridhinithiyogam; (8) Yogapusthakam (register for decisions of the yogam); Account book; ledger, thirattu book; Audit report; Voucher file; diary of the canonical visit of the bishop; bound copies of the eparchial bulletin etc (cfr. Synodal News, 11 (1998), pp. 71-73).

Administration of the temporal goods

The success of any parish depends also on the ability of the pastor to administer the temporal goods of the parish. In all juridical transaction the pastor of the parish acts in the name of the parish. Therefore, he should make sure that he administers the property of the parish efficiently and faithfully as per norms of law.

The pastor can be given assistants whenever it is necessary. The assistants should exercise their rights and obligations under the authority of the parish priest. They are to be considered assistants to the parish priest and not to the parish. The assistants do not have the faculty to bless marriages. In certain eparchies they are given the general faculty by the bishop. In that case he can delegate his faculty to another priest.

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[40] For detailed information regarding the rights and obligations of the pastor of a parish see the book "The Right and Obligations of the Pastor of a Parish" by Thomas Mathew Adoppillil, Dharmaram Publications, Bangalore 2008.

Rectors of Churches

The rector of a church is a priest to whom is given the care of some church which is neither parochial nor is connected with a house of an institute of consecrated life. If the church is connected with seminary or college, the rector of the seminar or of the college is, at the same time, the rector of the church unless the bishop has determined otherwise (c. 305).

Resignation of the pastor

The pastor ceases from office by resignation accepted by the eparchial bishop, expiration of the term, removal or transfer. When a pastor has completed his 75th year of age he is asked to submit his resignation from office to the eparchial bishop (c. 297). When the bishop accepts the resignation he goes out of office. The eparchy should find suitable support to the retired priests (c. 298).

THE MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH AND HER ADMINISTRATIVE AND CULTURAL ADAPTATIONS

Rev. Dr Stephen Plathottathil OIC

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The Existence of a Christian Community in Malabar, from very early times is admitted by historians both catholic and Non-Catholic, though they are not agreed about the exact time or nature of its origin.

The early Christian community of Malabar was of one faith and rite until its division into two Christian denominations, one remaining under Latin bishops and the other denying obedience to them. But the latter did not continue to remain in their wavering state but formed an independent Church and cherished a communion with the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. This church we refer to as the Malankara church in this paper.

The Malankara Church made serious attempts at reunion with the Apostolic See of Rome and was ultimately successful. As a result the Catholic Malankara Church came into existence. We use the term 'Malankara Catholic Church' or "Syro- Malankara Church "to denote the community reunited with Rome in contradistinction to its counterpart the " Malankara Orthodox Church" which is not in communion with the Roman Pontiff.

The juridical status of the Malankara Catholic church as a Particular Church in the Universal Church is dependent on its juridical constitution by the Holy See, but this constitution is largely based on the juridical nature and the status of the Malankara Church. In fact it was the Juridical Status of the Malankara Church as an autonomous oriental church that induced the Holy See to recognize it juridical as such.

Though an examination of the nature of Malankara Church in itself is simple, had it not been complicated by the complexity of its history. For, the Malankara Church had been for long in a jurisdictional relationship with the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, giving the appearance of some dependence and almost losing its autonomy as a separate particular church. Hence it is necessary to examine closely the nature of the jurisdictional relationship. It is a fact historically that the Malankara Church did enjoy autonomy as a particular church before the time of reunion in spite of its jurisdictional relationship with the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch.

The introduction of the Antiochean rite into the Malankara Church was a gradual process. Examining this process closely we see that the Antiochene liturgy with its rituals was fully

adopted, though gradually, and declared officially in 1836 to be the liturgy of the Malankara Church. Later the then Antiochene prelate Mar Cyril completed the evolution, leaving no room for other liturgical elements to exist in it.

As for the disciplinary system, very few innovations were made, though a few elements that were properly Antiochene and intimately connected with liturgy and its rituals were introduced at various stages. However, the discipline of the Malankara Church was declared formally Antiochene and the transition was complete as it had adopted the "Nomo-Canon" of Bar Hebreus as the code of laws for it, although the church-government was left to be regulated, for the most part, by the traditions and customs of the Malankara Church drawn and influenced from the cultural elements, the local administrative system and other different sources and developed through the various stages of its history which will be discussed in the paper.

The Native Source

About the native sources springing from the Christianised local customs and traditions, we haven't any records; but much of it could be reconstructed from the reports of travelers and other writers who have recorded them then or later

Therefore these sources are not constitutive in the sense that they directly from the part of a corpus; but they are informative sources in the sense that they give information towards a highly probable state of affairs.

In short, we are left with practically nothing to retrace the juridical system of the Indian Church before the coming of the Portuguese. Therefore, we search for the juridical foundation of the various institutes of the church in the customs and traditions that were prevalent in the community, as a "custom is the best interpreter of laws" (CCEO c. 1508). It is believed that these customs and traditions were formed into a kind of *'codex'* or 'corpus' called the law of Thomas" or "*Thoma marga*"[1].

By term 'law of Thomas' we mean the customs, privileges and the liturgical and disciplinary norms of the Indian Christians of St. Thomas, conveyed through tradition since the time of their apostle Thomas. These as *consuetudines* have received legal force in the community. Although mostly unwritten, they can be compared to the *Nomocanons* of East Syrian (Chaldean) and of the West Syrians (jacobites).[2]

Canonical Legislation in the Malankara Catholic Church

It was the right and obligation of the Malankara Church to live an ecclesial life according to the pure Antiochene Rite and to be governed according to its sacred canons.[3] Having obtained full ecclesiastical communion with the Universal Church, it was then, the obligation of the Malankara Hierarchs to update these to bring them into conformity with the canonical tradition of the ius commune of the Oriental Churches. For this, the Malankara Hierarchs, during the course of the

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[1] Marga means way. It must be noted that the early Christians considered Christianity as the WAY, the way of salvation (Acts. 9:12; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:14, 22). Therefore Christianity was considered Christu Marga, and since Thomas brought it, it was called Thoma Marga. See Andrews Thazhath, Juridical Sources of the Syro-Malabar Church, OIRSI 106, Kottayam, 1987, 8-12.

[2] Thazhath, The Juridical Sources of the Syro-Malabar Church, 11.

[3] See Apostolic Constitution Christo Pastorum Principi, AAS XXIV (1932), 290-291.

years undertook a series of legislative activities in shaping the disciplinary system. We describe them briefly below.

In 1933 a Table of Taxes was published in Trivandrum by Mar Ivanios, specifying fees on items and other voluntary contributions expected of the faithful. In the same year, in Tiruvalla the Diocesan Statutes were promulgated containing 33 regulations, 22 on ecclesiastical fees and 18 on marriage. On 1 January 1936, the administrative laws in the Archdiocese of Trivandrum, containing 102 rules and abrogating contrary regulations, customs, traditions, etc. came into force. The Kumpasara Shalitha containing laws on the administration of the sacrament of confession and other norms on fasting and abstinence were promulgated on the 1st of Jan., 1936. In 1941 the Malankara Hierarchs together condified the Thukasa of the Holy Qurbono, and the rubrics of the Holy Qurbono, and promulgated it. In 1942 Mar Ivanios published the Kudasavachanangal (form of the sacraments) explaining the matter and form of the sacraments and their efficacious administration. In 1941 and 1942, through circular letters the Archbishop-Metropolitan of Trivandrum gave some instructions regarding the divine office both to the clergy and laymen. In 1943 Mar Ivanios published the Thukasa for the administration of sacraments in order to ensure uniformity of celebration of the sacraments in the Malankara Church. In 1944 the Archbishop abrogated the Table of Taxes and published a new one, which came into force on 10 May 1944.

The Syro-Malankara Bishops who took part in the Plenary Council of India in 1950 issued certain regulations with regard to the celebration of more than one Holy Qurbono a day for the good of the faithful and resolving the holy days of obligation after obtaining the approbation of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

In 1957 the Bishops of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church were asked by the Congregation for Oriental Churches to bring up-to-date and complete, in the light of the new conditions and exigencies of the Syro-Malankara Church, the liturgical norms previously issued.[4] And instructions were given accordingly. According to another instruction of the same Congregation on 19 January 1961, the Metropolitan of Trivandrum issued new regulations of fasting and abstinence.

In the Eparchy of Tiruvalla, Bishop Zacharias Mar Athanasios revised the Leges Ecclesiae in January 1969 and promulgated it on September 15, 1969, which came into force on October3, 1969.[5] The Elenchus Taxarum was revised by Bishop Isaac Mar Yohanon and promulgated on 5 May 1984 and came into force on 3 July 1984.[6]

In the Archdiocese of Trivandrum, Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios revised the administrative laws promulgated by Mar Ivanios in 1936 and promulgated them on 29 September 1973.[7] which came into force from 4 November 1973. The same Archbishop revised the

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[4] The instruction of the Sacred Congregation for Oriental Church on 25 February 1957, Prot. No. 380/51. We have quoted it from Malancharuvil, The Syro-Malankara Church, 151.

[5] See Zacharias Mar Athanasios, Leges Ecclesiae (Tiruvalla Rupatha Idavaka Bharanam Sambandhichulla Niyamavali, Malayalam) Tiruvalla, 1969.

[6] See Isaac Mar Youhanon, Elenchus Taxarum (Tiruvalla Katholic Rupata: Idavaka Bharanam Sambandhichulla Niyamavaly, Malayalam) Tiruvalla, 1984.

[7] See benedict Mar Gregorios, Leges Ecclesiae (Thiruvanandapuram Athirupathayile Bharananibandhanakal, Malayalam), Trivandrum, 1973.

Elenchus Taxarum and promulgated it through a circular on 1 June 1985, which came into force on 1 July 1985.[8]

Bifurcating the Eparchy of Tiruvalla, Pope John Paul II created the eparchy of Bathery through the Bull dated October 28, 1978 and the Eparchy was formally erected on February 2, 1979. Bishop Cyril Mar Baselios codified the Leges Ecclesiae in 1985, to which he added further instructions to the priests through the letter dated august2, 1986 (prot. No. CI.19/86). To these, further guidelines were added on January 18, 1989, through his pastoral letter (Prot. No. PL. No. 13/89).

We have seen in brief the canonical sources of the Malankara Church. We know that some of these sources are constitutive while the others are informative. The sources of the early period include both the East Syrian sources as well as the native sources. Of these, we have said that the East Syrian Sources are identical with the West Syrian (Antiochene) sources at least up to the commencement of the fifth century, which in turn shares the patrimony of the Universal Church. Together with the sources of the later developments in the historical evolution of the Malankara Church, we can say that the Malankara Church has a deposit of a very rich canonical patrimony that serves as sources for the codification of the Particular Law of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church.

Malankara Catholic Church - a Major Archiepiscopal Church

At present the Malankara Catholic Church is a Major Archiepiscopal Church within the Catholic communion. According to the Eastern Canon Law there are four degrees of ecclesial status-the Patriarchal Churches, the major-archiepiscopal Churches, the Metropolitan churches and other Churches governed by an episcopes. The Malankara Church stands in the second place as a major archiepiscopal Church next to the Patriarchal Churches. As a Major Archiepiscopal Church it is an independent autonomous church under the general governance of the Pope. Though there is a difference in the title of the Patriarchs and the Major Archbishops, the powers of these two ecclesiastical dignitaries are almost the same. The only significant difference is that when the Major Archbishop is elected, his election can be declared only after receiving confirmation from Rome. In other matters especially those concerned with the administration of the church the Major Archbishop and the Major Archiepiscopal Church under him have the same canonical rights with the provision for Episcopal Synod and independence in deciding and executing the daily affairs of the Church as the Patriarch in the Patriarchal Churches. This means that the Malankara Catholic Church has now become a full-fledged sui juris church from canonical considerations with its own rights and responsibilities. But Canon law does not constitute a church; rather it only provides the framework for an existing church to function. Accordingly it becomes clear that the Malankara Catholic Community has received a canonical framework within which it has to live and establish itself as a church of Christ. What is the nature of the church that should exist and function within the canonical framework? This question leads us to the history of the community in the past, the values for which the community has been struggling through the centuries, the sociological situation in which this community finds itself today and its theological and spiritual responsibilities.

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[8] See Benedict Mar Gregorios, Elenchus Taxarum (Thiruvananthapuram Athirupata: Thirukarmanustanam Sambandhichulla Padisadhanam) TrivaNDRUM, 1985.

The Malankara orthodox- Jacobite Church functions according to the 'Constitution of the Malankara Church' Promulgated and approved by the General Council of the Church in1934 and finally approved by the Supreme Court of India in1958 .According to this Constitution the administrative structure of the Church consists of three levels of responsible bodies.

i. The laity receives a major role in the administration of the temporalities

ii. The ordained members are mainly concerned with the spiritual affairs of the church

iii. The laity has a significant role in the election of the Bishops

These characteristics are still to be implemented in the Malankara Catholic Church.

The present Code

The present Code limits the power of the Major Archbishop to the territory allotted to him. In the present situation, only Kerala, the Kanyakumary, Coimbatore, Nilgiris and Thiruchirapally districts of Tamilnadu and Mysore, Mandya, Hassan, Coorg, Chikmangalore, Shimoga and South Kanara districts of Karnataka come under the territory of the Malankara Major Archbishop. This means that there is almost no means to cater to the spiritual needs of the Malankara Catholics who reside in other parts of the country. This situation detrimental to the existence of this community, which is already the smallest, and there is a constant flow of population in this country. The Malankara Catholic Community should constantly fight for regaining the right it enjoyed in the pre- Portuguese period. Many are the areas which need attention. At present the canonical status as the major archiepiscopal church is only a framework though the particular laws are made. But it is fact that these could not be reached into the grass root level.

POPULAR DEVOTIONS –NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN TODAY'S PLURALISTIC INDIA (CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES)

Hrudayaraj Gade

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Catholic Church's Sensitivity towards Popular Devotions

The Second Vatican Council recognized the importance of popular devotions in the life of the Church and encouraged the bishops and priests to promote sound popular devotions - "Popular devotions of the Christian people are to be highly commended, provided they accord with the laws and norms of the Church" (SC 13).[1]

Directory On Popular Piety and The Liturgy,[2] published by the *Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments,* offers Principles and Guidelines to promote the liturgical life among the faithful and to utilize popular piety....

Popular Devotions and the Catholic Identity

Traditionally, the Catholic faith provides us with many devotions, from honouring Christ's Kingship, adoring His Precious Blood to the honouring of His Immaculate Mother, and praying devotions to the Saints in Heaven, the Angels and Holy Souls in purgatory. These popular devotions practically contribute to the shaping of the Catholic Faith (or Catholic identity). In India, the devotees generally promise to make vow offerings for the favours received. Censuring their head, lighting the candles, breaking the coconuts, giving charity to the poor, offering garlands etc. are some of the common practices of Indian devotees.

After the Second Vatican Council, with the over-emphasis given to the official Liturgy, even the Church-instituted popular devotions like Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament have almost

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[1] Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter: *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* , http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jpii_enc_17042003_ecclesi-de-eucharistia_en.html (accessed October 2014).

[2] Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Directory On Popular Piety and The Liturgy* (December 2001), http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20020513_vers-direttorio_en.html (accessed November 2014).

faded in the Church. There may be other modern reasons why particularly in the Western part of the world such devotions have been rejected. Sadly, the Holy Mass itself, even on Sundays and Solemnities, lacks some essential elements in the Liturgy, i.e., incense and thurible. So, we can observe that the Liturgy itself (in spite of many attempts to revive) has been suffering from poor attendance so far.

On the other side, popular devotions too suffer depreciation because of a few extremities... The devotion to the Holy Eucharist is and has to be the primary devotion in the Church. There is every reason that this devotion has to be revived in the Church....

Relationship between Popular Devotions, Culture and Religion

In popular devotions faith and culture meet one another. In other words, popular devotions arise in the encounter between the Catholic faith and culture. Popular devotions can be described as expressions of the inner bond between local culture and the religious faith of the people in the Church.... It should be noted here that "Inculturation", as a theological term, is defined in *Redemptoris Missio* as "the on-going dialogue between faith and culture." [3] So, popular devotions allow the practice of the faith to pass beyond the bounds of the Church's official liturgy and to permeate more thoroughly the daily lives of people in their own culture.

Popular Devotions in Today's Pluralistic India

Indian people, in general, have deep consciousness of the divine. The devotions in India have profound religious character. All religions recommend pilgrimages and other devotional practices as *sadhana* or spiritual practice which purifies the self and brings him/her closer to the divine. Regular *yathras* are made by the people every year with the purpose of purification, renunciation and transformation of life. *Tirtha yathras* to many holy places is a common practice by the people of all religions....

Historically, since beginning of Christianity in India, the devotees of Christ, *Khrist Bhaktas,* were strong religious followers. For reasons both theological and political, the *Khrist Bhaktas* are not baptized members of the Church, yet remain adoring disciples of Christ....

The popular devotions, in the Indian context, offer for the Church wonderful platform (pulpit) for much needed interreligious dialogue to understand and live in harmony with one another. Popular devotion is, indeed, a form of "internal dialogue" with the people of other religions who feel an inner joy in Christian feasts, and even celebrate them and make their own the religious values expressed in them...The goal of Hinduism is ***moksa*** *(*liberation or escape from ***samsara)*** attained through three religious methods or paths: the way of action or ritual (*karma marga*), the way of knowledge or wisdom (*jnana marga*), and of devotion (*bhakti marga*)....

In multi-religious context of India, Muslims have special devotion to Mary and numerous of them throng to Shrines and Churches of Mary. With religious approval of Mary and Jesus and the non-existence of female divine image in Islam, one can understand the Muslims' affinity with Christian pilgrim places....

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[3] Pope John Paul II, Encyclical Letter: *Redemptoris Missio*, (November 20, 1947), no. 52, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio_en.html (accessed November 2014).

Different Dimensions of Popular Devotions in India

In multicultural countries like India, the most difficult challenge is developing liturgy that fits the local culture....

I believe, the Evangelisation of the Church today has to adopt a natural process. In other words, evangelisation need not be a fiery action of engaging with the people directly. "And I...will draw all people to myself", said Jesus (Jn 12:32)....

On the subjective level, popular devotions nurture and persevere our faith... As Fr. Arokiasamy in his seminar paper in the book, *Popular Devotions* says:

> "Popular devotions express spirituality of the people. Such a spirituality is not religion in Barthian sense but a graced faith praxis. It includes their culture, their meanings, values, hopes, their existential questions, struggles and sufferings and their fears of forces of evil, alienation and death in the symbolic world (of culture and religion) and in the socio-political realm. In their struggle to cope with them, they live and create a spirituality. They are subjects of their spirituality."[4]

Besides personal spiritual benefits, popular devotions have psychological and social benefits too. Popular devotions bring different benefits to the individuals, families and communities at large. In India, popular devotions are often popular piety of the families and the communities. For many people, **particular and regular pilgrimages and devotions have become a family culture and serve the families in keeping them in good faith and unity....**

Some would argue that "Lay movements", "Prayer groups" or "Scripture study groups" have replaced popular devotions. **"World Youth Day" is said to be a very popular annual event in many places.** Such groups can no doubt be excellent additions to parish life, but they have not proven themselves capable of replacing devotions. **Today, in India, lay movements can be present like a *Bhakti* movements within the Church which offer dynamics of spirituality in groups...**It must not, however, be supposed that devotional practices or devotions of lay movements are unchecked. Paschal Mystery celebrated by the Church in Liturgy is and should be the central celebration of our Catholic faith.

Extremities and the Need for Vigilance and Discernment in Popular Devotions

The *sensus fidelium* (CCC 92) of the popular devotions have to be valued as reliable and their faith experience must be encouraged and guided properly in the right spirit. At the same time, constant vigilance and a deep sense of discernment are required to ensure that devotions contrary to the Christian faith and the mistake of syncretism to Christian piety are to be discreetly avoided...

The intellectual arrogance to judge popular devotions as immature, superficial and superstitious must not only be avoided but also the working of the Holy Spirit in them must be accepted... A lot depends on the priests to lead the congregation towards refreshing or purifying devotions of the Catholic faith.

Romanticism, Relativism and Subjectivism in Popular Devotions

To confuse emotional experience in popular devotions with devoutness is dangerous to one's Faith. It is sometimes disheartening to see the culture of *romanticism* creeping into religious

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[4] Paul Puthanangady (Ed.), Popular Devotions (Bangalore: NBCLC, 1986, p 473-4).

hymns of Christian liturgy and worship. Many Christian hymns in India sadly now have only the theme of love to the exclusion of the theme of Faith and Hope... Likewise, one could also find narcissistic mind-set of *materialism, relativism and subjectivism* in popular devotions. It is shocking that a particular devotion is simply popular because of the "promise" attached to it... The devotions cannot be allowed to become a bargaining with God for favours and for the exploitation of the religious sentiments for commercial gains. Devotions should not be based on superstition or magic... The popular devotions must be seen as opportunities of faith education and the building of the kingdom of God in the hearts of the people.

Need for New Language and New Media to Promote Popular Devotions in India

Now that everything is almost mentioned about what happens/should be done and does not happen/should not done between popular devotions and the people, one should consider, in today's Indian context, it is very important to adopt new language and use new media to promote popular devotions in India more extensively and effectively... If this is an age of marketing and if advertising has a very crucial role to serve us as a new pulpit of proclamation of our faith, then we should not hesitate to sell our "brands of faith."[5] In today's India, new media is an area where we do not do enough or more to develop the popular devotions. It is time that the Church leaves the comfortable zone of confining itself with regular and routine methods of promoting faith or popular devotion. The Second Vatican Council points out that it is almost impossible for the Church to carry out Christ's command to teach all nations without using the media.

Devotional depictions of Mary in art have been a wonderful tradition of Catholicism both in the West and Eastern parts of the Church. Like many world popular devotions, Catholic popular devotions in India, are also intertwined with history, culture, fine arts, narrations of stories or myths, etc. The national Catholic Shrine of Our Lady of Good Health in Velankanni is a fine example of such devotional development into a major popular pilgrim place in India. A universal longing for good health or any other extraordinary favours like the conception of the child is perhaps what makes this pilgrimage place popular and crowded. This shows us that universality **in teachings or belief will find the popular devotions or pilgrim places busy.** YouTube, Facebook/Twitter feeds, blog posts, podcasts, apps and messaging are popular channels of communication today. **Even music is well used to communicate the message. So, t**he Church's mission is connected to the challenges presented by modernity and post-modernity and hence the use of new pastoral methods (like popular devotion) combined with effective communication breeds excellent results. There is a lot being done by the Catholic Church to serve the devotees in India, but a lot more has to be done too to use the new media to address wider "digital world" audience. Of course, care should be taken that our faith sharing is not lost in virtual or digital world, but seen as real witness to the Good News of Jesus Christ.

[5] Mara Einstein, Brands of Faith: Marketing Religion in a Commercial Age (London and New York: Routledge, 2008).

INDIGENIZATION OF THE SYRIAN CHURCH IN KERALA: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

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THIS paper attempts to understand the history and cultural dynamics of religions in Kerala for more than two millennia and how a systematic indigenization of the church alongside. Religious studies have been taking place in a framework that is static and ahistorical.

Studies on Indigenization were revisited due to the recent development led growth in India. Post liberal 1990s increased possibilities of cultural tourism. Christian pilgrimage tourism has increased worldwide. Interest of cultural tourists to Kerala primarily has been religious. In India most cultural sites are linked with religions. Kerala a tiny coastal state in southwest India has many religions coexisting which intrigue natives as well as visitors. The second aspect that intrigues them is the antiquity of these religions, how well they have integrated with each other. The third aspect is how various religions coexist in Kerala by borrowing from each other. The enquiries in multiples lines on these intriguing positions point to one aspect the increasing and historical processes of cultural borrowings, assimilation and indigenization of all foreign religions has taken place within Kerala and this is an ongoing process.

Among the religious traditions in Kerala there are three broad categories

I. **Hindu/ Brahmanical**
II. **Non-Brahmanical or nastika (like Buddhism and Jainism)**
III. **West Asian (Judaism, Christianity and Islam)**

In this paper we shall deal focus on Christianity and the ongoing processes of indigenization. The three west Asian religious groups, Jews, Christians and Muslims came to Kerala at different times but coexisted in most parts of its past. Judaism, Christianity and Islam emerged in west Asia at different times. Though their history has been documented in Kerala for nearly two millennia we have seen it with an epistemological indifference. The dynamic reality of the west Asian religious systems operating in Kerala has seldom reflected in many of the historical, anthropological as well as sociological studies.[1]

Interreligious interactions within Kerala have been rarely looked into by researchers. Western philosophy has often looked at India as a spiritual world not a material world. This prompted theorists like Karl Marx to think that everything in India was driven by religion and lend Indian history a static spiritual outlook. This attitude has echoed time and again in the colonial writings and till recently among certain indologists and historians.

In an article by Dr. Cherian P.J, et al., Pattanam an archaeological site close to North Paravoor and Maliankara two ancient Christian centres posits evidence for hosting cross-border religions. These include the Brahmi inscribed pottery with the word amana which is contestably *sramana*

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[1] Narayanan M.G.S., 2004, Maritime history of Kerala: notes for a masterplan, in Journal of the entre for Heritage Studies vol.1- Tripunithura

referring to a Jain or Buddhist monk. There is a marked absence of non-local currency and doubts on the nature of local exchange at Pattanam. Foreign exchange must have been strong there and many foreign cultural elements mainly foreign ceramics are present. Besides, a few human bone samples from Pattanam were sent for DNA studies and the results further affirm the presence of west Asian residents in a multiethnic population at Pattanam. The major players in international trade between 1st c BCE to 5th c AD were residents of the port cities like Alexandria in Egypt as we come across in the Vienna Papyrus of 2nd c CE and the Peutinger table. This explains the necessity of coexistence of Syrian Christianity in Kerala along with other religions in the ports.

Trade brought Christianity to Kerala and it followed trade routes across the Indian Ocean active from 1st c BC to 5th c AD when trade declined. Many trade routes existed land or via sea or both. From 1st c BC onwards, we have more records stating the newly discovered utility of the Hippalus winds. This was the name given by the Greek navigators to the south west monsoon winds. Classical accounts mention that, Muziris was the nearest port in India in 1st c BC and AD. The presence of Christianity in Malabar Coast clearly took place before 5th c CE. Thus with such a long tradition, indigenization of church was the only course that could have helped Christianity to survive and succeed in Kerala in the centuries to come.

Historians have approached early history of Christianity in Kerala in an indifferent way. While the church historians accept the arrival of St. Thomas as a historical fact, many historians have rejected it as a legend which has blocked the path of true investigation.[2]

Process of indigenization from 500 CE to 1500 CE

This one millennia is the period of growth of church in Kerala. Christians were flourishing in the coastal towns like Kollam by 1000 CE as known from the Tarissapally copper plate. Church, trade and market were the pivots of the economic structure and spice trade in Kerala during this period.

During this period Christians continued to live in the markets in Kodungallur and slowly expand to the hinterland and upland. This is also attested by inscriptions. Many churches were built in the new settlements. Old churches and large christen settlements were frequented by missionaries and bishops. Persian crosses and Pahlavi (ancient Persian script) inscriptions have been found in many of the old churches. Then there are the open air stone crosses that were built by the local community and often predate church. This period of growth and expansion of Christianity out of the trade centre and coastal towns like Kodungallur and Kollam also led to contact with Hinduism in the midlands and further accelerated the process of indigenization.

Elements of indigenization and forms of dissent

Indigenization emerged as a form of dissent of Portuguese missionaries and a protest movement in Syrian orthodox churches. The old churches at Ramapuram, Kuravilangad, Edapally and Udayamperoor have survived and follow a similar pattern and are smaller. In these four places, new churches were built in the vicinity of the old church. These have been used as museums or serve as a small chapel or shrine in most churches. Many churches in central Travancore have indigenous architectural elements such as lamp posts made of stone and most customs followed are imitations of the Hindu customs. Thick stone and lime mortar outer walls are a feature of churches as at North Paravoor near Pattanam. This is similar to *anapalla mathil in* temples.

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[2] Ibid:37

Location of churches

The visit to several old Christian settlements would show its vicinity to other worship centres usually another Syrian church Jacobite/ Orthodox/ Knanaya church or a temple or both. In three places in Kerala, there were religious clusters. At north Paravoor in Ernakulam district the Marthoma Jacobite Syrian church, Kannankulangara temple and synagogue are adjacent to the market. At Chendamangalam four km from north Paravoor there is a temple, a synagogue, one church and one mosque adjacent to each other. At Kandanad near Udayamperoor, there is a fairly big Syrian orthodox church in the centre of the town or market area and a small catholic church nearby. There is a famous temple nearby. Similar is the case in Akaparambu.

In Angamaly, there are two churches adjacent to each other bordering the old marketplace. The catholic church as well as Jacobite church is in the name of St. Mary and they face each other. From their location close to the waterfront and proximity to market it is safe to surmise that the two churches in Angamaly predate the Portuguese period. In 17th c, the bishop approved by Portuguese resided in another quarter of the town. Thus locational analysis can show the location of the old market and location of the church within it. The proximity to market led to contacts with other communities particularly the dominant community. This led to gradual indigenization of the church.

Indigenization as a historical process

By the time of the Synod of Udayamperoor in 1599 CE, the church in Kerala was highly indigenized. It is not a synod which is a meeting of bishops. Since it was a meeting of the clergy drawn from various churches in Kerala it should be considered as *palliprathipurushayogam.*[3]The synod was an instrument of the nascent colonial state dreamt by the Portuguese in Kerala. It was the culmination of a century long attempts to Latinize the church by the Portuguese.[4] The synod criticized in strong terms the indigenizing tendencies of the church in Kerala. Among the canons, 56 are against indigenization. Most of the indigenizing elements were identified as superstitions and customs. By this time, laity was laid back and perhaps was lacking a spiritual inclination. Thus special provisions were made by the Portuguese by pressurizing their ally the king of Cochin to start seminaries in Vaipikotta to teach Latin and to train young priests. Prior to that, priesthood in Kerala followed a gurukula system in the priest's house.

It sounded the death knell of the *Palliyogam* which was an age old institution of church governance in Kerala. It also ended the native priest order (*desathu pattakkar*). The Synod also touched upon the superstitions and blind assimilation from the society. Cultural relativism or how the people of that couture sees things have to be understood according to Redfield.[5] These have not been entirely successful and resurfaced often as the economic and social contacts with other communities continued and Christians were not living in a vacuum. To create a new community of Christians who could be more westernized, Portuguese missionaries had grand plans of conversions. The neo-conversts were detached from their social ambit. Gradually, they also got integrated with the indigenous society. The reforms were introduced in haste by the Portuguese

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[3] Pulikunnel Joseph, 1998 preface in Zacharia Scaria Ed. 1998 Udayamperoor Sunahadosinte Kanonakal, Edamattom.

[4] Zacharia Scaria Ed. 1998 Udayamperoor Sunahadosinte Kanonakal, Edamattom:7

[5] Redfield Robert, 1953

and these were reversed partially later. In recent forms of popular piety in the churches in Kerala miracles and magic have resurfaced.

Earliest attempts at recognizing these efforts to arrest ongoing process of indigenization of the church were done by the missionaries particularly the Jesuits and this was much before the synod of Diamper. Though voices of dissent were there, few of the dissent notes have survived and fewer still studied.

Christian Folklore

Christian folklore was also first documented by the Christian missionaries. Syrian church folklore is now considered as an integral component of Malayali folk study. Peculiar dances during weddings and a rich tradition of folk songs among Syrian Christians are being lost systematically after 1599 synod.

One of the most common folk dance forms among the Syrian Christians is Margamkali which is most popular among Knanaya Christians. [67] The other major Christian art form is Parichamuttukali with a Christian theme but derived from native martial art forms like Kalaripayattu and Parichakali.[8] This art form emerged only in 16th c CE among the Christians of Kerala while[9] parichakali is an art form practiced by the Hindus, Christians and Muslims. In art forms a strong element of indigenization of the Kerala church can be seen. Parichamuttukali itself has evolved into seven different versions among the knanaya, suriani, yakobaya, malankara, marthoma, Latin and dalit Christians.[10] Same folk-art forms are shared among the Syrians, Knanayas and the Latins three major Christian groups in Kerala. It also shows integration of these churches at a cultural level. The art forms point to different levels of acculturation that the church in Kerala has gone through.

Niranam pattukal or Niranam songs which were codified in 17th century by a ramban (senior priest) from Niranam in Alappuzha district is another example of indigenization of Syrian church. These songs are set in local language and tune and spread the message of pride in a shared Christian heritage within a larger society by showcasing the uniqueness of the Syrian Christian culture. It is a cultural product of indigenized Christians of Kerala. [11]

Art forms that are folk in nature evolve in an organic society and keep on changing with generations. The changes in wedding songs among the Jews and the Knanaya Christians (both are similar) have been documented.[12,13] The Niranam songs had even modified the biblical parables.

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[6] Choondal Chummar, 1984. Christian theatre in India. Trissur, Kerala Folklore Academy

[7] Chackochan Asha, Margamkali oru kristhava kalaroopam in Pallath J.J. ed, Christian Folklore Vol. 1, Kerala Folklore Academy, Kannur.

[8] Choondal . ibid.

[9] Ulahannan. 1993 Margamkali, parichamuttukali pattukal, Kottayam

[10] Thenadikulam George. 2004, Parichamuttukali kristhava paramparyathil in Pallath J.J ed, Christian Folklore Vol.1, Kerala Folklore Academy, Kannur.

[11] Manalil Paul., 2004, Niranampattukal in Pallath J.J ed, Christian Folklore Vol.1, Kerala Folklore Academy, Kannur: 48

[12] Jussay P.M. Kerala joothanmarudeyum, knanaya christhianikaludeyum purathana kalianapattukal in Pallath J.J ed, Christian Folklore Vol.1, Kerala Folklore Academy, Kannur

[13] Scaria Zacharia Ed, Karkuzhali

A major part of the Christian folk culture transcends any form of legitimization by the church and clergy and is part of a larger public space. One of the best examples is Margamkali which is done in 14 parts. Between each part there are songs named Edakalipattu which were fillers based on small parables drawn from the Old Testament done with more freedom by the singer and performers.[14] During interviews with artistes and singers who are basically farmers, they vividly remembered the Edakalipattu rather than the main parts which were related to the proselytizing mission of St. Thomas. This is a classic example of the high degree of indigenization and assimilation with other prevalent art forms in central Travancore. There is a possibility that, the Margamkali was an easy form of outreach among the converted Christians and the art forms chosen belonged to the communities from which largest number of converts was drawn. The assimilation of the new religion was largely made uneventful through these processes of indigenization.

Church in Kerala and other communitie

There are ample reasons to believe that strong links and cultural bonds existed between Christians and other communities. Traditions and legends associated with almost every major church in Kerala has great respect for the local ruling chiefs or Hindu landlords. They gave land and permission to build church and gifted timber or lamp for the church. In quite a few churches even now a representative of these erstwhile royal families has to visit the church to begin annual festival. Organic links between a Nair lord and Christians are still followed at Vallarpadom church (the Paliyam family). The church at the pilgrim centre Bharanganam in Kottayam, and in church in Thalasseri diocese also was gifted by Nair overlords. Church has friendly links with local community. The local community irrespective of cast and creed is seen actively taking part in church festivities and often conducting part of the festivals. This has continued even in 21st century.

Discussion

Indigenization of the Syrian church in Kerala is a subject that is too vast and each aspect itself will be matter of discussions in future. In a globalized world with increasing glocalization, religions play a dubious role. Discussions on indigenization of church in India are done by civil groups, political parties that resist conversions, laity and the clergy cutting across denominations and liturgies. It was a natural response to survival in the socio- political conditions in Kerala for the churches to reinvent in local fervor. Those who prefer the Indianization of church want it to continue unabatedly. Outright Indianization has been attempted in the missions outside Kerala but seem to have backfired. Cautious indigenization keeping intact uniqueness and mutually c respecting space of each community is a vital part of indigenization which can be considered as a secular front of the Church and an initiative towards interreligious understanding and peace building.

Acknowledgements

The paper is part of larger attempts to document the integration of church in Kerala with local culture particularly borrowings from other religions in Kerala in a historical context. This project has been funded by United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia.

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[14] Punnoose M.I, in palathu J,J ed, Christian Folklore Vol1, Kerala Folklore Academy, Kannur: 66

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BAPTISM & THE CHARISMATIC *HABITUS*: NEO-PENTECOSTALS AND CATHOLIC CHARISMATICS IN GOA

Savio Abreu

Introduction

I have drawn on the works of Bourdieu and Coleman to argue that religious activities and practices among the neo-Pentecostals have contributed to the "creation of a form of charismatic habitus, a form of embodied disposition" (Coleman 2000: 6). The process of the constitution and articulation of the Charismatic *habitus* leads to Charismatic constructions of the person, of social practice, of space and time. This *habitus,* in the case of neo-Pentecostals in Goa, was formed through intensive socializing during their weekly praise and worship, prayer cell meetings and the 'Encounter with God' programme and in the case of Catholic Charismatics during their prayer group meetings, night vigils, charismatic programmes and retreats like Potta retreat and Life in the Spirit seminar.

The rituals that mark the passage of time for the individual neo-Pentecostals do not literally follow the biological cycle and differ from the Hindu and Catholic life-cycle rituals due to the dispositions, motivations and classifying and organizing principles generated by the Charismatic *habitus*. I would like to analyze the life-cycle rituals of the neo-Pentecostals as Geertz's (1973) 'cultural texts', what Newman would call 'ritual drama' (2001: 218-228), which may be read and interpreted to get a better understanding of that particular culture.

Notions from the Charismatic *habitus* on baptism

The Charismatic *habitus* by generating ritual practices bring the idiosyncratic self in line with idealized and universally shared incarnations of faith, achieving status of perfect health happiness and prosperity(Coleman 2000: 134). Through the rite of baptism a neo-Pentecostal believes that God brings about a change in the individual self and all of one's ungodly ambitions, sinful past and selfishness are buried in the waters of baptism. The *habitus* of the individual neo-Pentecostal makes one regard the baptism rite as a funeral service, wherein one buries the old self and comes alive in God. Another notion connected to baptism is that it brings about the empowerment of the self by activating the Holy Spirit in their lives. Drawing from Turner, Newman (2001: 218-228) defines liminality as the threshold point, a process by which a participant in ritual drama is separated from normal time and normal social structure and undergoes a new experience by which he may perceive new truths, get a new status, assume a new role and come to a greater understanding. The pastor of 'New Frontiers International'(henceforth NFI) gave the example of the baptism of a woman from his Church. They had to carry her into the water since she was hardly able to walk. When she came out after being baptized she was able to walk up to the first floor of her house. She was amazed since she had never walked like this without someone's support and attributed the healing of her legs to God. Newman while describing ritual dramas that are once in a lifetime events, laden with symbolic significance and emotional meaning says, "Rite of passage have greatest meaning for the individual directly concerned, though everyone present may be influenced at some level" (Ibid: 221)

The symbolic significance of the rite of baptism is that it is a bridge-burning act wherein the new convert publicly declares his allegiance to the new faith and severs all ties with his old faith community. Baptism is a public declaration to the world and to the devil that one is a follower of Christ. Visvanathan (1999: 263) found that the Syrian Christian life-cycle rituals of birth, marriage and death express the intrinsic correspondence between the life of Jesus and the life of every Christian. For most of the neo-Pentecostals who were Catholics before, the baptism rite effectively implies severing all family and kinship ties. On the other hand baptism bonds the new convert to the community of believers, who are referred to as the family of God. In the baptism I witnessed, after the ritual of immersion in the water the newly baptized were warmly congratulated by all the other members through handshakes or hugs. Such notions elevate the idea of community from having a basis in biological, kinship or lineage ties to one in which members have their spiritual unity in Christ and his gospel. The new members are regarded as brothers and sisters by the other members of the community, thus compensating for the loss of kinship ties when they joined the new sect. A member of NFI mentioned that when he first joined the Church he was amazed by their love: "When I would go to Church Anna (an old woman) would come & give me a big hug. I had never seen that happen anywhere, people being so friendly". Robinson (1998), drawing on the work of Jack Goody, while analyzing Goan Catholic life-cycle rituals found that through such rites, which are celebrated publicly, the individual Catholic is made to feel one with the community of believers, who are referred to as his/her brothers and sisters in Christ. She adds that in attempting to make its members think of the Church- rather than of their lineages or kin groups- as the primary (spiritual) community to which they belong, the Church draws a distinction between kin and blood relations and membership of the Catholic community or 'family' (spiritual kinship).

Another important notion of the Charismatic *habitus* is that baptism is parallel to the circumcision of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament the Jews were circumcised to show they were God's people, but today through water baptism given by Jesus, they are marked as God's people. Thus the rite of water baptism like circumcision is a ritual marker of their membership of the new spiritual community. It is a spiritual mark of identity inscribed on their body to distinguish them from the others (whom they call pagans/ gentiles). Hollenweger (1972: 485) finds that the baptism of the Spirit, with the objectively ascertainable sign of speaking in tongues, serves as a 'tribal mark' to distinguish between those who belongs to one's own 'tribe', the Church, and those who belongs to the 'hostile tribes', the world. The Catholic Charismatics would term baptism as the indelible seal of the Holy Spirit. In the NFI Churches water baptism is essential to become a committed member of the Church. Only committed members are eligible to take up any posts and responsibilities in the Church. Thus baptism is a vehicle to assume offices in the Church and enter the elite group of elders who assist the Pastor in running the Church. Catholic life-cycle rituals differ from Hindu life-cycle rituals since they link the Catholic with the beliefs and doctrines of the Church (Robinson 1998). The neo-Pentecostal baptism too is linked to their teachings to give it divine legitimization. The teaching of NFI runs like this: Jesus got water baptized (Matthew 3: 13-17); Jesus lived his life on earth as an example for all, therefore they need to imitate all that he did and so get baptized. Baptism is a thus a command from God.

The rite of water-baptism

Each neo-Pentecostal Church has its own way of performing the water baptism. As part of the preparation to receive water baptism each catechumen has to attend a short foundation course. Even after attending the entire course, a person can decline to receive baptism. The catechesis

consists of teachings on sin and other topics regarding the importance of taking baptism. The teachings on baptism link the rite of baptism with the doctrines of the Church and contribute in building up the Charismatic *habitus*. The following description of the baptism rite of some believers of the NFI Church will explain the procedure of the rite. Five members of the NFI Church received baptism on the beach of Miramar, a popular tourist destination and the beach closest to the capital city of Panjim. This rite took place on November 2, 2008. Among the catechumens was a young Goan couple who were Catholics before. They had two young daughters and the woman was expecting their third child. The third catechumen was a Korean woman in her 30s, who was pregnant. The fourth was a young woman, around 20 years old, and the fifth was a Hindu woman, who appeared to be in her late 20s. After the second service got over at the Church hall in Panjim, a crowd of nearly 30 people assembled at the Miramar beach. The pastor first prayed over the five catechumens and read a few texts from the Bible concerning baptism. He asked each one of them if they were receiving baptism of their own accord or were being forced by anyone.

The actual rite of baptism took place in the sea water. Only the pastor and a member of the Church, who was assisting him, went into the sea along with the five catechumens. The water was above the knee level and the Pastor who was in his shorts was dressed appropriately for the occasion. All the others remained on the shore watching the rite and clicking photographs. The sand was really burning as it was around 1 pm. The pastor and his assistant held the catechumen, while the pastor laid his right hand on the person and said some prayers. They then dipped the person, head first, completely in the water either forwards or backwards. The catechumens who were in their Sunday best clothes were completely soaked. They immersed the catechumen only once unlike some other born-again Churches who practice triple immersion. After finishing with all the five they came out on the sand where the rest of the people were standing. The congregation congratulated the newly-baptised and the mood was one of joy and happiness. After that the pastor asked the people to pray for them. He laid his hands on one of the baptized and the people also extended their hands and prayed for them. They also prophesized for the five new converts. The whole ceremony which lasted for an hour ended with a song "I have decided to follow Jesus".

Doctrine of the Charismatic movement on 'Baptism in the Holy Spirit'

When Catholic Pentecostalism, which soon came to be known as the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, arrived on the Pentecostal scene in the US, it led to a flurry of theological activity as many Churchmen were forced to make new assessments of their own understanding of the Pentecostal movement. During the 1970s itself it became clear that since the Classical Pentecostals were either unwilling or unable to contribute to the developing mainline Charismatic theology, Charismatic scholars developed their own view of the "baptism in the Holy Spirit" that allowed Pentecostalism to flourish in the historic Churches without the "cultural baggage" and rigid exclusivism espoused by many of the Pentecostal Churches (Synan 1997: 253). The new position, espoused by the CCR and the Pentecostals in other mainline, historic Churches, but accepted in varying degrees and with varying modifications by the independent neo-Pentecostals, viewed the Pentecostal experience ("the decisive coming of the Spirit" according to McDonnell 1980: 27) as an essential part of the 'rites of initiation', that is, baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist. By receiving the Spirit in initiation, one becomes a member of Christ's body, is introduced into the people of God, and is joined to a worshipping community (Ibid). Thus, being 'baptized in the Spirit' was identical with water baptism, while the later experience of tongues

and other gifts of the Spirit constituted a release or actualization of the grace given and received at baptism. This was in contrast with the Classical Pentecostal view of a separate 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' subsequent to conversion and water baptism, with the necessary 'initial evidence' and 'Biblical proof' of speaking in tongues. The Charismatics rejected the Classical Pentecostal position on the necessity of glossolalia. In adherence to the principle of 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism' they believed that a person could be baptized in the Spirit as an infant at water baptism, while the gifts of the Spirit could appear in one's later Christian experiences. They accepted that most Charismatics speak in tongues, not as 'initial evidence' but as one of the authenticating gifts of the Spirit.

As mentioned above, the different independent neo-Pentecostal groups in Goa differ in their interpretation of the rite of baptism. Elucidated below are the views of the members of the NFI Church on baptism. Unlike the Catholic Charismatics they do not accept that the Pentecostal experience is an essential part of the 'rites of initiation', since they do not accept the sacrament of confirmation and have a different understanding of Eucharist. They differ from the Catholic Charismatics since they distinguish between water baptism and Spirit baptism. They have no particular order for the two baptisms. A new convert may either be water-baptised and then spirit-baptised or vice versa. They teach that it is necessary to have both the baptisms, since both are equally important. One of the women I interviewed compared receiving one baptism and not wanting to have the other with a woman who loves a man and is happy to live with him but does not want to marry him. Unlike water baptism which is a public act and has a particular ritual, spirit baptism has no particular rite or place and can occur anywhere and anytime.

The most distinct external symbol which has characterised Pentecostal movements all over the world and which has given it a distinct identity is the practice of "glossolalia". The distinct contribution of the Pentecostal movement has been to single out "glossolalia" as the only evidence of having received baptism in the Spirit and make it part of "normal" Christian worship rather than a curious by-product of religious enthusiasm. Like the Catholic Charismatics, NFI does not accept the Classical Pentecostal position on the necessity of glossolalia as proof for being born again. The NFI pastor's wife while speaking of baptism in the Spirit said: "Spirit baptism is not practised in many Churches. For example, Rick Warren who is such a great preacher and writer does not believe in speaking in tongues. My Church believes in speaking in tongues as direct communication with God and wishes everyone to speak in tongues, but there are a few people who have still not yet spoken in tongues".

They link 'baptism in the Spirit' with the biblical discourse of the occurrence of the 'Pentecost' event when the Holy Spirit came down upon the disciples in the form of tongues of fire (Acts 2:1-4) and cite other texts like Acts 2:38-39 to point out that once a person is baptized, he/she will receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Some members do not link glossolalia with baptism in the Spirit, but cite other gifts of the Spirit like preaching, teaching and healing as actualization of the grace received when one is baptized in the Spirit. At the same time they have high regard for glossolalia and expect everyone baptized in the spirit to speak in tongues. Glossolalia is also a very common practice not just in their prayer meetings, but also in their everyday life. A woman who has faced a lot of trouble from her husband for becoming a neo-Pentecostal found that whenever she could not pray openly in the house, she would pray in tongues and that gave her lot of strength. Another woman sat in her bedroom and asked God for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and then for more than an hour she was speaking in tongues.

Conclusion

The creation of a distinct Charismatic *habitus* has led to the life-cycle rituals of the neo-Pentecostals differing from the biological clock and from other religious traditions. I have analyzed the life-cycle ritual of birth in the light of notions of the born-again Christian community being elevated to a spiritual community of believers, elevated from its biological and kinship moorings. The rite of baptism is a bridge-burning act for the new convert, who severs all ties with his/her old faith community and publicly declares his/her allegiance to the new faith. Neo-Pentecostals distinguish between water baptism and the baptism in the Spirit, both important for their religious life. On the other hand the Catholic Charismatics equate baptism in the Spirit with water baptism and incorporate the Pentecostal experience within the rites of initiation. Baptism in the Spirit which has no particular rite or place is linked with glossolalia and is a distinguishing external characteristic of Pentecostalism. Like the Catholic Charismatics, the neo-Pentecostals reject the Classical Pentecostal position on the necessity of glossolalia. Water baptism, wherein the new convert is immersed completely in the water, like circumcision, is a ritual marker of the new convert's membership in the born-again Christian community. The neo-Pentecostals connect birth with death through the notion of baptism being a funeral service, a liminal experience wherein the neophyte buries his/her old self and is born again in Christ. By accepting only adult baptism, which stresses on the free and deliberate choice of the individual to become a Christian, the neo-Pentecostals' 'life-cycle' begins not with biological birth but spiritual birth (being baptized in the Spirit).

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"LIVED CATHOLICISM DEFIES BOUNDARIES - INSIGHTS FROM THE COASTAL CONTEXT"

P.T. Mathew, S.J.

Introduction

This paper makes an attempt to understand Catholicism as lived religion, focussing on the deeper dynamics related to the shaping or reshaping of its boundary in concrete situations. It is my belief that the study would throw light on the less visible dimensions of lived Catholicism that would help reflect on its theological significance in the present day context.

Before proceeding let us first clarify what we understand by *lived religion* and *boundary*. What usually comes under scrutiny in any study of Catholicism, or any established religion for that matter, is its rational articulation comprising its scripture, doctrinal codifications, ethical precepts or institutional structure. Sociologists like Robert Merton make a distinction between the *manifest* and the *latent* modes of religion; *manifest mode* refers to the socially recognized and sanctioned elements of religion that exist within conventional and official structures and norms. The *latent mode*, on the other hand, refers to those elements that are not officially recognized and approved, and hence operate outside the official structures and norms.[1] In this paper the concept 'lived Catholicism' is used as synonymous with the 'latent mode of Catholicism' as discussed above. Authors like Meredith McGuire use the concept of 'lived religion' as the ethnographic framework for understanding beliefs and practices of the faithful in their everyday life, taking into account the non-official and the non-dogmatised elements in the practice of religion.[2] Lived Catholicism in the present study refers to the Catholic religion as lived by the fishing communities along the Kerala-Tamilnadu coast in the Southern corner of the Indian peninsula.

Boundary is a notion that is usually employed to designate the separating line between two realms or regions, whether conceptual or geo-political. A fence, a wall, a river, a mountain or a forest may become a physical boundary line. The notion comes to us primarily as referring to a nation-state: as administrative units having monopoly of power over a territory with demarcated boundaries, legitimizing its rule by laws it enacts. The same concept is being applied to social segments like caste groups, ethnic or tribal collectivities, and religious communities. It is in this conceptual sense that we refer to the boundary of religious communities. As a sign of separation boundary 'encloses' to provide identity to the group, separating it from other contending religious groupings. The more rigid a boundary is, the more strange those outside of it appear. In this sense boundary is an ambivalent concept; it both reveals the limits as well as the inexhaustible mystery that lies beyond.... The official Catholic tradition, rooted in its Semitic worldview, looks at boundary primarily as line of separation (as opposed to being a region of interaction, as we shall see in lived Catholicism).

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[1] Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, (1968 enlarged edition), Amerind Publishing Co. Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi: chapter 3.

[2] Meredith McGuire, *Lived Religion – Faith and Practice in Everyday Life*, 2004, p. 12.

Coastal Catholicism as Lived Religion

Study of lived religion calls for appropriate methods that are quite distinct from the classical methodologies of dogmatic theology, and often seeks the help of various disciplines, particularly the social sciences. Since the beliefs and practices are not codified unlike in creedal religions, these can be ascertained only indirectly. Cultural studies, ethnographic methods, ritual theory, etc. help in eliciting the essence of lived religion.

Coastal Catholicism comprises two main strands of religiosity in close interaction: *neithal religiosity*[3] and *Iberian Catholicism*[4]. The mass conversion of the coastal people of the erstwhile Travancore into the Christian fold goes back to Francis Xavier and his companions coming from the Iberian Peninsula in the middle of the sixteenth century. Missionary letters and colonial reports of this period give us a fairly good picture of the infancy stage of the new community of coastal Catholics. But details of their pre-Christian history are scanty; still we have enough evidence to say that there existed a unique coastal culture and religious expression. *The neithal culture* of the maritime community ensured life in harmony with the geo-social environment and occupation in close interaction with the sea and the seashore. Its specific worldview and religious conceptions, which may be called *neithal religiosity*, gave them support and protection in their risk-ridden life. Closer look will reveal different layers of Indic traditions like Buddhism, Jainism, Tantrism, and popular Hinduism that had contributed to neithal religiosity at various periods of its history.

The encounter between neithal religiosity and Iberian Catholicism was significant in redefining the religious boundary transforming it into Coastal Catholicism. The process was not always pleasant or smooth. Xavier and his companions, true to their boundary-affirming Iberian Catholic tradition, tried hard to eliminate the belief system and ritual practices of the neithal heritage with limited success. Their presumption was that the fisherpeople along the Indian coast were idolaters and worshippers of the devil. Studies show that even after conversion, many elements of the pre-Catholic faith traditions continued to operate along with the new dispensation. Lived Catholicism felt comfortable with both the systems without conflict, although official Catholicism tends to deny, or at best ignore such phenomena, if not condemn it as syncretism. The co-existence of the Catholic and the *neithal*, mostly interacting with each other crossing over boundaries, reflect much of the present-day coastal Catholicism as really lived.

The following examples would illustrate the point better. First we shall take a diachronic view of coastal Catholicism defying boundaries, followed by some contemporary examples of the synchronic interaction across religious boundaries.[5]

a) The Cult of Cintathiramatha

Mary, mother of Jesus, is widely revered as patron and protector of the faithful all along the sea shore. She is venerated as *Cinatathiramatha* (Our Lady of Good Voyage) at the church in Vizhinjam, and is depicted as standing in a ship holding child Jesus in her arms. A closer look at

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[3] *Neithal* (from *neithal tinai*) was the term used for the coastal zone in the Sangam literature (5oo BCE-200CE) of ancient Tamilakam in its five-fold division of eco-cultural zones. The term *tinai* referred to geographical areas and to specific norms of social living as well as to psychological moods.

[4] The Iberian Peninsula comprises the nations of Spain and Portugal.

[5] For more details on these illustrations see P.T. Mathew, *We Dare the Waters – the World and the Worldview of Mukkuvar*, Chennai: University of Madras, 2001, Chapter 4.

the cult discloses many strands of coastal religiosity. Her image as mother of good voyage is vital to the sea-going fishermen in their life of risk and danger, and can be seen as superimposed on their conception of the ocean as *Kadalamma* (Mother Ocean). Her image is ambivalent; she is not only a benign and bounteous mother, but is also a ferocious warrior protecting them from danger. The features also link up to the image of Mata or Devi with the mother goddess cult of ancient Dravidian religiosity. The veneration of Bhadrakali as well as *Saptmatrukkal* remained prevalent along the coast from ancient times. Thus the three strands of divine conception stay intermingled and coexisting in the cult of *Cintathiramatha*. Lived Catholicism does not feel any incongruity since its conception of the boundary is not one of separation but of interaction.

b) Veneration of Warrior Saints

Coastal Catholicism shows an obvious affinity for those saints who depict militant or warrior features. St. Michael and St. James (*Santiyagappar*) are obvious examples. But other saints like St. Antony also are ascribed militant features. "Our life is a life-long fight with the ocean" – these words echo the philosophy (and theology and spirituality) of coastal Catholics. Its link with the neithal culture and the hunting ethos of the coastal people cannot be missed. It has also deep roots in the cult of warrior gods in the ancient Tamilakam; Murugan and Vairavan (Bhairavan), the two ancient Dravidian warrior gods, had their share of influence on neithal religiosity. In Coastal Catholicism we find these warrior qualities getting transferred to many Christian saints.

c) Rituals to Ward off Evil

The nature of work characterised by risk and uncertainty impels coastal people to seek protection and to ward off evil through ritual acts. The world of ritual practices shows the influence of ancient tantric tradition with widespread use of *yantras* and *mantras*. But the coastal Catholics have succeeded in 'baptizing' them with Christian motifs and prayers, often associating them with warrior saints or the Holy Cross. Examples are the *Antoniar Chit* (St. Antony's Plate), *Irupu Chakram* (The wheel-seat) of St. Michael, and *Satrusamharamala* (yantra to ward off evil). Church functionaries often discount these as 'pagan' or superstitious, but closer scrutiny reveals their Christian character as lived theological expression. Christian saints and the Holy Cross are incorporated into the yantras, and the eight directions are entrusted to their protection in the pattern of *ashtadikpalakas* (guardian divinities of the eight directions). The prayers, written often in mystifying style, are nothing but Christian prayers expressing the fruits asked for. The ancient tantric tradition had left its imprint on all Indic religions, and coastal Catholicism is no exception.

The Contemporary Scene

The tendency to defy the boundary is not confined to the past; it has been continuing as part of the phenomenon of lived Catholicism, and its marks are still visible today. The relatively peaceful co-existence of the three major religious groups, viz. Hindu, Muslim and Christian, is a characteristic mark of today's Kerala society, and it is equally valid for the coastal context. The relationship was not always smooth, yet a dynamic process of interaction and dialogue has always been present. We shall illustrate it with some contemporary examples.

Various forms of ritual offering (*nercha*) are common practice among coastal Catholics; *salt and pepper nercha*, *kañjinercha*, (distribution of rice porridge), *mūdāvinercha* (dressing up the statue of our lady with a new cloth), etc. are examples. What is significant for us is that such practices are not confined to the Catholic Church or to Catholic celebrations. Prayers and offerings are made at the nearby Hindu temples and Muslim shrines too. For example, at Vizhinjam fish

vending women and cyclists, on their way to the inland markets, unfailingly stop at the temple and make their offerings to ensure good business that day; on their way back too, they make offerings in gratitude if the day was good. They do not find any contradiction in such practices. They also offer 'oil and wig' (*eṇṇayum thiriyum*) at the same temple to receive favours. Many Catholics participate in the *vedi nercha* (ritual firing of gun shots) at the *Amman* temple in order to recover lost articles. "I will teach you a lesson; I have offered a *nercha* at the Thaṭṭātheru temple", we may hear people say.[6] According to the temple committee, a major portion of the cash collection at the temple comes from the coastal Catholic community.

The Muslim shrines and holy places too get their share of offerings. At Vizhinjam there are two tombs of Muslim saints at Karimpallikara, the southern part of the beach, preserved in an ancient shrine, together with a miraculous well nearby. It is a sacred spot not only to the Muslims but also to the coastal Catholics. *Karimpallikara Uppa* is invoked to punish a person in retaliation for the harm he might have done. The 'bucket and rope' *(pāḷayum kayarum)* nercha at the well is said to be effective for children's illness. These instances show that lived Catholicism defies boundaries not only in its historical evolution, but also in its contemporary existence.

Some Salient Features of Lived Catholicism

a) Lived Catholicism tells us that boundary is a region of interaction, not a wall of separation.

The different religious streams in lived Catholicism do not run along parallel lines; a process of dynamic encounter and interaction, unhindered by official Church, remains a characteristic mark. The boundary line is seen not as a wall of separation, but a region that brings together divergent traditions and worldviews. The creative religious mind of the people shapes the religion to meet the needs of the community at the phenomenal level. In sociological terms the Catholic tradition has contributed to the *structural identity* of the community, while leaving the *meaning frame* largely to the *Indic/neithal* tradition. The active survival of beliefs and practices from both traditions side by side with no major conflict is proof enough of a boundary conception that is merging into each other creating a region of creative interaction. It ignores or defies the legal or dogmatic boundaries vertically erected between religions.

Contrasting forms of religious logic are at work here: lived religion is built on *conjunctive logic*, ie, *both* this *and* that. In contrast, the inherent logic of Iberian Catholicism has been a *disjunctive* one, ie, *either* this *or* that, but never both.[7] Lived religion remained open to welcome another tradition while remaining rooted in the Catholic foundation. An honest acknowledgement of this factor, largely ignored by theologians and church functionaries, will contribute to ecclesiological explorations in the Indian context.

b) In Lived Catholicism people become subjects of religion and architects of theology. Any new element or disparate idea has to be fitted into the meaning system or worldview, or else it will be eliminated. Here the coastal people become real subjects of religion and makers of their theology - no more mere consumers of religious/theological artefacts. They become subjects – as both interpreters of religion and creators of theology; first, they dared to re-read and re-formulate the Christian scriptures, practices and doctrines in response to the needs and thought patterns of

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[6] The *vedi nercha* at the temple has been suspended in recent times.

[7] Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, New York: Orbis, 1985, 150.

neithal context; second, they brought along elements of their neithal religiosity into their practice of Catholicism.

The post-Tridentine Church was preoccupied with the *object of theology*, viz. *tradition*, which meant the doctrine transmitted by the Church from the time of Christ and the Apostles to the present day. The coastal Catholics, as subjects, expand the scope of tradition, and try to include their rich neithal heritage that has been sustaining them amidst misery and death. Every lived religion implies a lived theology, and coastal Catholicism is no exception. It also throws light on the very method of their theologising in their everyday life.

c) Boundary as perceived by lived religion can become potential arena of inter-religious enrichment. Religious change along the Travancore coast, unlike in Goa or Tuticorin, was largely a conflict-free process, although there were areas of discrepancy. A religious community with an open boundary-line was displaced by one with closed boundaries; coastal Catholicism became well demarcated and enclosed as never before. The official Church failed to recognize this discrepancy till the time of Vatican II which acknowledged the plurality of cultures (*Gaudium et Spes*, 53), and spoke of entering "into communion with various cultural modes, to her enrichment and theirs too" (G.S.58). The Christian tradition has a long history of encounter with the boundaries of varied cultures/religions at different stages of its evolution, leading to periodic revision of its own boundary. The history of Christianity in the early centuries is marked by the impact of Hellenistic, Roman, Germanic and Celtic cultures and worldviews. Today the lived Catholicism of coastal people may pave the way to look at boundary as potential arena of inter-religious enrichment.

Conclusion

Religious boundary has become a critical component in the highly charged atmosphere of the present day socio-political discourse in the country. Official religion seems helpless in dealing with the issue creatively, if not becoming part of the issue. Perhaps study of lived religion may have a lesson or two to give us in approaching the problem differently. It may help take our attention away from understanding boundary as wall of separation to boundary as region of interaction and potential arena for inter-religious enrichment. That would be a contribution of true religiosity to the making of a more humane, and divine, world.

KOLAM: A SYMBOL OF RELIGIOUS HARMONY AND INTEGRATION

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India without art is unimaginable! India is home to various art and culture. Any festival or auspicious occasion is incomplete without an integration of art. Kolam is a floor decoration at the entrance of the house with traditional patterns. Kolam is an age old traditional religio-cultural floor art form prepared in front of Hindu houses (labyrinth) everyday early morning by the woman of the house in the southern part of India, Tamil Nadu. The woman of the house draws an artistic design using lines and dots. From the basic geometric design to complex art, 'Kolam' is represented in various ways and is traditionally transferred from one generation to another. What makes 'Kolam' an interesting area of study is the fact that it is not only practiced among traditional Tamil Hindu families but also followed among Tamil Christians. The aim of this paper is to analyse various Kolam depicted by Tamil Christians and also to understand the religious themes and symbols followed in the art. For this study, a sample of 10-20 designs were photographed and collected through field visits and analysis is done.



ईशभक्तिः परं ज्ञानम्

ईशभक्तिः परं ज्ञानम्

DHARMARAM

Devotion to the Lord is the Supreme Wisdom

Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram

Bengaluru 560029