

**Theological Studies on Saint Chavara 5**

**KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA**  
**The Wise Liturgical Reformer of**  
**Thomas Christians of Malabar**

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Thomas Christians of Malabar**

**Francis Kanichikattil CMI**

2020

**Chavara Central Secretariat**

Kochi 680 030 Kerala, India

**&**

**Dharmaram Publications**

Bangalore 560029 India

***Kuriakose Elias Chavara:  
The Wise Liturgical Reformer  
of Thomas Christians of Malabar***

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## THEOLOGICAL STUDIES ON SAINT CHAVARA

Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara (1805-1871) - a Carmelite religious priest and a professor of theology (*Malpan*) in the Syro-Malabar Church, who pioneered consecrated life in the Indian Church by founding the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI; in collaboration with Thomas Palackal and Thomas Porukara, in 1831), the first indigenous religious congregation for men and the Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (CMC; in collaboration with Leopold Beccaro OCD, in 1866) - is widely recognized for his pioneering efforts to reform the Church in Kerala and the society of the nineteenth century. His credible Christian witness along with the leadership he offered to the Church of Saint Thomas Christians, at a time when it was passing through multiple jurisdictional crises, scripted a spiritual and disciplined growth in the Kerala Church.

Canonized on 23 November 2014, Saint Chavara's personal sanctity and Christian wisdom are identified to be unique. While the secular society admires his contributions in pioneering a set of revolutionary changes in uplifting people on the margins and those who were socially ostracised through educational and social initiatives, the fundamental core of all his achievements is solidly established in his filial discipleship of Jesus Christ, whom he addressed '*ente nalla appa*' (my beloved father).

Saint Chavara had a firm foundation in Christian faith, which is clearly visible throughout his life and it is testified by those who knew him. He articulated his views and perspectives primarily based on his personal encounter with Jesus and also based on his readings and theological reflections. They are available to us through his extant writings, which are published in four volumes in the *Complete Works of Kuriakose Elias Chavara*. Some of these works, recognized as pioneering

efforts in Indian literary genre, offer us a mine of rich and sound theological insights. Although his access to scientific Christian literature was minimal (if not completely absent), his writings draw from the biblical as well as other Christian traditions, which he had faithfully and creatively interpreted for the enhancement of the faith life of the Christian community that he had catered to throughout his life.

*Theological Studies on Saint Chavara* – a joint effort of the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) and Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (CMC) – attempts to promote and publish fruits of scientific investigation into the unique and varied theological insights of Saint Chavara in the form of monographs. These theological investigations will be instrumental in appreciating and popularising the sound and solid theological contributions he made to enhance Catholic faith in the nineteenth century, which, in turn, indicate that he deserves titles like ‘Father of the Syro-Malabar Church’ and ‘Doctor of the Church’. As the publication of this series is undertaken with the blessings of the Synod of the Syro-Malabar Archiepiscopal Church, which also had benefitted from the eminent theological acumen, pastoral insights, and ecclesiastical leadership of Saint Chavara, these studies would bring to light the multifarious theological heritage that he had bequeathed to the Church and the subsequent generations of faithful in India.

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## PREFACE

The definition of liturgy is glorification of God and the sanctification of human beings. In the liturgy, God is praised and glorified by signs perceptible to the senses. Perceptible means that whatever signs and symbols used in the liturgy must be intelligible to people. People must understand it and, with its help, they must participate in the liturgy wholeheartedly. At the same time, the liturgy guarantees the sanctification of the humans, because, in every liturgy, the mystery of Christ is established in the present circumstances.

Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara Chavara (1805-1871) was an ecclesiastical luminary in the horizon of the Malabar Church of Thomas Christians in the nineteenth century. When he was the Vicar General, he steadily revised the liturgy in view of awakening the sacramental life of the clergy and the people, and thereby ensuring a spiritual renewal within the Church. He wrote *Thukasa* to keep an order in the celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy; in addition, he compiled the Divine Office for the clergy and religious, formed a new liturgical calendar for the use of Thomas Christians and so on. Thus, with the help of confreres of his own Congregation, he made a renewal in the liturgical life of his Church. Regarding the revision of the liturgical texts he left no stones unturned, he passed through all the liturgical books of the Malabar Christians of the nineteenth century. Nobody has made any attempt to study the liturgical contributions of Saint Chavara to the Malabar Church; hence, the relevance of this work in which an attempt is made in the area.

The present volume has two parts: the first part gives a glimpse of the liturgical contributions of Saint Chavara. He

was a wise reformer in the sense that the Saint deeply understood that liturgy is the “the celebration of the Mystery of Christ” by which the salvation of the world is established in the present context. Chavara was not at all a professional theologian in the liturgical field. The second part includes the study of *Thukasa* in detail, focusing on the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. The Saint concentrated on the way of celebration of the Christ Mystery rather than the theology of the liturgy. Secondly, the Saint compiled the Divine Office of the Thomas Christians from the available sources in Malabar. That was a major contribution of the Saint to Thomas Christians. But his efforts were only partly successful because only a portion of his work came to light. By the reform of the liturgy, the Saint gave a thrust to the clergy and the people to invigorate their sacramental life.

I would like to express my sentiments of gratitude to Father Saju Chackalackal CMI, the General Councilor for Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry, for including this work for publication under the series “Theological Studies on Saint Chavara.” Thanks are due to Father Babu Paul Kalathuparambil CMI, who went through certain parts of this work and helped me to improve the language and style, and Father Sunil Kizhakkayil CMI, who prepared the illustrations. I owe my thanks also to Thomson P. J. and David (Smriti), who designed the cover page. Father Jose Payyappilly CMI, Prior, and the CMI community at Elthuruth always encouraged me to bring this work to light; Lince Meleppuram CMI made language corrections for a few chapters: my profound gratitude is due to all of them.

Feast of Saint Chavara  
3 January 2020

Francis Kanichikattil CMI  
Thrissur

## INTRODUCTION

Christian faith was brought to India at a very early period. The firm tradition of the Church is that Apostle Thomas preached the Good News to the people of India, especially in the South-West coast (Kerala) in the first century. Although difficulty still exists regarding the documentary evidence of the apostolate of Saint Thomas in India, there is a solid body of scholarly opinion that the foundation of Christianity in India was laid by Apostle Thomas. A good number of studies, both by Indian and foreign scholars, give us a comprehensive picture of the issue. The early Christians who received the faith from Saint Thomas were called 'Thomas Christians' and the religion they practised came to be known as the 'Way of Thomas', *Thoma Margam* by others. Saint Thomas founded seven communities (churches) at different parts of Kerala, and today these churches are well known pilgrim centres, and the tomb of Saint Thomas is situated at Mylapore Cathedral. People visit these holy places as the source of their Christian faith, which they inherited from the apostolate of Saint Thomas.

There is a strong tradition in Kerala that Saint Thomas baptized Brahmins at Palayur, one of the seven Christian communities in 52 AD. In South India, the *Sangam* Period, the period of early Tamil literature, spreads from 1 BCE till 4 AD. There were three well identified kingdoms in the south during *Sangam* Period, namely, *Chera*, *Chola*, and *Pandya* kingdoms. The Western Kingdom, *Chera*, is today's Keralam (*Ceralam*) and its capital being *Muchiris*, once the legendary Sea Port that joined the east and the west of the globe. The *Muchiris* had a sea route with foreign world even before the Christian era. The Egyptian navigator Hyppalas in the first

century found out the Monsoon Wind in the Indian Ocean, and that made the trade between India and the western world far easier. Hence, there is possibility that Saint Thomas had chosen this way to reach Kodungalloor (*Muchiris*) in the first century. There he confronted the Brahmins, who were very literate, in the *Cera* Kingdom. By the preaching of the Gospel, certainly a number of Brahmins had been converted and received baptism from Saint Thomas.

Saint Jerome in the fifth century wrote that Pantenus, the head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria, visited South India around 190 AD “to preach Christ to the Brahmins (literate) and philosophers there.” Both Eusebius and Jerome reported that Pantenus found the Hebrew Gospel in India. Pantenus was a Stoic philosopher teaching at the Alexandrian School. He converted to Christian faith and sought to reconcile his new faith with Greek philosophy. The Alexandrian School was the earliest catechetical school, and became influential in the development of Christian theology. There is possibility that the Brahmins and philosophers mentioned in the writings of Jerome and Eusebius refer to the literary men and poets of the *Sangam* Period in South India (i.e., *Chera* Kingdom). Thus, the early Christian community that received Christ by the preaching of Saint Thomas might be the natives from the above mentioned Dravidian stock, also the converts from the believers of Jainism and Buddhism and the Aryans (small number) who came from the North and joined the natives. The Jews, who were good traders and got settled at Malabar Coast in the Christian era, had accepted Christian faith in the first century. Thus, the early Christian Church of Saint Thomas in the first century was a mixed community of Dravidians, Buddhists, Aryans, and Jews. The terms like

*marga* (way) and *Palli* (church) might have been contributions from other religions. Later when *Namboori* Brahmins (caste Hindus) came from the North in crowd around the sixth and the seventh centuries, the early Christians probably received their customs and manners such as *Poonool*, *Kuduma*, religious art, etc.

It was the early Christian tradition that wherever the apostles preached the Gospel and baptized the faithful, there they celebrated the 'breaking of the bread' (Eucharist) in the language and culture of the people. This paved the way for the emergence of different traditions and liturgical families, which, in turn, became the basis for the formation of different Rites in the Church. Rite is the patrimony of the manner of living the faith in an individual Church. Hence, it is certain that Saint Thomas celebrated the 'breaking of the bread', as his Guru, the divine master, taught him in the culture and tradition of the people of India. Except a few fragmentary documental evidences, we do not have many resources for the existence of a liturgy at that time. The Portuguese missionaries of the sixteenth century have narrated certain inculturation elements of the Holy Liturgy of the Thomas Christians. Instead of making the bread out of wheat, they made bread from rice: one bread in the form of a cake and other small breads. They placed them in a lotus leaf and brought it to the priest for the Holy Sacrifice. Similarly, when there was scarcity of wine, they used grape juice or tender coco milk.

### **1. The Persian Invasion**

The early Christian life of South India was further strengthened by emigration of Christians from outside, namely, the Persian invasion in the fourth and ninth century. The Persians came from West Asia in 345 AD with their

Syriac liturgy, under the leadership of an able merchant by name Knai Thomman, whose descendents are the *Knanaites*, today, an endogamous Christian community in Kerala. The Christians from Persia were good traders and the King of the Chera Kingdom, the Cheraman Perumal, gave them *copper plates* granting many privileges such as riding on the elephant, sitting on carpets, travelling different places and so on. In the Kerala history, it is known as the '*Knai Thomman Copper Plate*' given to the Christian community. Unfortunately, this deed was lost in the sixteenth century during the Portuguese era. But a translation of the copper plate is kept in the British Library Manuscripts (Add. Mss. 9853). The Christian faith in the Malabar Coast was very much strengthened by their presence. On the other hand, the natural blossoming of the Christian life and flourishing of the native liturgy was completely obstructed as a result of their presence. It was the most disastrous event in the history of the Thomas Christians. It is definite that only after the arrival of the Persian bishops the Syriac liturgy was introduced in Malabar (Kerala) among the Thomas Christians.

The Portuguese missionaries, who arrived in the sixteenth century, have narrated the enmity and fight between the native Christians (Thomas Christians) and the newly arrived Persian Christians. Since they lived in the southern part of Kodungalloor, they were called *Soudists* (Thekkumbhagakar) and Thomas Christians were normally *Nordists*. There was hostility between these two groups. This division between the Knanaites and native Christians still exists. Since the native Christians began to use the Syriac liturgy that was brought by the Knanaites, the Malabar Christians in general were called Syrian Christians. That was a false appellation, and it still exists today. The

Knanaïtes still keep on different traditions and customs, which they brought from West Asia for their marriage and child birth. Just as the invasion in the fourth century, there was another migration in 823/ 825 AD, under the leadership of another illustrious trader by name Maruvan Sabarisho. They arrived at Quilon, then a port city, and the King of Venad, Ayyan Adigal, granted them many presents and privileges. These privileges were later known as '*Tarsappally Copperplates*'. Some of them are lost; still many exist today. Two bishops Mar Sapor and Mar Prot were included in the group. They were brothers and very saintly persons; the Kerala community honoured them and called them '*kandisangal*' (saintly persons). In many of the Jacobite churches they are still honoured. A. Mingana writes in *The Early Spread of Christianity in India* (1926):

In those days and in the days that followed, Syrian Fathers used to come to that town by order of the Catholicos of the East and govern the dioceses of India and Malabar because it was from it that these Syrians used to go to other parts. Then in the year 825 AD the Syrian Fathers Sapor and Prot, with the illustrious Sabarisho, came to India and reached Kollam. They went to the King and asked from him a piece of land in which they could build a church for themselves and erect the town. He gave them the amount of land they desired, and they built a church and erected a town in the district of Kollam.

To this group of settlers is credited the founding of the city of Quilon in 825 AD, the year from which is reckoned the Kerala Era, *Kollavarsham*, starting with *chingam*, *Kanny*, etc. The Persian connection was beneficial to the Kerala Christians to a certain extent, especially for the fact that this connection opened the small Christian community to the

larger Christian world. But many see this relationship as compromising the independence and local character of the community. It led to the tighter controls of the Church of Persia over the Kerala Christians. This adversely affected the spontaneous growth of the original community into a genuine Indian Church, with its Indian Christian patterns of thought, worship, and lifestyle. Not only were foreign bishops sent from Persia, but also the Kerala Christians were required to adopt Persian thought forms and formulas of faith, worship patterns, church customs, and practices. It meant that the Kerala Christians had to lead a life in two worlds at the same time: the geographical and socio-cultural environment of Kerala, on the one hand, and the ecclesiastical world of Persia, on the other. The Persian Church never tried for a missionary expansion or a formation of a Church in the Indian culture. They were satisfied with their own liturgy, and they never tried for a change either in the language or in the symbols of the liturgy. An important feature of this period was the advent of Sri Sankaracharya (788 AD) in Kerala, the world-renowned Indian philosopher and religious leader of Hinduism. His contributions in the area *Advaita* philosophy and mysticism are incomparable. Yet, we never come across any exchange of ideas or religious dialogue between Christianity and Hindu religion in the eighth and ninth centuries. This area needs more research.

## **2. Contact with the Western Church**

On the other hand, in the sixteenth century, the Western Church undertook more missionary expansions. Saint Francis Xavier, the great missionary from Spain, by his teaching and preaching sowed the seeds of faith in the hearts of the people and converted many to the Christian



faith, especially in Goa and the West Coast of South India. Among those who tried to acquaint themselves with the language, culture, and religion of India, the genial Italian missionary Robert de Nobili (1577-1656), a Jesuit, stands exceptional. He is not only a milestone in the history of Christianity in India, but also a luminary in the theological horizon. No history of theology in India worth its name can be written without a reference to de Nobili, much the same no history of Chinese theology could be ever written without reference to Matteo Ricci. Rightly he can be called the first oriental scholar from the West.

What has been the theological achievement of de Nobili? His great contribution to theology in India is his *praxis* of inculturation, which is even today a source of inspiration. The *praxis* was animated by his theological vision. From the middle of the sixteenth century onwards, there were mass conversions along the southern coast of Tamil Nadu among the fishermen. The converts had to abandon their traditional ways and to adopt Portuguese customs and even Portuguese family names. The Christianity was even known *Parangi Marga*, the way of *Parangis* (Portuguese). It was in the context of this anomalous way of Christian living that de Nobili was led to reflect on its root causes. He came to the conclusion that true Christian faith could not be inimical to the culture and traditions of the land. In an attempt to give concrete expression to his vision, he assumed the traditions and ways of life of the caste Brahmins who were, all along been considered guardians and protectors of the Indian culture and religion. As a part of his inculturation, de Nobili plunged into the study of the language and religious literature of Sanskrit, Tamil, and Telugu. He has left much literature in those languages. At that time Vedic texts were secretly preserved, and learning them was the right of the

Brahmins. Through the help of a teacher he learnt the Vedas; perhaps he was the first European ever to familiarize himself with the Veda, the most ancient religious text of India.

The encounter of de Nobili with the Hindus may not be called dialogue in the sense we attribute to this word today. Nevertheless, we can discern some features of dialogue in his approach to Hinduism. From his life and approach we can infer that he recognized the universality of God's salvation, the presence of God's truth and His grace in other religious traditions. In this sense, he anticipated to some extent the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. His scholarship and the positive outlook on other religions contained the seeds for a truly open and catholic theology of religions. He persuaded theology in an original way especially through his way of life. His praxis is a challenge to the theologians in India today and their theological enterprises.

With the arrival of the Portuguese, the Saint Thomas Christian community was thrown into a world of Latin or Western Christendom. The new world would, in the course of time, exert such a deep influence on them, whether they wanted it or not, that it became a difficult task for them to move forward in peace. The first representatives of this world were cordially and even enthusiastically welcomed in their midst. Before long, the Portuguese posed a challenge to, and even threatened, the particular identity, autonomy, and unity that the Saint Thomas Christians had developed throughout many centuries. The Portuguese doubted the Syriac (Persian) liturgy of the Thomas Christians, which they practised for centuries. For the Portuguese the Persian Church was a heretic Church separated from the Catholic communion from the Council of Ephesus in 453 AD. In that

Council, Nestorius, the patriarch of Constantinople, was condemned. The Portuguese did not accept the Persian (Nestorian) Church and its liturgy, and began to purify the Church whatever way possible, especially the sacraments and Eucharistic Liturgy. The new world not only distorted but even shattered the autonomy of the Indian Church of Saint Thomas Christians.

Attempts to bring the Thomas Christians under the Portuguese *padroado* (patronage) and to introduce Latin customs in the Liturgy culminated in what is known as the Synod of Diamper, convoked in 1599 by Alexis Meneses, Archbishop of Goa, who was determined to bring the community once and for all under *padroado*. Historians and ecclesiologists have pointed out that the Synod of Diamper was invalid because it was summoned without proper authorization, it did not follow proper canonical form, and the decrees were ordered under force. Nevertheless, its decrees became slowly the major part of the law of Thomas Christians. The acts and decrees of the Synod have become very significant in shedding light on the pre-Diamper customs, practices and theological vision of the Thomas Christians.

In the wake of the Synod of Diamper, Latin *padroado* prelates were appointed to lead the Christians. The first *padroado* bishop of the Thomas Christians, Francis Roz SJ altered his bishopric to its ancient location Cranganore (Kodungalloor). He and subsequent prelates administered the Church along Latin juridical lines, corrected the liturgical texts of Malabar and introduced Latin customs in the administration of the sacraments resulting in stiff opposition from the Thomas Christians. This opposition culminated in a revolt in 1653, known as the '*Coonan* (bent) *Cross Oath*'. Under the leadership of the archdeacon Thomas,

a group of Saint Thomas Christians swore that they would never live under the rule of the Jesuits. This schism marked the culmination of the storm that practically divided the Saint Thomas Christians into two groups (Catholics and Jacobites).

The ensuing crisis was so serious that it demanded immediate and tactful handling, through the intervention of some agent other than the Portuguese. The Congregation for the Propagation of Faith dispatched Carmelite missionaries to India with full power to deal with the situation. The mission under Joseph Sebastiani OCD met with partial success. But since the Dutch gained the power from the Portuguese, the missionaries had to leave Kerala in 1663. Again, in 1700, Rome sent Angelo Francis as the Vicar Apostolic. At the same time, the Portuguese Crown, which temporarily suspended the appointment of *padroado* prelates, resumed the practice of appointing the prelates to the Seat of Kodungalloor. Thus, the Thomas Christians came under double jurisdiction: *Padroado* (Portuguese) and *Propaganda* (Rome). The competition continued till Rome suppressed the Propaganda in 1877 in order to start self-administration of the Thomas Christians.

Trouble started again, this time on the issue of the unity of the Saint Thomas Christians. Several attempts had already been made for bringing together the two groups, namely, the Catholics and the Jacobites. The Propaganda Congregation was almost inclined to do so, but the Carmelite missionaries were unanimously opposed to the move. At this juncture, two eminent priests among Thomas Christians, Joseph Kariatty and Thomas Paremakkal, with the authorization of the community went on a delegation to Rome to get permission for the reunion of Mar Thomma VI with the Catholic faith and to activate the Seat of

Cranganore, which had continued to remain vacant for a long time by the suppression of the Jesuits in 1774. The efforts of these priests were not fully successful. On their way back Joseph Kariatty, with the approval of Rome, was nominated as Archbishop of Cranganore by the *padroado* authorities. He was consecrated in 1783 at Lisbon and was given all the faculties necessary to receive Mar Thomma VI into the Catholic Church. Unfortunately, on the way back to Kerala Monsignor Kariatty fell ill at Goa, and met an untimely death there in 1786, and the news spread that Archbishop met with death by the Portuguese. Their narration of the Visit to Rome, Lisbon, and other places is the *Varthamanapusthakam*, the first travel narrative in Malayalam literature. The death of Archbishop Kariatty was a great blow to the aspirations of the Saint Thomas Christians. Their attempt to get one as the head of their Church also failed. Thommas Paremakal, who was an opponent of the Propaganda Carmelite missionaries, became the administrator, *Gubernodor*, at Cranganore in the same year.

### **3. Advent of Father Chavara Kuriakose Elias as an Ecclesiastical Luminary**

Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara, founder of the CMI religious community was born on 10 February 1805 in Kainakary, a suburb of Alapuzha district. His parents were Kuriakose and Mariam from the community Thomas Christians. Nineteenth century is a notable era in the history of Kerala for inaugurating socio-religious and educational *awakening* of Kerala Society. The community was suffering from poverty, illiteracy, caste difference, untouchability, and child marriage and so on. There started a yearning for change in all the fields of the society. The breeze of the

western education and the efforts of the great missionaries like Herman Gundert, Arnos Padri, and Paulinos Padri were the source behind this renaissance movement of the Kerala people and their contributions were instrumental for the upbringing of the Kerala people. Also there emerged from Kerala community great personalities like Father Kuriakose Elias Chavara (1805-1871) from the Thomas Christians, Chattambi Swamikal (1854-1924) from Nair caste, Sri Narayana Guru (1856-1928) from Ezhava community, and Ayyankali (1866-1914) from Dalit group. They were really the torchbearers and renaissance leaders of the Kerala community in the nineteenth century. They started an uncompromising war against the above mentioned evils of the society. The new impetus really caused a renaissance in the socio-cultural and educational milieu of Kerala.

At the early age of Kuriakose, the Thomas Christian community was in an utter situation of grief. They were under double ecclesial jurisdiction and the Christian community was deeply frustrated because of the dealings of the western missionaries. Both *Padroado* and *Propaganda* jurisdictions were in competition for supremacy over the Malabar Christians. Once, a senior priest Father Thomas Palackal, who was the Acharya of a *malpanate* (seminary), came to see young Kiriakose in his house. The priest could see something extraordinary in young Kuriakose and told the parents to send him to the seminary to prepare him for priesthood. Though his parents did not want to part with him, they did not obstruct his vocation. Acharya Palackal received him as his beloved disciple in the seminary attached to Pallipuram parish church. In the first half of the nineteenth century there was no proper seminary for priestly studies in Kerala. During his studies, Kuriakose very much felt the pathetic situation of the Malabar Church.

His love towards the Universal Church and its head the Holy Father, on the one hand, and the Malabar Church of Thomas Christians, on the other, knew no bounds. Deploring the disunity and barrenness of the Church of Malabar, he wrote in the *Chronicle* (CWC 1):

As a magnetic needle always points towards the north, so the brethren of my flesh and blood called the Nazarenes of Malankara, had their hearts set from the earliest times on getting Syrian bishops. This had often endangered their spiritual life and led them often to break away from the Communion of the Holy Church. As any observer can perceive, the Christian way of virtuous life and exemplary conduct has not yet taken root in this land of Malabar! This Church had received the gift of Christian faith right from the Apostle of Saint Thomas. But even today she remains barren without giving birth to even one saint, while some other countries and islands which received faith much later have brought forth several saints.

Chavara Kuriakose was ordained in 1829 at Arthungal and offered the First Holy Mass in Chennankari, Alappuzha district. He loved his Church as his own mother. He wept over the sad situation of the mother Church. He really desired self governance as a solution for the calamity and disunity in the Church. Chavara says that the Malabar Church remains barren even after centuries of its foundation by the Apostle Thomas.

Acharya Thomas Palackal was one of the consultants of the then Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly, Aurelius Stabilini (1819-1831). Acharya had a deep desire to start monastic life in the Thomas Christian community. He shared this ardent desire to his intimate friend, Father Thomas Porukara, another dedicated and committed pastor of great zeal

among the Thomas Christian community. Father Chavara narrates this in his chronicle: "Father Thomas Palackkal and his intimate friend Thomas Porukara had yearned to establish a religious house (*darsanaveedu*), since in the absence of a house of penance (*tapasubhavanam*) in Malabar, even for priests, much good was left undone. They were sad at heart as there was no one to give them support, but they went on praying." Later, Jacob Kaniyanthra, a friend of Porukara, joined the trio. One day both Fathers Thomas Palackkal and Porukara decided to approach the bishop for the permission of the *tapasubhavanam*. They said to him: "Both of us would like to live somewhere *in solitude*." But the response of the bishop was quite different. He responded: "if you go away to live in silence and solitude, who else will be left to teach the people? If you like, you may establish a monastery, so that all people may benefit from it." So, the trio thought of a monastery, a spiritual resort amidst the people to do whatever good possible for them. Their intense desire and hard work, supported generously by the people of good will, realized in the foundation of the monastery at Mannanam in 1831, and later it became the mother house of the CMI religious community.

Before long, there was an incident of deep sorrow for the community at Mannanam. The two elderly priests, the pillars of the new movement, Father Palackkal in 1841, and after five years Father Porukara in 1846, were called by the Lord for their eternal reward. Now the whole responsibility of the religious establishment fell on the shoulders of the young priest Father Chavara. Nevertheless, the spiritual formation of the community systematically progressed under the supervision of the Carmelite missionaries, and in 1955 the first 11 Fathers made their First Profession as 'Servants of Mary Immaculate of Mount Carmel'. Chavara



Kuriakose Elias was their leader, the Prior of the Community. The title 'First Prior' ever goes to Saint Chavara.

After establishment of the Mannanam monastery, the immediate attention of Father Chavara and the religious community turned to the spiritual formation of the clergy of the Malabar Church. The founders were convinced that the leaders should be learned; otherwise they would be like the blind leading the blind. In a circular, dated 25 March 1850, Chavara deplors that, for want of learned clergy and laity, his Church does not have the vitality or the wisdom of saints (CWC IV, 1990):

As those who have no eyes are called 'blind', so those who have no learning should be called 'spiritually blind'. Thanks to the latter kind of blindness, although we the Nazarenes (in Kerala) claim to be Christians of ancient origin, we do not have the seeds and sprouts of saints. Our Lord Himself has taught that if one blind person leads another, both fall into the ditch.

Father Thomas Palackal was the *malpan* under whom Chavara was ably trained for priesthood. In fact, all his life Palackal remained the *malpan* of the seminary and was committed to the formation of priests. Well aware of the need for well trained and erudite priests in his Church, he made seminary training an important apostolate of the new congregation. By his initiative already in 1833 a seminary attached to Mannanam monastery started functioning and he continued as the *malpan* till his death. While the seminary at Pallipuram eventually ceased to exist, Mannanam continued as the only one seminary for the whole of the Syrian community. Other seminaries attached to the monasteries of Vazhakulam, Elthuruth, and Pulinkunnu, were opened in 1866, 1868, and 1872, respectively. In 1844, Chavara was appointed the examiner and *malpan* of the

priestly formation of the Malabar clergy by the Vicar Apostolic Francis Xavier OCD of Verapoly. All these seminaries were meant not for the candidates of the religious congregation but for the diocesan ones, although the Fathers hoped to get vocation for religious life as well. Later, they all were merged into one, the Seminary at Puthanpally.

The Fathers were concerned not only about the training of the priestly candidates but also the ongoing formation and discipline of the priests. The use of cassocks, introduced by *malpan* Palackal, had created in the clergy a sense of priestly identity and dignity, and that, in turn, made them more respectable before the people. Chavara composed the canonical prayers from the existing manuscripts of the Chaldean Divine Office. He never deprived the oriental prayers, but made it more substantial by integrating whatever necessary from the Latin Rite in order to make prayer more meaningful. For the uniform celebration of the Mass, Chavara wrote an Order (*Thukasa*) for the clergy. He took pains to conduct for them annual retreats at Mannanam every year. Thus, Chavara made a renewal in the spiritual life of the Malabar clergy, which eventually turned out to be the cause for a renewed energy in their pastoral life.

Chavara was also interested in the educational field. In those days there were some primary training in the *kalary* for reading and writing. There were some English schools run by non-Catholics. But entry to them and even the study of English language were forbidden to the Catholics for fear of their being influenced by Protestant ideas. In order to rise above, as a first step, Chavara started a Sanskrit school attached to Mannanam monastery. Priests and others in the monastery as well as students from the neighbouring places

studied there. The establishment of Sanskrit school testifies Chavara's love for Indian culture and heritage because Sanskrit is the sacred language of the majority religion, namely, Hindu. Sanskrit was the language of the Brahmins, the upper class Hindus of the community during that time. By establishing a Sanskrit school and inviting both the Christians and the lower caste for learning Sanskrit, Chavara broke the barriers established between the upper and lower caste Hindus. He invited them towards a religion of peace and universal harmony.

In the course of time, Chavara made effort to make education still more popular and available for all sections of the people in the society. He started schools of secular nature and insisted the people to send their children to school. A revolutionary innovation attributed to Chavara is the setting up of the schools attached to each parish of the Malabar Church. Of course, it was the Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly Bernardine Baccinelli, who published a common circular for all the parishes to start schools attached to churches. But it is widely agreed that the Vicar General of the Thomas Christians Father Chavara was the brain behind the circular. The circular written in the hand of Chavara is kept in the archives of the Mannanam monastery, and is an evidence for Chavara's commitment for the learning of the common people. By the circular, education became very popular not only for the upper class people but even the poor and the *dalit* of the community.

Another attempt of Chavara in view of the common good of the people was the setting up of the printing press at Mannanam for publishing spiritual as well as secular books. That attempt eventually led to the publication of 'Rashtra Deepika' (newspaper) from Mannanam press in 1887. With the help and advice of Father Leopold Beccaro, a Carmelite

missionary, Chavara started the first convent (CMC congregation) at Koonammavu, which played a pivotal role in the empowerment of women across Kerala, particularly among the Saith Thomas Christians. Contributions of Chavara for the uplift of the Kerala society, especially the Thomas Christian community, are admirable and praiseworthy. Actually, Chavara was trying to put into practice what his Acharyas Father Palackal and Porukara promised to the Vicar Apostolic Aurelius Stabilini, "to do whatever possible for the good of the people."

#### **4. Towards Full Autonomy of the Malabar Church**

Frustrated by their failure to get one from among themselves appointed as the head of their Church, the Thomas Christians often turned to the East Syrian Church of Chaldea. The Chaldean Church was not immediately in a position to intervene. But after a few decades, when the relations between the Carmelite missionaries and Thomas Christians further deteriorated, and when the Chaldean Church was under the Patriarch Joseph Audo VI, the interventions came from the Middle East, further complicating the situation. Against the explicit directive of Rome, the Chaldean Patriarch consecrated Thomas Roccas and sent him to India as the bishop (1861), and, later, another in bishop Mellus (1874). The presence of these prelates caused schisms in the community. At this juncture the Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly appointed the Prior Chavara Kuriakose Elias (1861) as the Vicar General of the Syrians. With the help of his confreres and other Catholics, Chavara was able to manage the situation and at last send Roccas back to Baghdad.

This sad event succeeded in convincing Rome that community's aspirations required an impartial assessment

and a suitable course of action. Pope Leo XIII's broad-mindedness proved to be a decisive factor in the gradual process by which the Thomas Christians were given autonomy in a limited manner for which they were agitating for centuries. The separation of the Malabar (Syrian) Christians from the Latin jurisdiction in 1887 was a milestone in the long process of full autonomy. The creation of two Vicariates, namely, Thrissur and Kottayam, was a limited autonomy. Afterwards the two Vicariates were amalgamated, and, in turn, three ecclesiastical units were erected. The Syro-Malabar hierarchy was constituted in 1923 by the Apostolic letter *Romane Pontifices*, with Ernakulam as the Archdiocese and Thrissur, Kottayam, and Changanacherry as the saffragan dioceses. In the wake of the Second Vatican Council, many Syro-Malabar dioceses were further created especially in North India for effective mission among the people.

Pope Saint John Paul II visited India in 1984 for the beatification of a son and a daughter of Syro-Malabar Church, Father Kuriakose Elias Chavara and Sister Alphonsa Muttuchira, a Franciscan-Clarist nun. This became impetus for the full autonomy and recognition of the Syro-Malabar as a "*Sui Iuris*" Church. Since the publication of the Oriental Code of the Canon Law for the Oriental Churches (1990), the process of autonomy got intensified. Following the visit of the Pontifical Commission in 1992 to Kerala, the Holy See elevated the Syro-Malabar Church, a *Sui iuris* Church, with Ernakulam-Angamaly Archdiocese as the seat of the Major Archbishop. Later, dioceses were created abroad for the pastoral care of the Thomas Christians there. In 2017, on the way to the full autonomy, the Syro-Malabar Church was given territorial jurisdiction all over India, the status the Church enjoyed before the Synod of Diamper. No

one could ever forget today the great leadership and commitment which Saint Chavara offered towards gaining the full autonomy to the Syro-Malabar Church. It seems that the title "Syro-Malabar Church" is anomalous and insufficient to represent this Church. It is also confusing. A more apt name would be "Apostolic Church of Saint Thomas in India" Or "Catholic Church of Saint Thomas, India" (Marthomma Catholic Church).

## **PART 1**





## Chapter 1

# LITURGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS OF SAINT KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA

### 1. Introduction

Father Chavara's contributions for the liturgical reform of the Church of Saint Thomas, the future Syro-Malabar Church, are found to be immense. As a pastor filled with the zeal and commitment, he made himself available for any difficult task which would invigorate the spiritual as well as liturgical life of the Thomas Christians. He made everything for a thorough awakening of the liturgical life of the pastors and the people of God. Though it took place during a period prior to the Second Vatican Council, his attempts at renewal made the Malabar Church move towards '*aggiornamento*' that was fervently recommended by the Council. Sometimes Chavara was criticized from some corners of the Syro-Malabar Church, that he was only a follower of the Latin Rite, and encouraged Latin customs in the Thomas Christian Liturgy. It is a false allegation. Saint Chavara was never a liturgical reformer with Western thought patterns. He stood for an awakening of the pastoral and liturgical life of the clergy and the people of his Church. He borrowed certain liturgical practices from the Roman tradition, bearing in mind that it would help the faithful of the Malabar Church to increase their spiritual life.

Already when Chavara was a student at Pallipuram Seminary, he helped his Malpan Thomas Palackal to collect whatever manuscripts were available in Kerala, and put them in order. In 1860s when he became the Vicar General of the Malabar Church, with the necessary permission of the Vicar Apostolic, he initiated a liturgical renewal in the

Malabar Church. Placid Podipara summarizes the works of Chavara as follows:

His work consisted in the organization of the Liturgical Books, the rubrics of the Eucharistic celebration, the books of the Divine Office, the Office for the Dead, and the Liturgical Calendar.<sup>1</sup>

According to Porukara, Chavara compiled the Divine Office, the Order of the Mass, Liturgical Calendar, the Order for the Solemn Mass of three priests, order for Solemn Vespers, Prayers for the Dead, etc.<sup>2</sup> The Chronicle of Mannanam Monastery (III:88; also refer *Positio*:499) mentions of the preparation of the rituals for the Mass, the Rite of the Holy Saturday, Rites of the Solemn Mass and Vespers, and the Liturgical Calendar.

Thus, we know today that 10 Liturgical Books were prepared and published under Saint Chavara's care. To summarise, they may be listed in the following four categories:<sup>3</sup>

1. Original compositions or books which Chavara himself prepared and which were published under his care: *Thukasa* (Order of the Mass) and the Liturgical Calendar.
2. Compilations from the existing manuscripts: Divine Office (Breviary), Office for the Dead, and Funeral Service.
3. Books which Chavara adapted from the Roman traditions: the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Lectionary of the Mass.

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<sup>1</sup>Podipara, *Our Rite* (Malayalam), 132.

<sup>2</sup>Porukara, *Founding Fathers* (Malayalam), 37-38.

<sup>3</sup>Mundadan, *Blessed Kurikose Elias Chavara*, 267-268.

4. Books which he translated into Syriac from Roman liturgical texts: Holy Saturday Services, Rites for the 40 Hour Adoration, and Blessings.

## 2. Eucharistic Liturgy

The Missal of the Thomas Christians had been printed in Rome in 1774 and 1844; hence, the body of the text did not require any reform. But the rubrics and the calendar indicated in the text were too brief and imperfect. Hence, the priests were celebrating Mass following customs which varied from place to place. Naturally, this was a cause of great embarrassment to the people. In this background, Chavara undertook the composition of an order of the Mass (*Thukasa*). About this, Mannanam Chronicle has the entry (III:88-89; *Positio*:499). When Father Chavara visited Mannanam in 1866 he had brought with him the Order of the Mass, which he had prepared at the advice of the Vicar Apostolic.<sup>1</sup>

For the Syrians of Malabar had till now no written ritual which described all the rubrics of the Mass. Therefore, the Vicar Apostolic had asked Father Prior to write one in conformity with the printed Missal and the teachings of Saint Alphonse Liguori, and he (Father Prior) finished that difficult work.

Chavara prepared it and got it printed in 1868 with the Syriac title *Thukasa*, which means 'Order' of the Mass. In the preface of the Order, the Vicar Apostolic orders the priests to follow the rubrics strictly.

In a circular dated 1 January 1869, the Saint sent to all the priests the following information:<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Valerian, *Divyasri Chavara Kuriakose Elias* (Malayalam), 219-220.

<sup>2</sup>Mundadan, *Blessed Kurikose Elias Chavara*, 269.

Our Missal prepared according to the Chaldean Rite and approved by Rome and printed there had been given to us. We have prepared an Order of the Mass, which describes all those rubrics not given in the above mentioned Missal [A detailed study of *Thukasa* is given in this study]. By the Grace of God we have printed this Order. This together with the Calendar will help the celebration of the Mass uniformly everywhere, even in minute details (CSK IV, 1986: 130-132).

*Thukasa* was again printed in 1926. It was in use in the Church till 1962, when the Kurbanā in Malayalam, promulgated from Rome, came into use. Father Bernard, the historian of the Thomas Christians, in the *History of the TOCD* writes:

Chavara wrote a book called *Thukasa* containing the rubrics of the Syriac Mass and got it printed for the priests. The *Thukasa* was composed in order to bring about uniformity in the rubrics of the Mass. The contents were almost the same as followed traditionally by the priests of the Malabar Church. It was to bring about uniformity in the celebration that Chavara, at the order of the Vicar Apostolic, composed it and got it printed.<sup>1</sup>

### **3. Liturgical Calendar**

After the Synod of Diamper, there was no liturgical calendar for the use of the Thomas Christian Church. They were compelled to follow the Latin calendar. In the Missal of 1774 and 1844 the dates of feasts, fasts, etc., were marked in the text of the Missal itself, more or less in the Roman pattern. This caused great difficulty for the Thomas Christians because they were following Chaldean (East Syrian)

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<sup>1</sup>Bernard, *CMI Congregation in Early Period* (Malayalam), 136-137.

calendar for centuries. In the Chaldean calendar the feasts, fasts, etc., were arranged according to different liturgical seasons and were fixed. Father Chavara well understood this difficulty of the people and his attention turned towards the creation of a Liturgical Calendar for his Church. In the same circular mentioned above (1 January 1869), Chavara instructed the priests to follow the Liturgical Calendar he had made in the celebration of the Mass. We possess only the 1926 edition of the 1871 Calendar. This was commissioned by Archbishop Baccinelli in 1968. Father Bernard gives the following comment on the Calendar:

According to the Syriac tradition, the Calendar was a fixed one. But since it was not possible for all to remember it, and since the Ordinary had decreed that the vestments used by clergy in the liturgical celebrations should be of different colours as was in the Latin Church, [Chavara] introduced the tradition of printing Malayalam Calendar for every year.<sup>1</sup>

Father Lucas Vithuvattical tells us that till the year of his death, it was Father Chavara who prepared and printed the Calendar. But the earliest copy of the Calendar that we have been able to trace out was that of 1871, the year Chavara died. This was the last Calendar Chavara had prepared and he died on 3 January 1871. In his letter dated 30 August 1870, the Saint asks Father Alexander Kattakayam to continue this work for the following years. Chavara's letter to Kattakayam reads as follows: "I send to you the Calendar of 1871. Please take care to print all these there, as in this year, for it is not convenient to print it here [Koonammavu]." <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bernard, *CMI Congregation in Early Period* (Malayalam), 137.

<sup>2</sup>Vallavanthara, *Research Notes on Liturgy*.

The Calendar is of great importance for the simple reason that it gives us a glimpse of the ancient mode of demarcating the seasons of the liturgical year, known and practised in the Church of Thomas Christians. The seasons are: Sundays after the Nativity (no name is given to this period); Period of *Denha* (Epiphany), seven weeks; Period of *Sauma Ramba* (Lent), seven weeks; Period of *Qyamta* (Resurrection), seven weeks; Period of *Sliha* (Apostles), seven weeks; Period of *Qaiitha* (Summer), seven to nine weeks; Period of *Sliva* (Cross), seven weeks; Period of *Qdas d' Eta* (Dedication of the Church), four weeks; Period of *Suvara* (Annunciation), four weeks. This Calendar is an evidence of Chavara's knowledge of the East Syrian liturgical tradition and his great desire to preserve that tradition as an identity of Thomas Christian Church of Malabar.<sup>1</sup>

The Calendar is composed in Malayalam; the dates are noted according to both Malayalam Era (KE) and Gregorian Calendar (AD). The months are given in Malayalam Era, though it is also adapted to Gregorian calendar. But the periods are given in Syriac as in the ancient tradition. It is to be noted that Saint Chavara also adapted many feasts of the Saints from the Latin Calendar. This is because feasts of the Saints from Latin Calendar were already introduced in the Church after the Synod of Diamper. Chavara found that the celebration of the feasts of saints would better encourage the faith practice among the Thomas Christians.

#### **4. Divine Office**

The Divine Office, the Office for the Dead, and the Funeral Services were the three books, which Chavara compiled

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<sup>1</sup>Mundadan, *Blessed Kurikose Elias Chavara*, 270-271.

from the ancient manuscripts. This does not mean that *Thukasa* and the Liturgical Calendar were exclusively original compositions; in composing them Chavara had depended, at least partially, on other sources from the Malabar as well as the Roman traditions.

The Divine Office used by the Thomas Christians was a lengthy one and even the priests did not take much interest to recite the prayer. There were no printed books and some of them used only manuscripts. Practically, the Divine Office was slowly disappearing in the Church. Chavara experienced the pathetic situation even when he was a seminarian at Pallipuram. When he became a priest, he urgently began working on compiling the Divine Office. The Divine Office that he had compiled continued in the Church till the renewal of liturgy at the wake of the Second Vatican Council (details of the Divine Office of Chavara are given in a later portion of this work).

### **5. Office for the Dead**

Chavara prepared the Office for the Dead, a long one and a short one, and the burial services. Burial services were arranged according to different persons: for priests, adult lay-people, and for children. In organizing this, Chavara had not merely collected the ancient texts, but he also edited them, making them shorter. The Office for the Dead was not printed in Chavara's time. It was first printed in 1882 by his successor Kuriakose Eliseus Porukara. In the preface of this work, Kuriakose Porukara gives the details as follows: "This Office consists of the longer Office for the Dead and the shorter, as it was divided by our respected Father Kuriakose

Elias, whose memory resounds in the whole Kerala today.”<sup>1</sup> Later, different editions were published until the year 1976 when the Office for the Dead was prepared in Malayalam. Father Abel CMI condensed it in Malayalam with the approval of the Church, and now is being widely used in the Syro-Malabar Church for burial services. All appreciate the poetic elegance and Syriac melody of the Malayalam version. The service for the funeral of the children was adapted from the Roman ritual.

## **6. Rituals Adapted from Latin Tradition: Little Office of Blessed Virgin Mary**

Besides the funeral service for children, the Little Office of Blessed Virgin Mary and the Lectionary were adapted from the Latin Rite. First of all, Chavara arranged this according to the structure of the Divine Office of the Malabar Church. This book, however, was never printed.

The Lectionary, which Chavara prepared, was only to complement what was available. He prepared readings for certain feasts that were added after printing the Missal in 1774, and in 1844. He prepared the manuscript and sent it to Rome around 1865. The whole reading was not written down, but indications of the vesicles from the Bible were given.

## **7. Holy Saturday Service**

In the Malabar tradition, as in the East Syrian tradition, there was no special ceremony for Holy Saturday. To meet this situation, Father Chavara himself prepared the ceremony for the Holy Saturday. This was a Syriac

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<sup>1</sup>*Book of the Services for the Dead* (Syriac) 1882; also refer Placid, *Our Rite*, 139.



translation of the liturgical text and ceremonies of the Roman Rite. The text was prepared before 1864 and sent to Rome for approval. In this regard, we are in possession of two letters, one in 1864 and another in 1869, sent to Rome for approval.

We are sending along with this letter, the liturgy of the Holy Saturday, translated from the Latin ritual, for your approval. In the Syrian (Chaldean) Rite, there are no liturgical services for Holy Saturday. Our Churches remain closed on that day like the Jewish Synagogues. So, I request you to approve it for us and send it back as early as possible.<sup>1</sup>

It may be noted that already before 1869 permission had been obtained to follow the Latin rite prayers from Ash Wednesday to Maundy Thursday. Permission for Holy Saturday services was received in 1870. The ceremonies remained in manuscript till 1928, in which year it was printed.

According to Father Parapuram, to make things easy for the Syrian churches, the ceremonies that were conducted only in the Latin churches were translated to Syriac and got the necessary permission to conduct them during daytime. It was conducted at Koonammavu Monastery church in 1871. Later, it was conducted at Mannanam, then, at Elthuruth and vazhakulam.<sup>2</sup> A new translation of it was compiled in 1934. After the Second Vatican Council the Latin Church combined the Holy Saturday service to the Easter Sunday vigil service (Saturday night). This is the early Christian tradition of the remembrance of baptism and the celebration of Easter. The Syro-Malabar must move to

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<sup>1</sup>Letter in 1864, CSK 1982 (Malayalam), 29.

<sup>2</sup>Mundadan, *Blessed Kurikose Elias Chavara*, 278-279.

that way of celebrating the baptism and Easter in one ceremony (Easter vigil service).

### **8. Forty Hours Adoration**

Chavara, an apostle of the Eucharistic devotion, translated the ceremonies of forty hour adoration from Latin into Malayalam and introduced it in churches with due permission. It was first conducted at Koonammavu in 1866 and in the following years at Mannanam, Vazhakulam, and Elthuruth. Thereafter it spread to many churches in Kerala. This devotion was a great inspiration for the faithful for the renewal of their Christian life.

Chavara himself wrote the Order of this devotion in Malayalam adapting it from the Latin Church. Other monasteries and churches copied down the text of Chavara for their use. Chavara stated that these orders had been compiled from the letter of Holy Father Pope Clemens XII and, hence, it should be followed strictly. It is published in the *Complete Works of Chavara*.<sup>1</sup> Chavara himself translated all the prayers, hymns, the litany of All Saints from Latin into Syriac verses.

The spread of 40 hours adoration first in the monasteries and, then, in the Forane Churches made *Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament* more popular in Kerala. People came from faraway places to participate in the Benediction conducted in monasteries. It is the general view that Msgr. Ross SJ, the first *Padroado* Bishop of the Thomas Christians started the *Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament* in the Malabar Church. But Saint Chavara made it more popular in Kerala. Whether Chavara translated the Latin hymns of the Benediction into Syriac is not yet sure. The hymn *kollen dasne* is the Syriac

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<sup>1</sup>CSK III, 77-83.

translation of the *tantum ergo sacramentum*, the Latin hymn of Benediction, while *sabhah lessan* is an adaptation of the Latin hymn *Pange Lingua*, praise my tongue. It contains traces of Saint Ephrem's vision of the Eucharist. These hymns are the work of the great Saint of the Eucharist, Saint Thomas Aquinas:

Praise my weak tongue the mystery of the body '*rasa d pagra*' without slain. Your blood is for the cleansing of the soul and it gives joy for the whole world. As the price of redemption of man, the beloved King shed his blood. The 'fruit of the womb of the Virgin' '*pera d'karsa dausulta*' is our sanctity and food.

### 9. Promoter of Popular Devotion

Chavara was definitely a supporter of devotion of the people. He himself was a devotee of the Holy Eucharist and encouraged that piety for the spiritual renewal of the faithful. Besides the forty hour adoration, he encouraged the solemn feast of the *Corpus Christi* and Eucharistic procession in relation to the feast. In the monasteries, he ordered to recite divine office (*Leliya*) for eight days (*ettamadam*) before the Blessed Sacrament. Chavara himself prepared the text for the Office and it was included in the Divine Office for Feast Days. The *Leliya* prayer of the Holy Office was long and was very substantial adapting verses into Syriac tunes from the writings of the Fathers of the Church Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Augustine, and Saint Thomas Aquinas. It was continued in the CMI monasteries till the vernacular text in 1968.

Chavara also encouraged devotion of Virgin Mary, especially in the month of May, Saint Joseph the protector of the Church in the month of March, and that of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the month of June. He had a special

devotion to the Holy Family and he liked to be called 'Kuriakose of Holy Family'. In his Testament to the people of Kainakary, he encouraged the devotion of the Holy Family.

### **10. Conclusion**

Thus, the Saint made a renewal in all areas of the Sacred Liturgy of the Church. Chavara was not at all a liturgiologist in the strict sense, but very well a promoter of liturgy. He touched all areas of liturgy, and left no stone unturned. He did everything possible to bring about a renewal in the sacramental life of the clergy and the people.

## Chapter 2

### **SAINT KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA A Wise Liturgical Reformer of the Thomas Christians of Malabar**

#### **1. Kerala Society during the Time of Saint Chavara**

The socio-ecclesiastical set up of the Kerala society was very confusing and complex during the nineteenth century. Illiteracy, poverty, superstitions, caste difference, child marriage, etc., were inflicting the Kerala society from a sociological point of view. The people experienced sheer starvation and caste difference was at its zenith. No one helped or regarded the other. English education was already started at certain parts of India, but not yet very common in Kerala during the first half of the century. Yet, the breeze of the western education was slowly diffusing in the Kerala society. The Basil Evangelical Mission (BEM) was in north Kerala and the German missionaries gave leadership for it. They were engaged in starting English schools at Thalasserry and Kozhikode. With the education the missionaries spread the Bible to the people. In the South, the Church Mission Society (CMS) and London Evangelical Mission (LEM) started English schools in Kottayam and Thrissur.

Hermon Gundert (1814-1893) was a contemporary of Saint Chavara and he was in Kerala during the time of Chavara. From 1839 his Mission field was Thalasserry. For twenty years he worked hard as a missionary and a literary man there. He learnt many languages of South India and wrote about twenty books in Malayalam apart from the illustrious Malayalam-English Gundert Dictionary which

made the language Malayalam world famous. Thus, the English Education started by the Western missionaries, was rapidly changing the face of Kerala society. Saint Chavara was very much attracted by the literary work of the missionaries. He also had a desire to start schools in order to eradicate the illiteracy and superstitions from Kerala society. But English Education was prohibited for the Catholics at that time because of the heretical fear among Thomas Christians. That was one of the reasons that the Saint started a Sanskrit school for Catholics where all without any caste difference may join for learning. Chavara brought a Varrier from Thrissur to teach Sanskrit where both the seminarians and children of the low caste studied Sanskrit. Starting a Sanskrit School was a bold step of Saint Chavara because nobody except the high caste Hindus dared to start such school during that time. Chavara's ardent love towards Indian heritage and its religious philosophy is very evidently manifested by this venture and he found that Sanskrit language was not at all a sacrilege for the Catholics.

From an ecclesiastical point, the Malabar Christians were under double jurisdiction during Chavara's time. That is, the Portuguese *Padroado* (patronage of the King) and the Roman *Propaganda*. The Christians were not at all satisfied by this double jurisdiction. There was an internal fight amongst the foreigners for domination over Thomas Christians. Till the Coonan Cross oath in 1653 there was only the *Padroado* Jurisdiction. After the riot of 1653, Rome intervened and established the *Apostolic Vicariate of Malabar* for the safeguard of Malabar Christians. Later, it was restructured as *Apostolic Vicariate of Verapoly*. Even though it was a small healing, in the long run, the Christians were not at all pleased under the Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly. They wanted somebody from their community to be appointed as

their head. With that intention, they elected two eminent priests, Frs. Joseph Kariatty and Thomas Paremakkal and sent them to Rome. They conveyed Rome the sad situation of the Thomas Christians and their great desire for a native bishop. Rome sympathetically heard their grievances and discussed the matter with interest. Without much hesitation Mar Joseph Kariatty was appointed the Archbishop of Kodungallur by *Padroado* and ordained at Lisbon with the knowledge of Rome in 1782. The long awaited desire of the Malabar Christians was, thus, partially fulfilled. An unfortunate event that had happened in 1786 was the sad demise of the Archbishop in Goa. The news that spread out among the Thomas Christians, however, was that the Archbishop was tortured at Goa by the Portuguese authorities and that resulted in his untimely death.

Frustrated by their failure to get one from among themselves appointed the head of their Church, they turned to the East Syrians or Chaldeans of Persia. The Chaldean Church was not immediately in a position to intervene. But after five or six decades, when the relations between the Thomas Christians and the Propaganda Carmelite Missionaries further deteriorated, and when the Chaldean Church was under the leadership of Patriarch Joseph Audo VI, the interventions came further complicating the situation. Against the explicit directive of Rome, the Chaldean Patriarch ordained Thomas Roccas (1861) and sent him to India as the Bishop of the Malabar Christians. This incident further complicated the Kerala situation as the Thomas Christians were divided into two groups. At this juncture, the Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly Bernadine Baccinelli appointed Father Chavara the Vicar General of the Thomas Christians. The saint studied the complicated situations of the Community and with the direction of Rome

he sent Roccas back to the Middle East. The apt intervention of Chavara at the right moment kept the Church away from a possible division. The Vicar Apostolic even determined to suggest Chavara as the Bishop of the Thomas Christians and he wrote to Rome.<sup>1</sup> Chavara, however, was always unenthusiastic of that position.

## **2. Deteriorating Spirituality**

The Synod of Diamper made drastic changes both in the sacramental and the social life of the Thomas Christians. The miserable consequence was the deterioration of the spiritual life of the Saint Thomas Christians. After the Synod, Bishop Ross ordered to use the corrected Missal as the Eucharistic text and it was very inconvenient for the priests. Only in 1774 new Syriac *Taksa* was printed from Rome for the use of the clergy. For administering the Sacraments, Syriac translation of the Latin Rite text were introduced at the last session of the Synod. The Portuguese Bishop Francis Ross introduced Latin Liturgical Calendar for the Thomas Christians. All these created an apprehension in the community and their spiritual life began to decline in the following decades. The worst among them was the Divine Office. There were no proper texts of the Office for the clergy. Only some handwritten texts were left after the Synod. Those prayers were too lengthy and there was no proper order and setting in reciting the office. Hence, reciting the Divine Office was slowly fading away from the Church at the time of Chavara.<sup>2</sup> The Portuguese missionaries tried to Latinize the Divine Office as the Latin model

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<sup>1</sup>Panthamplackal, *Chavarayachan Oru Reghachitram* (Malayalam), 72-73.

<sup>2</sup>Bernard, *CMI Congregation in Early Period* (1989), 17-19.



but it was not successful; hence, they left the idea. Under the Propaganda jurisdiction also, the Thomas Christians were not satisfied and they always turned to the Middle East to get someone as their bishop. At the time of the Saint, the spiritual life of the community was declining.

### **3. Saint Chavara: An Apostle of the Eucharist**

The central idea of the devotional life of the Saint was Holy Eucharist. For him the love towards the Eucharist was not perfect if it is devoid of nearness to and union with the Blessed Sacrament. The saints become one with this divine love only to the extent that they identify themselves in this world with Jesus Christ. Jesus the divine saviour has himself stated: he that eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and me in Him. As the living Father has sent me, I live by the Father. So, whoever eats me, will live because of me (Jn 6:56-57). For the saints, the Holy Eucharist is instituted for two reasons: to be united with the souls through the Holy Communion and, then, to achieve the nearness of the lovers of Jesus, hidden in the tabernacle. He was fully convinced that the tabernacles were the abodes of God on earth. It may be stated without exaggeration that Saint Chavara spent a lot of time before the tabernacle.

From his early childhood his deep devotion to the Holy Eucharist was predominantly manifested in all his dealings. He received the Sacrament as frequently as per the custom in those days. Although he was incapable of carrying the Missal due to his tender age, he showed great fervour in assisting at the Holy Mass. This may be understood as an inborn inclination in him, to love God in the Holy Eucharist. As a seminarian, this devotion became so extraordinary that he could win the esteem and admiration of all his friends. In the seminary, he became an active apostle of the devotion to

the Blessed Sacrament. As a young priest, he tried his best to spread the Eucharistic devotion throughout Kerala. The Italian missionary Father Leopold recorded what he could see as “the admirable dignity, devotion and recollection with which he celebrated the Sacred Liturgy, made a great impression upon those who participated in it. Besides the usual visits to the Blessed Sacrament, he used to spend long hours on his knees, immersed in prayer before the Tabernacle.”<sup>1</sup> The charm and gracefulness that adorned his face while he was lost in contemplation before the Blessed Sacrament have been noted by many of his colleagues and friends who could only describe him to be angelic.

In the meditations and prayers the Saint revealed his ardent faith in the Blessed Sacrament. Referring to the Old Testament idea, he wrote:

The Holy of Holies was a prototype of the real sanctuary, where the Son of the Eternal Father dwells although day and night in the Tabernacle, hiding all his majesty and power in the form of bread. Even though I knew and believed unhesitatingly who was in the Tabernacle, how often have I entered the sanctuary without due reflection and respect! Yet, how many times was I forgiven and was not awarded punishment for my irreverence and impoliteness.<sup>2</sup>

Chavara has given explicit directions to families with regard to devotion to the Eucharist. In his last exhortation to families, He stated: “the chief asset of a family is fear of God and devotion to him. A God-fearing family will enjoy the blessing of God in his life and life after.” He insisted daily Mass for the families. He was of the firm view that if all

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<sup>1</sup>Beccaro, *Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara* (1871), 13-14.

<sup>2</sup>CWC III (English), 15.

members were not able to participate in the daily Mass, one or two should represent the family before the holy Altar. In one prayer he reflects:

The arc of the covenant contained Law on Stone tablet. Here in the Tabernacle is the law-giver in the fullness of His Humanity and Divinity. One who approaches him with due reverence received everything he needs. The Lord remains on the tongue that receives Him, staying in the heart gives Him accommodation. He comes down from the heaven when the Words of Consecration are uttered by a duly ordained priest.<sup>1</sup>

Father Chavara was very eager to exhort the religious in the monasteries and convents to practise devotion to the Holy Eucharist. He made arrangements in the monastery chapels for Divine Office to be sung *Coram Sanctissimo* 'before the Holy Sacrament' during eight days (*ettamadam*) after the feast of *Corpus Christi*. This practice was continued in the CMI monasteries till the introduction of the new Divine Office in vernacular in the year 1967.

#### **4. Saint Chavara: A Wise Liturgical Reformer**

The basic theology of liturgy is the glory of God and salvation of the world. God is to be praised and glorified in the fullness. The prayer that Jesus taught his disciples is the part of every Eucharistic Liturgy. The present Syro-Malabar liturgy starts with the hymn that angels sang at the birth of Jesus: "Glory to God in the Highest, peace and hope to people on Earth." In the Latin Mass, there is a beautiful hymn, the Gloria on Sundays and feast days in the beginning, which is a *type* of praising God in the Highest. Further, in every Eucharistic Liturgy, there is the hymn

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<sup>1</sup>CWC III (English), 18.

Holy, Holy..., the background of which is Prophet Isaiah's vision of God in Heavenly Abode (Is 6:3). In the Syro-Malabar Liturgy, the prayer appears in the second *gehanta* of Anaphora and, then, follows the hymn. Thus, praising God in the Highest is the central theme of every liturgical celebration and through the liturgical celebrations the community experiences the Divine.

Equally important is the concept of salvation of the world. God is the creator of everything in the world, namely, human beings, birds, animals, plants, mountains, etc. According to Raymon Panikkar,<sup>1</sup> there is a deep relationship in the Universe between Cosmos, God and Humans. He calls this relationship a Cosmotheandric-Experience. It is a radical relativity and one does not exist without the support of other. In Christian tradition, God so loved the world that He sent His only Son to the world. By His death and resurrection Jesus Christ, the eternal Son, fulfilled the glory of God the Father, and sanctification of the world. The liturgical celebration on earth, especially the Eucharistic celebration, may be understood in this background, as the experience of a deep relationship between Cosmos-God-Humans.

In the liturgical celebrations, the Divine is manifested through signs and symbols. Hence, the Constitution on the Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, reads: "in the Liturgy the sanctification of humans is signified by signs perceptible to the senses, and is effected in a way which corresponds to each of these signs."<sup>2</sup> That means, in the Liturgy, the Divine is experienced through signs and symbols and they must be perceptible to the human senses. Again, the same

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<sup>1</sup>Panikkar, *Cosmotheandric Experience* (1993).

<sup>2</sup>*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 8.

Constitution says: "that the liturgical celebration, it is an action of Christ the Priest and of His Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others, and no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree." That means, the very liturgical celebration is a *sacred action of Christ, the Priest, and the mystical body the Church*. Hence, in every liturgy, the celebrant priest stands for the person of Christ, *persona Christi*, and, hence, his actions must be most perfect and holy.

The liturgical reform brought by Saint Chavara was very promising and effective as the community of the faithful is concerned. After the Synod of Diamper, the Missal of the Thomas Christians was very much Latinized, whereas the language remained the same (Syriac). The Portuguese made many Latin additions in the text and also introduced Latin rubrics for the celebration. The clergy were ordered to use Latin liturgical vestments. There was no uniformity for the celebration and the Divine Liturgy was celebrated differently in the churches. This adversely affected the spiritual life of the clergy and the people. As the Vicar General of the Thomas Christians, the Saint understood the complexity of the divine celebration, and as an answer to it, with the consent of the Vicar Apostolic, he wrote the *Thukasa* (Order for the Celebration) in the vernacular for the use of the clergy. At the time of Chavara the Eucharistic text was already fixed and Chavara could not make any change in the text. But he was very conscious that "it is a sacred action surpassing all other actions of the Church." Therefore, Chavara insisted an order for the celebration of the Liturgy, not only for the Holy Mass but also for other celebrations. In the *Thukasa*, the Saint explained the priest's entering into the sanctuary as follows: "Then taking the Chalice by the left

hand and putting the right hand on the *ketana*, bowing the head before the Crucifix in the sacristy, the priest enters the Holy of Holies with great devotion and spiritual sentiments."<sup>1</sup> Similarly, on blessing the people before reading the Gospel, the Saint wrote: "Turning to the people, with eyes downward, placing the left hand on the chest, the priest blesses with right arm with all fingers straight, he raises the right arm till forehead and then to the downwards..."<sup>2</sup> Thus, for Chavara the Eucharistic celebration was a celebration of the Mystery of Christ, namely, the death and resurrection of Christ on the holy altar; it is the sacred action of the Church.

In the Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, the Sacrament of Love, Emeritus Pope Benedict XVI explains *Ars Celebrandi* in the following words:

The primary way to foster the participation of the people of God in the sacred rite is the proper celebration of the rite itself. The *ars celebrandi* is the best way to ensure their active participation. The art of celebration is the fruit of faithful adherence to the liturgical norms in all their richness; indeed, for two thousand years this way of celebrating has sustained the faith life of all believers.<sup>3</sup>

The Second Vatican Council has well stressed the active participation of the faithful in the liturgical celebration. "Mother Church earnestly desires that the faithful should be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in the liturgical celebrations." Pope Emeritus says that the full active participation is ensured by the proper celebration (*ars celebrandi*) of the liturgy.

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<sup>1</sup>See the explanation in *Thukasa*, 1-2.

<sup>2</sup>*Thukasa*, 18-19.

<sup>3</sup>Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 38.

Saint Chavara was fully aware of the proper disposition of the community for the liturgical celebration. Liturgy, especially the Eucharistic Liturgy, is the celebration of the Mystery of Christ. As it is the sacred action surpassing all other actions of the Church, the priest and the community of believers must perform this action with dignity and esteem for the glory of God and salvation of the world. For this reason Saint Chavara wrote the *Thukasa* for the orderly and meaningful celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy.

### **5. Awakening the Sacramental Life of the Clergy and People**

Saint Chavara wrote *Thukasa* for the clergy to ensure the fruitful celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy. He compiled the Divine Office in oriental patterns for the spiritual growth of the clergy and the people. Chavara was the mastermind behind the creation of an Order for the Solemn Eucharistic Liturgy (Sung Mass) and the Solemn *Ramsa*, popularly known by the Portuguese name *Vespera* in Kerala. The Sung Mass was in Syriac, but its music was a combination of Syriac and Latin tunes. *Vespera* was conducted in the churches on the eve of important feasts. Chavara edited the Office for the Dead from the existing manuscripts of Malabar, and the Office was fully in Syriac style. Later, Father Abel composed the Office for the Dead in vernacular from Chavara's Syriac Office for the Dead.

The major contribution of Chavara for awakening the spiritual life of the Malabar Church was beginning of 40 hour adoration in the monasteries. Its prayers and lyrics (translation of the All Saints' Litany into Syriac, etc.) were composed by Saint Chavara himself. The Saint had a deep devotion to the Blessed Sacrament; further, he got inspiration from the Carmelite missionaries to start this

devotion in the Malabar Church. It is recorded that first it was started during the three days following the Ash Wednesday at Koonammavu in 1866. Then, this practice was followed at Vazhakulam and Mannanam in 1867 and at Elthuruth in 1868. Consequently, it was extended to almost all the forane churches in Kerala. The 40 hour adoration started by the Saint, is mainly responsible for the spread of Eucharistic devotion among the Catholics of Kerala. Large number of faithful made their general confession and received the Holy Communion on this auspicious occasion. The feast of *Corpus Christi* began to be celebrated in a grand manner among the Thomas Christians. Both the Adoration and the celebration of the grand feast of the Holy Eucharist helped the people to renew their spiritual life. In fact, there was an awakening in the sacramental life of the clergy and people.

The liturgical renewal of the Western Church in the last century was the result of the great effort and leadership of the monks of the Abbeys of the West European countries, namely, France, Belgium, and Germany.<sup>1</sup> Rome was only an observer in the beginning. Prosper Geranger of France is remembered as the father of liturgical renewal. Geranger was never a reformer of liturgy but a traditionalist. He re-established the Order of Saint Benedict in France and founded the Benedictine Abbey of *Solesmes* in 1832. The Abbey stood for a deep study and research which paved the way for an interest in the liturgical sources. For the second phase of the liturgical renewal, Belgium took leadership. Dom Lambert Beauduin of the *Mont Cesar* Abbey was a man of genius and he planned to awaken in all Christians an

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<sup>1</sup>For a study of the liturgical renewal of the Western Church, refer Kanichikattil, *Search for Liturgy in India*, 85-90.



awareness of sacramental life. For Beauduin, "Liturgy is prayer. The people must take part in it, not merely assist at it. We are part of the Church and we give glory to God in our whole being." His programme for liturgical renewal was welcomed not only by the intellectuals but also by ordinary church going people who experienced a new spirit in the celebration of the liturgy.

Thus, Benedictine Abbeys of the West, namely, *Solesmes* in France, and *Mont Cesar* in Belgium were the wellsprings for the liturgical renewal in the Western Church. Their research and leadership in the field of liturgical renewal invigorated the sacramental life of the clergy and people, which paved the way for a renewal in the Church.

In the same manner, when we turn back to the history of the Thomas Christians of the nineteenth century, we come across Chavara, a strong pillar, who took the initiative for the renewal of the sacramental life of the clergy and people. The old CMI monasteries founded by the Saint, at Mannanam, Koonammavu, Elthuruth, and Vazhakulam became the liturgical centres from where a spiritual renewal spread all over Kerala. There were seminaries attached to these monasteries during Chavara's time which helped the easy dissemination of the liturgical spirit.

## **6. Saint Chavara: A Faithful Follower of the Oriental Tradition**

Was Saint Chavara a follower of the Latin tradition in the liturgical matters? Did he transmit Latin customs among the Thomas Christians? As a Malpan (Master), did he give formation in the Oriental method for the clergy and people of Malabar Church? We hear questions of this sort at times from different corners. Here, first, we have to examine the time in which Chavara lived. The Malabar Church was

governed by the *Propaganda* Congregation of Rome at the time of Chavara (nineteenth century). The *Propaganda* Prelates were very strict to follow the decrees of the Synod of Diamper, especially in liturgical matters. They considered Malabar Church to some extent as schismatic, following Nestorian Christology. Hence, the Saint had a rare chance to introduce anything of his own in the liturgy. He was satisfied by writing an Order, *Thukasa*, for the priests for uniform celebration of the Mass. However, Chavara could stress the 'mystery' aspect of the Eucharist in his writings. He could not make any change either in the liturgical text or introduce any Oriental innovation in the Eucharistic text.

But Chavara could do something creative in the case of Divine Office. The Portuguese missionaries tried to Latinize the Divine Office of the Thomas Christians. That means they attempted to change the Divine Office into the Latin model. But they could not succeed; hence, they left the plan. The Divine Office was slowly fading in the Church at the time of Saint Chavara. There were only few private manuscripts available in the Church, no printed texts. Further, the Office was very long and prayers were in different handwritten texts. Chavara could understand the pathetic condition of the prayer when he was a young seminarian. When he became the Vicar General of the Church, he called upon all the Malpans of the Church and discussed the matter with them. In the words of Father Porukara Eliseus, Father Chavara could write all the prayers by himself in Syriac and arrange them in the Oriental model.<sup>1</sup> As the Vicar General of the Church, he sent it to Rome for approbation in 1862. The arrangements of the prayers were exactly in the pattern of the East Syrian Breviary. The work of Chavara in the

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<sup>1</sup>See Porukara, *Founding Fathers* (Malayalam).

organization of the Breviary, and the attempts he made to print it shows his interest in the restoration of the prayers in the Oriental module. Through this the Saint was preserving a very ancient model of the Divine Office in the Malabar Church.

When we come to the Liturgical Calendar, we see that the Synod of Diamper unified the Liturgical Calendar for the Latin and Oriental Churches in Kerala. The Synod compelled the Orientals to follow the Latin Liturgical Calendar. This greatly affected the liturgical life of the Thomas Christians. For centuries they were following the Oriental Calendar. Chavara understood this aggrieved situation of the Oriental Church and when he was the Vicar General, with the consent of the Vicar Apostolic, he prepared a Liturgical Calendar for the Thomas Christians from the manuscripts then available in Kerala. Accordingly, the first Liturgical Calendar typically in the Oriental pattern appeared in 1865. That was a creative work of Chavara for the Thomas Christian Church. Till his death (1871), every year Chavara prepared the calendar for the Church. In the Calendar, the Saint articulated the East Syrian liturgical seasons, the feasts and fasts that appear according to different seasons, the names of Malayalam months, etc. In the same way Chavara prepared the Office for the Dead (*Annida*) and funeral service for the Malabar Church in the Oriental module. In the light of these creative works Chavara can never be called a 'follower' or promoter of Latin tradition; on the other hand, he was a strong pillar of the Oriental Rite.

### **7. Chavara: A Promoter of Unity in the Church**

Saint Chavara ever stood for the unity in the Church. He was a strong supporter not only of the Malabar Church but

alos of the universal Church. By his personality and activities he proved that he is a strong supporter of the Catholic communion. He was a humble servant of the Church, and his contributions may be understood in that perspective.

Father Chavara was appointed the Vicar General of Thomas Christians by Bishop Bernardine Baccinelli (1861) at a time when the Church was in great difficulty. An unauthorized Bishop Roccas from the Chaldean Church (Bagdad) reached Malabar in 1861 and began to congregate people to his side with the help of his supporters. Thomas Christians supported him because they detested the rule of the Carmelite prelates and welcomed someone from the Middle East. Saint Chavara as the Vicar General of the Thomas Christians appeared on the scene and skillfully studied the situation. To understand the truth, he wrote a long letter to Pope Pius IX, explaining the difficult situation in the Malabar Church. That letter shows his anguish of the unity of the Church and deep love towards the Holy See. He wrote: "Holy Father, in utmost humility and grief, with eyes filled with tears, I pray to you for the sake of the faithful, please reveal to us the Truth. What answer did Your Holiness give to the Patriarch of Chaldea? Whom shall we oblige: Bishop Bernardine Baccinelli or the newly arrived Roccas? In this difficult situation, please lead us in the true path."<sup>1</sup> The letter very specifically shows the Saint's great concern of the unity of the Church and his adherence to the Holy Father. The Holy Father very positively responded to the letter of the Saint, saying that the newly arrived Thomas Roccas is not an authorized bishop with the consent of

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<sup>1</sup>Letters to Holy Father, CSK IV, 13-15 (author's translation).

Rome. He had no authority over Thomas Christians of Malabar and was to be sent back to Bagdad without delay.

Chavara also wrote two letters in 1861 to the Prefect of *Propaganda Fide*, Cardinal Alexander Bernaba on the same matter. In 1869, the Saint wrote to the same Cardinal expressing his deep respect to the Congregation and love to the Thomas Christians of Malabar. He wrote: "We received our faith from Saint Thomas, the Apostle, and we are Thomas Christians. We do not have a bishop as our own for years. But other Oriental community (Jacobites) has their own bishop. People look for a bishop as their own. Hence, I would like to invoke you, it is better to have two bishops; one for the Latin Christians and another for the Syrian Christians (Thomas Christians)."<sup>1</sup> The Saint did not propose a bishop from Thomas Christians. Chavara also wrote a few letters to the same Congregation for the approbation of the liturgical books and rites concerned with liturgy. The life of Saint Chavara itself is, without any apprehension, a manifestation of his ardent love to the Holy Father and the Universal Church, on the one hand, and his commitment and dedication for the spiritual growth of the Thomas Christians of Malabar, on the other.

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<sup>1</sup>Letters to Propaganda Fide, CSK IV, 34-35 (author's translation).

## **PART 2**

### **A. Thukasa: 'Order' of Eucharistic Liturgy**

## Chapter 3

# PRIEST'S PREPARATION BEFORE CELEBRATING THE HOLY KURBANA

### 1. Introduction

The celebration of the Holy Kurbana is the principal duty of the priest. He is ordained principally for that. Only he can do this most holy and sublime act for the people of God in the most perfect and enriching way. Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara, well aware of this sublime and praiseworthy duty of the priest, prepared the *Thukasa* (Order) for meaningfully celebrating the Holy Mass. In Luke 22:7-8 we read Jesus telling his disciples "go and prepare the *Pesaha* meal for us." Jesus sent two of his disciples earlier to prepare the *Pesaha* and that became the 'Breaking of the Bread' in the early Christian community and later the 'Eucharist' in the tradition of the Church. In the model of the Lord, it is the duty of the celebrating priest to prepare materially and spiritually for the celebration of the Holy Kurbana.

In the Chaldean tradition, the celebrating priest recites the Liturgy of Hours, namely, the *Sapra* (Morning Prayer) before the morning Mass and *Ramsa* (Evening Prayer) before the evening Mass, especially for the great feasts of Nativity and Resurrection, with the people in the church. In general, in the Assyrian and Chaldean Churches, the celebrating priest must recite the prayers of the day with the people. Today this way is practised in many of the Syro-Malabar churches. But it is not a common practice in the Church as a whole. In the Latin Church, there are a number of preparatory prayers for the priests to say before celebrating the Holy Mass. Many of the preparatory prayers of the Latin

Missal entered in the Eucharistic text (*Taksa*) of the Syro-Malabar Church after the Synod of Diamper in the sixteenth century. The Syro-Malabar priests made use of it as a spiritual preparation for the Holy Kurbana. This appeared in the Syro-Malabar *Taksa* printed in Rome in 1774, and was used by priests till the new text of 1962 was promulgated. In the Latin Church the preparatory prayers were introduced in the Missal in the wake of the Council of Trent during the rule of Pope Pius V (1504-1572).

## **2. Preparatory Acts of the Priest**

In the Latin tradition, according to the old custom, the priest who wishes to say Mass should previously have recited the Matins and Lauds under the pain of venial sin. This rule was founded on an ancient custom of the Church at the time of Pope Innocent IV. It is also proper that the priest should spend some time in mental prayer. If he wishes to confess, he should do before putting on the sacred vestments. Then, he should make the proximate preparation on which depends the actual devotion that one has during the celebration of the Mass. In the old Latin Missal these prayers were printed for the priest to recite attentively, namely, the Psalms and the prayers having indulgences. Also it is printed on special card and kept in the sacristy for the use of the priest.

On the preparation of the priest for celebrating the Holy Kurbana, Saint Chavara stated: "The priest enters the sacristy in purity and diligence and he opens the *Taksa* to pray the given Psalms and prayers with great devotion, and as the Fathers of the Church teaches he spends proper time in mental prayer on the passion of Christ. Afterwards he



looks at the readings of the day in the *Taksa*.<sup>1</sup> The *Taksa* of 1774 prescribed certain Psalms (84, 85, 86, 116, 130),<sup>2</sup> as very meaningful and precise in the preparation for the Mass; as more Psalms are given, the priest had the freedom to choose according to his taste. Ps 84 is a pilgrim Psalm that the people of Yahweh used to sing when they reach the Temple for the Annual Feasts; it speaks of the majesty and glory of the Holy Temple of God. God's living presence is the cause of greatest joy in the Temple. "How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord Almighty? My soul yearns, even faints for the courts of the lord" (84:1,2). The dwelling place in the Old Testament stands for the Sanctuary of the Church in the New Testament. The Psalm continues: "Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young at a place near your altar" (84:3). It is very meaningful as it explains that the sparrow has found a home and the swallow even a nest near the Altar of the Temple. It means that the Altar of Sacrifice is the abode of holiness and hope of the eschatological life of the praying man. It is rather coincident that the same Psalm (Psalm 84) appears in the Ordination ceremony of the Syro-Malabar Church in the beginning itself (first Canon). The Psalm (130) is a prayer for help. The Psalm is an assurance of Lord's forgiveness. God will surely forgive our sins if we confess sins to him: "Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord; O Lord hear my voice. Let your years be attentive to my cry for mercy... But with you there is forgiveness."

After the Psalm, there is a litany prayer and then a prayer to the Holy Spirit for selecting the priest, the unworthy man, for celebrating the Holy Eucharist upon the Holy Altar of

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<sup>1</sup>*Thukasa* (1926), 1-2.

<sup>2</sup>Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 3-4.

the Lord as in the Latin Missal. Also there is a request to the Spirit to inspire the priest and cleanse his heart from all evil in the prayer.

Most Gracious God, in your loving kindness enlighten our hearts with the Grace of the Holy Spirit that we may worthily celebrate your mysteries and deserve to love you with an everlasting charity.

O God, to Whom every heart is open, to Whom every wish sounds like a word, and from Whom no secret is hidden, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the infusion of your Holy Spirit; that we may perfectly love you and worthily offer praise to you.

Burn our desires and our hearts with the fire of the Holy Spirit, O Lord that we may serve You with a chaste body, and with a clean heart pleasing to you.

Grant, O Lord, that the Advocate Who proceeds from you, may enlighten our minds; and may He lead us into all truth, as was promised by your Son. May the power of the Holy Spirit be near us, O Lord, mercifully to cleanse our hearts and defend us from all harm?

O God, who taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that, in the same Spirit, we may relish what is right and always rejoice in His consolation.

O Lord, visit our minds and cleanse our thoughts, we beseech you, that Our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, at His coming may find in us a home prepared for Him. Who with you lives and reigns in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, and world without end, Amen.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *St. Joseph Daily Missal* 1961; The old Kurbana Text of Syro-Malabar Church (*Taksa d'Kudase*, Text of Kurbana) Rome, 1774 .

### 3. Washing of the Hands

The washing of the hands before the Holy Kurbana, now practically lost its sense and became out of use. But before the Second Vatican Council this act was very particular and symbolic, asking the Lord to make the priest celebrant cleansed from all impurities of sin. After the due preparatory prayers the priest moves to the water urn to wash his hands. Saint Chavara wrote: "The priest should wash the fingers with utmost care thinking that it is cleansing from the sin. At the same time, he must do it perfectly, not simply wetting the top of the fingers, because he has to hold the Divine Bread with his fingers and perform the Sacrifice with great attentiveness."<sup>1</sup> The priest, then, draws the Sign of the Cross on himself and washes his hands with the following prayer:

Give virtue to my hands, O Lord, that being cleansed from all stain I might serve you with purity of mind and body: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.<sup>2</sup>

### 4. Liturgical Vestments and Vesting

The purpose of liturgical vestments worn by the priest during the celebration of the Holy Kurbana is, first and foremost, to make clear that the priest is not a private person, but stands in the place of Christ - *Alter Christus*. What is merely private, or individual, about him should disappear and make way for Christ. "It is no longer I who

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<sup>1</sup>*Thukasa* (1926), 3.

<sup>2</sup>Prayer for washing of hands and other vesting prayers, see "Liturgical Vestments and Vesting Prayers" from *Office of the Liturgical Celebrations of the Supreme Pontiff*, Rome, February 2011; Also see *Taksa d'Kudase*, Rome, 1774; Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 5-6.

live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20). These words of Saint Paul, from his own very personal experience, describe the newness of the baptized person in comparison with the celebrating priest. It is not he himself who is important, but Christ. It is not he himself whom he is communicating to men, but Christ. He makes himself the instrument of the Holy Spirit, acting not from his own resources, but as the messenger, indeed as the presence of another – *persona Christi* – as the liturgical tradition says.<sup>1</sup> Liturgical vestments are a direct reminder of the text in which Saint Paul speaks of being clothed with Christ: "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Gal 3:27).

The image of putting on Christ is, therefore, a dynamic image, bearing on the transformation of man and the community. The vestments are a reminder of all this, of this transformation to Christ, and of the new community that is supposed to arise from it. Vestments are a challenge to the priest to surrender himself to the dynamism of breaking out of his self and being fashioned anew by Christ and for Christ. The particular prayers of the priest during the vesting became part of the *Taksa* of 1774 of the Syro-Malabar Church, as mentioned earlier, due to the Latin influence after the Synod of Diamper. These prayers started in the Latin Church after the Council of Trent and still continue, though it is no longer obligatory. Their use is recommended since they help in the priest's preparation and recollection before the celebration of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. The Syro-Malabar priests were forced to use Latin vestments after the Synod of Diamper; before the Synod, probably, they used Chaldean vestments for the liturgy. These prayers were

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<sup>1</sup>Ratzinger, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 216-219.

taken from the Latin Missal and the concluding praise – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – is of Syro-Malabar origin.

The following prayers from the *Thukasa* have their base in the Roman Missal; they are of rich biblical symbolism and encourage priests to prepare themselves to offer the Kurbana with due recollection.

1. After washing the hands, the vesting proper begins. The priest begins with the amice, a rectangular cloth, and is placed over the shoulders and around the neck; the strings are then tied about the waist. The amice has the purpose of covering the everyday clothing, even if it is the priest's clerical garb. While putting it on, the priest recites: "Place upon me Lord, the *helmet* of salvation, that I may overcome the assaults of the devil: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."<sup>1</sup>

With the reference to the Saint Paul's letter to the Ephesians (6:17), the amice is understood as the "helmet of Salvation," which must protect him who wears it from the demon's temptations, especially evil thoughts and desires during the liturgical celebration. The Benedictines, the Carmelites, and the Franciscans put the amice first upon their heads and then let it fall upon the chasuble.

2. The alb/*kothina* is the long white garment worn by the sacred ministers, which recalls the new and immaculate clothing that every Christian has received through baptism. The alb is, therefore, a symbol of the sanctifying grace received in the first sacrament and is also considered to be a symbol of purity of the heart that is necessary to enter into the joy of the eternal vision of God

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<sup>1</sup>Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 7.

- in heaven. This is expressed in the prayer the priest recites when he puts on the alb. The prayer is a reference to Revelation 7:14: "Make me white, O Lord, and cleanse my heart; that being made white in the Blood of the Lamb I may deserve an eternal reward: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."
3. Over the alb and around the waist is placed the girdle or cincture, a cord made of wool or suitable material that is used as a belt. In the symbolism of the liturgical vestments the cincture represents the virtue of the self-mastery, which Saint Paul also counts among the fruits of the spirit (Gal 5:22). The corresponding prayer takes its source from the first letter of Peter (1:13): "Gird me, O Lord, with the cincture of purity, and quench in my heart the fire of concupiscence, that the virtue of continence and chastity may abide in me: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."
  4. The stole/*urara* is the distinctive element of the ordained minister and it is always worn in the celebration of the sacraments and sacramentals. It is a strip of material that is embroidered according to the norm. Putting on the alb, the priest recites the following prayer: "Lord, restore the stole of immortality, which I lost through the transgression of our first parents and unworthy as I am to approach Thy sacred mysteries, may I yet gain eternal joy: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."
  5. Finally, the chasuble/*kappa* is put on, the vestment proper to him who celebrates the Holy Mass. He chooses the colour according to the feast. The prayer for wearing the chasuble refers to Mathew 11:30: "O Lord, who has said, "My yoke is sweet and my burden light, grant that I may so carry it as to merit Thy Grace: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."

Regarding the above prayer texts, while it is possible to use different prayers, or simply to lift up one's mind up to God, nevertheless, the texts of the vesting prayers are brief, precise in their language, inspired by a biblical spirituality and have been prayed for centuries by countless sacred ministers both of the Roman and the Malabar Churches.

### 5. Taking the Chalice and Paten and Entering the Sanctuary

Sanctuary is the Holy of Holies in the liturgical tradition. Saint Chavara mentions the attitude of the priest: "Then, taking the Chalice by the left hand and putting the right hand on the *ketana*, bowing the head before the Crucifix in the Sacristy, the priest enters the Holy of Holies with great devotion and spiritual sentiments. The deacon or altar server, carrying the *Taksa* precedes him to the Altar.<sup>1</sup> When they enter the Holy of Holies (sanctuary) the priest says with great joy: "I will go unto the altar of God, the God of my gladness and joy" (Ps 42:4).<sup>2</sup>

The priest and the server proceed to the Altar and, at the foot of the Altar, the priest gives up his *biretta* (cap) in respect (to the Altar). Then, ascending to the Altar, the server puts the *Taksa* on the stand, while the priest takes the *ketana* and spreads it on the Altar Stone, places the Chalice on it. Afterwards he opens the *Taksa* and puts the mark. The priest and the server, then, return to the foot of the Altar, make a deep bow or genuflection if there is Eucharist in the Tabernacle, and the priest says in a low voice: "I have entered into thy house, and I have worshipped before Thy

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<sup>1</sup>*Thukasa* (1926), 9-10.

<sup>2</sup>King, "Syro-Malabar Rite" in *The Rites of Eastern Christendom*, 482.

Throne, O merciful Lord, pardon my faults and sins" (Ps 5:7).<sup>1</sup>

Here the Holy of Holies of the Church may be compared to that of Prophet Isaiah's vision of the *Heaven*. He says: "I saw the Lord sitting on the Throne high and lofty; and the hem of His robe filled the Temple. And one (angel) called to another and said holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory" (Is 6:1-4).

Also the East Syriac writer Narsai in his Liturgical Homily 17 explains the Holy of Holies, the majesty of the Lord, and the Mystery the priest performs. He has no human words to explain the Divine Mystery: "Into the Holy of Holies of the glorious Mysteries, the Holy Spirit permitted me to enter, that I might reveal the beauty of their glory to the sons of the Mystery. Come, then, O son of the Divine Mystery; hear the record - marvelous to tell - of the Mysteries of the Church. I have a Mystery, I have a Mystery, I have a Mystery... Lofty in Truth and exalted is this mystery that the priest performs in the midst of the sanctuary mystically."<sup>2</sup>

To Narsai, the Holy of Holies, i.e., the sanctuary of the church is the abode of the Lord, and the holy Altar is the Throne (*thronos*), also the sepulcher (*kaber*) of Christ.

## 6. Conclusion

When Saint Chavara was the vicar general of the Malabar Church (1868), he prepared the *Thukasa* (Order) for the use of the priests, to help them prepare intensely for celebrating the Holy Mass. He was very conscious of the experience of Holy Mass in the life of the Priests and people as well. Saint

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<sup>1</sup>King, "Syro-Malabar Rite" in *The Rites of Eastern Christendom*, 482.

<sup>2</sup>Connolly, *Liturgical Homilies of Narsai* (Homily 17), 1-2.



Chavara explained all the rubrics very elaborately for the use of priests so that the liturgical celebration would be very meaningful and appealing to the people. He insisted that the priest should spend sufficient time for mental prayer and recite the particular prayers as preparation for the Mass. The celebrant must use the holy objects such as chalice, paten, purifier, etc., with utmost care and respect. If there is Eucharist in the tabernacle the celebrant must genuflect at the beginning of the Mass.

Sufficient care should be given to liturgical vestments, because they help the priest for a transformation of the mind. On the holy altar the celebrant is another Christ – *altar Christus*. The vestments prompt him to do as Christ did. On the Mount Calvary, Christ sacrificed himself to the Father for all humans; on the altar, the priest does the same sacrifice of Christ to God the Father. Hence, the liturgical vestments are very meaningful in the life of a priest and play a significant role in liturgical services.

Sacristy is the vesting place for the priest, and the Sanctuary the place of performing the Mysteries. The high Altar is the Throne of God; therefore, in the Psalm, he prays: "I have entered into thy house, and I have worshipped before thy Throne." At the time of Saint Chavara, the priests were turning to the Altar during Kurbana not towards the people, and great respect was given to the Holy of Holies, the Altar, the Tabernacle, and the Crucifix. Also the sanctuary was decorated with beautiful liturgical art, with carvings of saints and angels to witness it as Heaven on Earth.



## Chapter 4

# CEREMONIES OF THE HOLY KURBANA FROM THE BEGINNING TILL THE END OF GOSPEL READING

### 1. Introduction

In every Eucharistic liturgy (Holy Kurbana), there are two parts, namely, the Liturgy of the Catechumens and the Liturgy of the Faithful. The Liturgy of the Catechumens is a preparation for the Liturgy of the Faithful. The Liturgy of Catechumens mainly consists of the *Enarxis* (beginning, i.e., the introductory part), and the Liturgy of the Word. In olden days the non-baptized used to participate in the Liturgy of the Catechumens, and at the end of the Word of God, they receive a blessing from the bishop or priest and leave the church. Since they are not baptized, they could not participate in the Liturgy of the Faithful. During the time of Saint Chavara, Catechumenate was very active in the Kerala Church, especially in the monastery churches which Saint Chavara had founded. The beginning (introductory part) of the Syro-Malabar Kurbana printed in 1774 at Rome consisted of the following: the Sign of the Cross, silent prayer (*Kusappa*), Permission of the Community (*pukdanahon*) and Response, Angelic Hymn, Our Father, *Slota* (Prayer), Psalms, *Slota*, and Resurrection Hymn (*Lakumara*) and Its Collect. In the renewed liturgy, the celebrant begins the Holy Kurbana with a short introduction of his own on the day's liturgy, but it is not obligatory.

Saint Chavara was very particular on due adoration to be given to the Lord Almighty, deep respect to holy places, and reverential fear and diligence in performing liturgical

actions. Hence, he explains in *Thukasa* four types of bowing (inclination) in the Divine Liturgy:<sup>1</sup> (a) simple inclination with head bowing, utters the name Jesus, putting the Sign of Cross on oneself, etc.; (b) slender inclination (head and shoulders inclined) for concluding the prayers; (c) moderate inclination (head, shoulders, and waist inclined) when one passes before the Tabernacle with Eucharist; and (d) deep inclination (head, shoulders, waist, and knees inclined) at the beginning of the Holy Kurbana, beginning of Credo, etc.

The Liturgy of the Word in Syro-Malabar Church consists of Trisagion (Thrice Holy Name), introduced at the time Patriarch Isho'Yab I (fifth century),<sup>2</sup> the readings from the Old Testament and the New Testament (but rarely read from the Old Testament at the time of Saint Chavara). The readings are made very celebrative and meaningful by adding *Suraya*, *Sumara*, and *Turgama* hymns<sup>3</sup> on special occasions and *Raza*.

## 2. The Beginning

The celebrant priest and altar servers at the foot of the altar make a deep inclination or a genuflection to the *Thronos* (Altar). Then, the priest makes the Sign of the Cross on himself saying *bsem abba...* at the beginning. "In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen."

Then, he prays in a low voice (*kusapa*). The prayer is praising God, and it has reference to Isaiah 6:3, "Holy... holy...," the purpose being to bring the atmosphere of holiness and omnipresence of God at the beginning itself: "*Holy, holy, holy* is the Lord God of hosts. The heaven and

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<sup>1</sup>*Thukasa* (1926), 17-18.

<sup>2</sup>Jammo, *La structure De la Messe Chaldeene*, 93.

<sup>3</sup>Jammo, *La structure De la Messe Chaldeene*, 101.

earth are full of His glory, and of the existence of His essence, and of the splendour of His glorious beauty, as the Lord said: 'Heaven and earth are filled with me'. Praise be to Thee, praise be to Thee, Praise be to Thee, praise be to Thy blessed Trinity, at all times, world without end. Amen."<sup>1</sup>

The priest, then, starts *Pukdanahon* (Your Permission), which he sings in the Solemn Mass. It is related to the social custom of Saint Thomas Christians, asking the permission of the community before any social function, and the community responds saying "Commandment of the Lord." The celebrant, then, prays or sings the Angelic Hymn, "Glory to God in the Highest" three times, to which the people respond with "Amen." Then, the priest says silently the second part. Scholars say that the Angelic Hymn was added to original Chaldean Liturgy at a very later period. According to Jammo,<sup>2</sup> the hymn was added only in the fifteenth century to the Liturgy. In the Liturgy, the Angelic Hymn signifies the birth of Jesus. Then follows the "Our Father who art in heaven..." with "holy... holy... holy" (*canona*) and repeats "Our Father" without "holy..." "Our Father" was added to the Liturgy only the tenth century. It was added to the Kurbana as the consequence of a debate between a Syrian Orthodox monk and the Chaldean Patriarch Thimothi I (780-823). The monk complained that the Chaldeans have no "Our Father" in the prayer of the day. Patriarch took this comment to consideration and he added "Our Father" not only in the beginning but also at the end of the prayer of the day. The Patriarch Abdisho I (963-

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<sup>1</sup>Taksa d'Kudase, 8.

<sup>2</sup>Jammo, *La structure De la Messe Chaldeene*, 73.

986) made it permanent in the Kurbanā Text.<sup>1</sup> But the hymn “holy, holy, holy... is the Lord God of Host” was present in the Liturgy at a very early age.

Then comes a *slota* about which Saint Chavara makes very minute mention: “On praying, the celebrant extends his hands in a modest way and the palms of hands in a ‘face to face’ position and at the end he places the folded hands on his breast.”<sup>2</sup> After a group of three Psalms (*marmita*) – Ps 15, 150, and 116 with antiphon for ordinary days – is prayed by the priest and the server. For feast days and different liturgical seasons, there would be different Psalms. The Ps 15 is very meaningful and it hints at the sanctity of the priest and the people of God who approach the Sacred Altar for the Holy Sacrifice. In the ordinary days, Ps 15 is recited by the priest and the alter server alternately. “Lord who shall enter your Temple? Who may worship on Zion, your sacred hill? Those that obey God in everything and always do what is right... (continues...)” The Psalm leads us to be spiritual in the House of God. Finishing the Psalm, and ascending to the Altar, the celebrant recites the antiphon, “How glorious and lovely is thy Holy Place, O God, the sanctifier of all things,” and kisses the Altar in reverence. The entire Psalm and antiphon bring the holiness of the Altar and sanctity of the priest and the people. After the Psalms, there is a *slota* that differs for Sundays and ordinary days.

### **3. Resurrection Hymn (*Lakumara*)**

The Resurrection Hymn, according to scholars, is very ancient in the Chaldean Liturgy. It is called Resurrection Hymn because the verses are very much related to the

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<sup>1</sup>Jammo, *La structure De la Messe Chaldeene*, 73.

<sup>2</sup>*Thukasa*, 19-20.

Resurrection of Christ and, hence, the whole universe, heaven and earth worship the risen Lord. Also this prayer is a guarantee of our own resurrection: "Lord of all, we praise you. Jesus Christ we glorify you. For you are the One who raises our bodies, and You are the Saviour of our souls." According to the Oriental tradition, this hymn was sung by the Fathers (OT) in Sheol, when Jesus came there after Death. Jesus Christ raised them from the dead and opened the doors of heaven and, thus, the Lord is the Saviour (*Paroka*) of humanity. Also, according to some Oriental writers, this hymn is a contribution of Patriarch Simon Barshaba who was martyred in 341 AD; he is a martyr of the Chaldean Church.<sup>1</sup> By the time of Gabriel Qatraya, the prayer has become an indissoluble part of the Chaldean Mass. The introductory prayer which presents the Church as a Triumphant Church is also very praiseworthy: "We will praise thee and glorify thee, unceasingly, in thy triumphant Church, full of every help and happiness."

There remained certain special actions in connection with the Resurrection Hymn, at the time of Saint Chavara. The altar server would bring the thurible to the celebrant and he would put the incense in the bowl and would incense the Altar in the Solemn Mass. On putting incense grains in the thurible Saint Chavara reminded: "The priest shall not touch the incense grains by the hands. He always keeps the hands neat and clean. He has to prepare Bread and Wine for the offertory, also to hold the Host by the hands. Hence, to put the incense grains in the bowl, he shall use a small spoon."<sup>2</sup> The celebrant and the choir sing or say the prayer alternately. The antiphon by the deacon is very meaningful:

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<sup>1</sup>Pathikulangara, *Resurrection, Life and Renewal*, 62.

<sup>2</sup>*Thukasa*, 13-14.

“I washed my hands clean, and encompassed thy altar, O Lord. We praise thee, Lord of All...” In the renewed text of the Syro-Malabar Kurbana (1989), this action is different. The celebrant and the server will be on the Bema during this hymn, and the veil of the sanctuary would be moved. Then the server would incense the whole *madbha*, Crucifix, and the people. The lamps in the sanctuary are burnt and the sanctuary resembles the Heaven and, hence, the name “Heavenly Jerusalem.” This ceremony becomes the official *introit* (start) of the Kurbana. This is possible only in the churches where there are the above-said arrangements. It is not a common practice everywhere in the Syro-Malabar Church.

#### **4. Trisagion and the Readings**

The “Thrice Holy Hymn” is a preparation for the community to hear the Word of God, and it invokes both the catechumens and the baptized to hear and reflect the Word. Its origin is supposed to be during the reign of Emperor Theodosius (430-456) in Constantinople. In the Antiochene tradition, there is an addition as “the one who crucified for us” and, hence, the hymn always converges to Christ Crucified. But the other traditions do not add this qualification and, hence, refers either to the Trinity or the Saviour Jesus Christ. It is a general understanding that in the sixth century Chaldean Patriarch Mar Abha (540-552) made a visit from Seleucia to Constantinople and he added the hymn in the Chaldean Liturgy.<sup>1</sup> The same Patriarch introduced the Anaphora of Theodore and the Anaphora of Nestorius in the Kurbana of the Chaldean Church.

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<sup>1</sup>Jammo, *La structure De la Messe Chaldeene*, 93.



The angels were always serving Christ (Mt 4:11) in the most holy redeeming work, which Jesus Christ fulfilled according to the will of the Father. Also the prophet Isaiah saw the Cherubim and Seraphim always praising God "holy... holy..." in the heavenly Jerusalem; and the vision of the prophet is a common feature in all liturgical traditions. In short, Trisagion is a 'holy hymn' of the people and it prepares them to hear attentively and reflect on the Old and New Testament readings.

In the Divine Liturgy, the Word of God comes after the Eucharist. The Word of God had a tradition of the Synagogue prayer during the time of Jesus. In the Synagogue, the Jews gathered to pray at different times of the day. In the Jerusalem temple, there were morning and evening sacrifices with offering prayers. In the Synagogue, Torah was read from the Bimma (raised platform in the midst) and the deputed person explained it to the people. In the history of the Church, the Christian community participated in the Breaking of the Bread on Saturday evening. As a preparation for Breaking of the Bread, they read from the Old Testament and Acts of the Apostles. In the Sunday liturgy explained by Saint Justin, we see the community read from the Acts of the Apostles, as a preparation for the Eucharist till the Service starts.<sup>1</sup> Gabriel Qatrya (seventh century), the East Syrian commentator, writes: "The law and the prophets that are read signify the arguments which Our Lord put forward from Moses and from all the Prophets to confirm His teaching as He said to the Jews: Search the Scriptures in which you preach the eternal life and it is they that bear witness to me."<sup>2</sup> Reading the Gospel according to

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<sup>1</sup>Jasper and Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 19-20.

<sup>2</sup>Qatrya, *Homilies and Interpretation on The Holy Kurbana*, 91.

Qatraya is the mystery of all the words which Our Lord said to the Jews before he suffered. Two lights on either side of the Gospel signify what Our Lord said to his Apostles: "You are the light of the world" and "your light shall shine before men as they may see your good works and may praise your father who is in heaven."<sup>1</sup>

Among the East Syrian liturgical commentators, the early writers Theodore and Narsai interpreted the Divine Liturgy from dismissal of the Catechumens. They did not speak of the Liturgy of the Word. But the seventh century commentator Gabriel Qatraya and, later, George of Arbela of the ninth century gave us a long and symbolic explanation of the first part of the liturgy, namely, Enarxis, the Liturgy of the Word and Eucharistic Liturgy. It shows that the 'reading' was ceremoniously established in the Chaldean Liturgy more or less from the time of Gabriel Qatraya.

In the ordinary (simple) Mass, which *Thukasa* explains, there are readings only from the Epistle and the Gospel. Therefore, in *Thukasa*, there is no mentioning of *surraya*, the hymn between the Old and New Testaments, the *summara*, the 'halleluya' hymn before the Gospel and the *Turgama*, before the Epistle and the Gospel readings. These preparations before the Old and the New Testament readings make the liturgy very celebrative and experiential. *Turgama*, the instructive hymn before the Epistle reading, enlightens the people as follows:

A treasure of happiness, the Lord has opened before those who seek it and has said, Oh! You sinners come and get back the bond of your debts. Cleanse your heart and become like children that you may be heirs and

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<sup>1</sup>Qatraya, *Homilies and Interpretation on The Holy Kurbana*, 93.

dwellers of heavenly kingdom. Behold! The word is preached to you in spiritual voices and opens for you a way to eternal happiness. It is necessary that like Saint Paul you turn from the shadow of the laws to the law that is real.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, the *Turgama* before the Gospel reading instructs the people:

O you who believe in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, come and listen to the words that heal the body and give life to soul. The Son of God took the likeness of man among men and by His command liberated humanity from sin. This sermon has opened before you a spiritual treasure and this Book is wholly filled with life and happiness. Devils flee and evil spirits depart in fear when they hear this living and life-giving word.<sup>2</sup>

Before the Gospel reading, the celebrant blesses the people. Priest must do it in a most perfect way. On Blessing the people Saint Chavara writes:

Turning to the people, with eyes downward, placing the left hand on chest, priest blesses with right arm, with all fingers straight, he raises the right arm till forehead and then to downwards, till the chest then to both sides in the form of a Cross, then bring both hands together at the chest level.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 52, nos. 3-6; See also Liturgy Text, *Raza of the Syro-Malabar Church* 1986, 20, nos. 3-6.

<sup>2</sup>Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 58-59, nos. 1-4.

<sup>3</sup>*Thukasa*, 29.

Saint Chavara's explanation on reading the Gospel to the people is admirable. Even though people could not follow Syriac language, he says that the celebrant turns little to people in order to feel that he is reading to them. The celebrant says: "The holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Proclamation, *karosusa* of (Name)." When uttering the word 'Proclamation' the priest signs the Book and himself to manifest the respect and devotion to the Gospel, also his own imperfection. Similarly, at the end of the Gospel reading, the priest raises the gospel and kisses the first 'Word' of the day's Reading.<sup>1</sup>

In 1868, when Saint Chavara was the Vicar General of the Syro-Malabar Church, he prepared *Thukasa* for the priest to celebrate the Holy Mass fruitfully. Liturgy of the Word was very elaborately celebrated only in the *Raza* and Solemn Mass (Sung Mass). In Ordinary Mass there were readings only from the Epistle and the Gospel, and are conducted in a more simple way.

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<sup>1</sup>*Thukasa*, 30-31.

## Chapter 5

# CEREMONIES OF THE HOLY KURBANA FROM PREPARATION OF THE OFFERTORY TILL THE ANAPHORA PRAYER

### 1. Introduction

As explained in the previous chapter, in the early period of the Church the non-baptized were not allowed to take part in the Liturgy of the Faithful. They were sent out from the church after Gospel reading with a blessing. Bringing the offertory objects before the Holy Liturgy begins was an ancient tradition in the liturgy. People used to bring agricultural products, especially the first crops of their manual work, on the special table near the Altar. At the end of the Mass the celebrant priest would bless those items and distribute them to the people, especially to the needy, etc. This tradition is renewed in all liturgies after the Vatican Council II, and it gained more recognition in the liturgical celebration. Bringing offertory items in the liturgy was considered an active participation of the faithful. In the Church of Africa, the offertory procession today is a very long liturgical ceremony with their rhythmic devotional music, trumpet, and dance. It is very devotional, evolving from their ancient culture and heritage and it is a part of the enculturation of the Church.

In the Divine Liturgy, the bread and wine are offered on the Altar; it is the first offering. They become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ after the recitation of the Consecration Words and Epiclesis. The Body and Blood of Christ are immolated for the remission of our sins on the sacrificing table, in the species of bread and wine. Here Jesus Christ

Himself is the Priest who sacrifices and He Himself is the Victim of the sacrifice. That is the mystery of the Divine Liturgy. When the priest offers bread and wine on the altar, the community also feels that it is their own sacrifice, participating in the eternal sacrifice of the Redeemer. Hence, by offering fruits, flowers, light, incense, etc., the community members have the feeling of sacrificing their self with the sacrifice of Christ. Hence, offertory procession and offering the objects make the liturgy more alive and participatory.

## 2. Preparation for the Offertory and Sending Out of the Catechumens

After the reading of the Gospel, the celebrant priest turning to the Cross and extending both hands says loudly, or in the Solemn Mass he sings: "*mhymaneen bad Alaha...*," meaning, "we believe in one God..." (Creed). The celebrant, then, makes a deep bow towards the Cross, and then moves to the centre, and making three bows he approaches the Holy Altar. The priest kneels at the foot of the Altar in great devotion.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, the proclamation prayer is said by the server: "Let us all stand rightly with joy and cheerfulness and let us pray, saying 'Our Lord, have mercy on us'." In the present Kurbana, the Creed and approaching the Altar with deep bow come after the second part of the *oniza d' Raze*. The Creed starts at the Bema and the celebrant moves towards the Altar making deep bows, then kisses the Altar several times. It is a spiritual preparation for the Anaphora prayer. At the time of Saint Chavara, the position of the Creed was just after the Gospel reading in the Ordinary Mass.

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<sup>1</sup>King, "Syro-Malabar Rite" in *The Rites of Eastern Christendom*, 488.

The deacon or server at the conclusion of the litany brings the censer to the priest for the blessing of the incense. The veil, paten, chalice, and pall (*m'kabлана*) are in turn held over the censer with the following prayers. For the veil: "Lord Our God, make this veil fragrant, like the veil of Elias the true prophet. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." For the paten: "Lord Our God, make this paten fragrant, like the paten of Aaron, the excellent priest, in the Tabernacle of the Covenant. In the name of the Father... For the chalice: "Lord Our God, make this chalice fragrant, like the chalice of Aaron, the excellent priest in the Tabernacle of the Covenant, Lord of fragrant roots and sweet smelling aromatics. In the name of the Father... For the pall: "Lord Our God, make this pall fragrant, in the Name of the Father..."<sup>1</sup>

The priest, then, prepares wine in the chalice at left end of the altar with the prayer: "the precious blood is poured into the Chalice of Christ Our Lord. In the name of the Father..." At this, a little water is added to wine with the customary prayer. At the right end of the Altar the celebrant prepares Bread, saying: "This Paten is signed with the sacred body of Jesus Christ. In the name of the Father and..." With the outstretched hands, in the middle of the Altar the celebrant concludes the proclamation prayer with the following prayer:

Lord God, the Powerful, we beseech and implore Thee,  
perfect in us Thy grace and pour forth through hands  
Thy gifts and Thy mercy and the goodness of Thy  
Godhead that they effect the forgiveness of the debts of

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<sup>1</sup>King, "Syro-Malabar Rite" in *The Rites of Eastern Christendom*, 488-489; Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 80-81.

Thy people and remission of sins of all the sheep... The Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.<sup>1</sup>

The Deacon, then, Announces:

Be pleased, Father to give blessing. Bow down your heads for the imposition of hands and receiving the blessing.

The priest, then, bowing down over the altar, says in a low voice: "Lord God, the powerful, Thine is the Holy Catholic Church. For the sheep of the flock have been purchased by the wonderful passion of Thy Christ, and through the grace of the Holy Ghost ... whom Thou didst elect.

Extending his hands and resuming a straight posture, the celebrant prays in a loud voice:

Grant, O Lord, in Thy goodness, that all the days of our life we may, every one of us equally please Thy Godhead by good work of justice... Glory and honour, praise and worship, Lord of all, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost... Amen.

Here comes the proper dismissal of the Catechumens:

Priest and Deacon: "Who hath not received baptism, let him leave."

Priest: "Who hath not put on the sign of life, let him leave."

Deacon/Server: "Who hath not received it (Holy Eucharist), let him leave."

Priest: "Go hearers and watch the doors."<sup>2</sup>

The Syriac writer Narsai of Nisibis (fourth century) in his Liturgical Homily 17 well explained the sad state of those who were leaving the Church at this stage:

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<sup>1</sup>King, "Syro-Malabar Rite" in *The Rites of Eastern Christendom*, 490.

<sup>2</sup>*Thukasa*, 45; King, "Syro-Malabar Rite" in *The Rites of Eastern Christendom*, 491.



Sadly they all go forth from the midst of the nave, and lament and stand with great mourning in the outer court of the church, congratulating those who remain in that enjoyment, and giving woe to themselves for their exclusion. By her expulsion ... the Church scans her congregation at the time of mysteries, and everyone that is not adorned with clean garments, she casts forth without.<sup>1</sup>

### 3. Offertory of Bread and Wine and Its Symbolism

The deacon now says: "Let us pray, peace be with us." The priest, then, goes to the right side of the altar, where taking the paten with host in both hands, he raises it to the level of the forehead. Then returning to the centre, the celebrant turns to the people, and says: "*msambaru sabares...*" "With expectation, I have waited for the Lord; with fear and love let us all offer to Him, upon the holy altar, the body of Christ and his precious blood, and with angels let us cry out to him: holy, holy, holy Lord God." The deacon or server responds: "The poor shall eat and be filled. With fear and love let us all..."

Then, the deacon having said, 'Let us pray', the priest takes the chalice in his right hand and the paten in his left, and holding his arm *cross-wise*, says in a low voice: "We will offer glory to thy most blessed Trinity always and forever. May Christ, who was immolated for our salvation, and commanded us to celebrate the memory of his passion, death, burial and resurrection, accept this sacrifice from our hands, through his grace and mercy, world without end. Amen." The offerings are placed on the altar and the base of the chalice is three times touched with the paten. The

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<sup>1</sup>*Texts and Studies*: Homily 17 (Exposition of the Myateries), 3.

celebrant continues: "Disposed, disposed ... and arranged these holy mysteries – glorious, life-giving and divine – on the sacred altar of Christ, until His glorious second advent from heaven. To Him is glory ... without end, Amen."<sup>1</sup>

Saint Chavara explains this part of the Liturgy as follows: The celebrant priest holds the bread in the paten by both hands diligently and lifting up to the forehead turns to the people and starts the prayer, "*msambarus sabares maria...*" "We will offer glory to thy most blessed Trinity... Then, turning to the altar, he takes the chalice by the right hand and holds both in a Cross-wise position, symbolizing the death of Christ on the Cross. The priest now completes the prayer, and places them on the altar."<sup>2</sup>

According to Syrian writers, Theodore and Narsai, this part of the liturgy is Jesus' carrying of the Cross to the Calvary and his passion and death on the Cross. The explanation of the offertory procession in Narsai's homily is very symbolic and meaningful. For the explanation of this part, Narsai very much depends on the writings of the 'great interpreter' Theodore of Mopsuestia of Antiochean Church. To quote Narsai:

And let us see Jesus who is being led to death on our account. On the paten and in the cup He goes forth with the deacon to suffer. The bread on the paten and wine in the cup are a symbol (figure) of His death, a symbol of his death these (deacons) bear upon their hands, and when they set it on the altar and cover it, they typify His burial: not these (deacons) bear the image of the Jews, but

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<sup>1</sup>Syro-Malabar Rite, 492.

<sup>2</sup>*Thukasa*, 46-47.

rather on the watchers (angles) who were ministering to the passion of the Son.<sup>1</sup>

Covering the mysteries (bread and wine) with the veil, the priest says or sings in Solemn Mass: "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Upon the sacred altar let there be a commemoration of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God." The server responds: "From the eternity and forever, Amen. Pray ye apostles of the Son and the friends of the Only-Begotten, that there may be peace upon every creature..." (the dialogue continued). Saint Chavara, the Vicar General of the Thomas Christians, commented upon this dialogue prayer:

After the deposit of the bread and wine upon the altar, the priest covers them with the veil symbolizing the Tomb of Christ. In the dialogue prayer that follows, the priest must stress the remembrance, *dukrana* of Blessed Virgin Mary, Saint Thomas the Apostle, the saint of the day, the dead who are in the hope of resurrection, and the faithful in the Church. In the liturgical celebration, there is a unity (harmony) between these groups in different level. All, the living and the dead participate and experience the fruit of the divine celebration.<sup>2</sup>

The Church newly added the name of the Saint Joseph, the protector of the Church, in the *dukrana* prayer. On this part of the Liturgy, Narsai comments:

The altar is a symbol of Our Lord's tomb, without doubt, and the bread and wine the body of our Lord. The veil also, which is over them, presents the type of the stone. The deacons standing on this side and on that and brandishing (fans) are a symbol of the angels at the head

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<sup>1</sup>Kanichikattil, *Divine Liturgy in the Vision of Narsai*, 36.

<sup>2</sup>*Thukasa*, 50-51.

and at the foot of the tomb. All the deacons who stand ministering before the altar depict a likeness of the angels who surrounded the tomb of our Lord.<sup>1</sup>

On examining the rite of offertory in the old Syro-Malabar Liturgy, one is convinced that the offertory represents passion of Christ; offering of the bread and wine by the priest, hands in the Cross-wise position symbolizes the death of Christ on the Cross for the remission of sins. The bread and wine placed on the altar and covering them by veil signifies Christ's Body placed in the tomb; the altar symbolizes the tomb. Two deacons represent two angels (Lk 24:4) whom the apostles saw on the day of resurrection of Christ. Thus, the offertory as a whole corresponds to the material preparation for the Anaphoral part of the Liturgy.

#### **4. Spiritual Preparation of the Priest before *Anaphora***

In the Chaldean (Syro-Malabar) Liturgy, the preparation of the bread in the paten and the wine in the chalice, and the offering of these elements are considered as the material preparation for the *Kurbana (Anaphora)*. After offertory, the celebrant priest washes and wipes out his hand symbolizing the removal from defilement. The priest washes his hands saying: "May God, the Lord of all, remove the uncleanness of our debts and offences in the immense ocean of his mercy. Amen." Then wiping his hands, he continues: "May the Lord wipe away the defilement of our sins through his grace and mercy. Amen." This liturgical rite signifies part of the spiritual preparation of the priest. The priest, then, from the middle of the altar blesses the server: "May God the Lord of all, give you strength to sing his praises," and the server responds: "Let us pray. Peace be with us. Pray for the

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<sup>1</sup>Narsai, Homily 17, 4.

memory of the fathers, bishops, of all priests and deacons of the unmarried youths and virgins, of all our fathers and brothers, of all our sons and daughters... our salvation and life everlasting in the kingdom of heaven." This proclamation is a reminder of the deacon to the community to pray for the dead who are in the hope of resurrection.

In the meanwhile, the priest having kissed the altar (tomb of Christ) in the centre, to the right, to the left, and again in the centre, says in a low voice the prayer: "I give thee thanks, my Father, Lord of heaven and earth, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; for while I was yet a sinner, thou didst make me worthy, by the grace to offer in thy presence these holy mysteries - glorious, life-giving and divine of the body and blood of Christ... tranquillity of all churches." It is a personal prayer of the celebrant priest to the Holy Trinity to keep him in purity to celebrate the Divine Liturgy in a perfect way for the peace and tranquillity of the Church.

Then, kissing the altar in the centre and to the right, the priest looking towards the Gospel side, makes the sign of the Cross and says: "'Be pleased, Lord, to give thy blessing: Brethren, pray for me that this oblation may be perfected through my hands." The deacon, then, responds: "May God, the Lord of all give you strength to sing his praises." The priest, again kissing the altar, continues: "I give thee thanks, my Father, Lord of heaven and earth, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost; ... Looking to the Epistle side, the priest now repeats the prayers and ceremonies and the deacons give the same response.

In the present renewed Kurbana of the Syro-Malabar Church (1989), the celebrant priest and the deacons make a procession at this point from the Bema to the Altar. The priest makes three deep bows when he approaches the altar,

saying the prayer, "I give thee thanks, my Father Lord of heaven and earth, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost..." When the priest reaches the altar, turning to people and extending his hands he invites the assembly: "Bless, O Lord, Pray for me brothers and sisters that this Kurbana may be fulfilled through my hands." The community responds to it saying, "May God the Lord of all strengthen you... Amen." This is possible only in places where there is bema at the lower end of the sanctuary or at *haikala*.

Thus, the offertory part of the Holy Liturgy is the preparation for the *Anaphora* of the Kurbana. The Creed, sending out of the Catechumens, offertory procession, and the silent prayers of the celebrant at the altar (now the solemn entry from bema to sanctuary) are the different rites of this part. It can be said that the general trend of this part of the liturgy is a symbolic representation of the passion, death, and burial of Jesus Christ. In this respect, the altar represents the tomb of Christ where the dead are remembered and prayers offered for them. According to Narsai, the liturgy in the sanctuary - *Anaphora* - represents the heavenly banquet to which all the faithful are invited to participate every day.

## Chapter 6

### CEREMONIES OF THE HOLY KURBANA The Anaphora of Mar Addai and Mari

#### 1. Introduction

*Anaphora* is the most essential part of the Eucharistic Liturgy. The Greek word *Anaphora* means that which is 'raised', that which is 'offered' to God. In the Holy Kurbana, the Eucharistic species, bread and wine are raised and offered to God by the priest. Those species become the Body and Blood of Christ who immolated himself on the Cross in Calvary as remission for the sins of the world. In the Latin Mass, it is the Eucharistic Prayer in place of the Anaphora that brings this change. In the Oriental Church, there are a number of classical *Anaphorae*, namely, the *Anaphora* of Saint James, *Anaphora* of Saint John Chrysostom, *Anaphora* of Saint Basil, etc. In the Chaldean and Syro-Malabar Churches, the *Anaphora* of Addai and Mari is the most accepted one. The Syro-Malabar Church, after the Synod of Diamper (1599), used only the *Anaphora* of Addai and Mari. Now the Church has allowed two more *Anaphorae*, namely, the *Anaphora* of Theodore and the *Anaphora* of Nestorius. It is taken for granted that the earliest form of the *Anaphora* of Addai and Mari evolved in the second or the beginning of the third century. Also liturgical experts agree that this *anaphora* shows a great affinity to the Jewish prayer of 'Birah' (blessing) after the meal. Hence, in the last century, the liturgists took this *anaphora* as the subject of their research, and there came out a number of scholarly articles. Bernard Botte, Gregory Dix, Ratcliff, Louis Bouyer, and Bryan Spinks made substantial research on the formation of this *Anaphora*.

Among these the grand contribution perhaps may be that of the Jesuit, William Maccomber, who found a tenth century manuscript of this second century *Anaphora* from Mossul which is taken as the most ancient document of the *Anaphora* of Addai and Mari. Further, the prayers of this *Anaphora* showed great affinity to the Jewish prayer, and strikingly the manuscript had no 'Institution Words' before the *Anamnesis*. That puzzled every liturgist. Earlier there was a doubt among liturgiologists regarding the presence of the 'Institution Words' in the most ancient manuscript. But after the discovery of the ancient text by Maccomber (1966), today liturgists almost agree that the 'Institution Words' were absent in the ancient form of the *Anaphora*. Still there is a possibility that the celebrant said by-heart the formula during the Holy Kurbana.<sup>1</sup> In the year 1996 (November), there was a dialogue between Roman and Assyrian Churches in Rome regarding the Formula of Institution Words in the *Anaphora*, and both agreed the use of the *Anaphora* of Addai and Mari without 'Institution Words' in the Liturgy, if necessary.<sup>2</sup> This is for the use of the Chaldean Church only.

This ancient *Anaphora* had a great affinity to the Jewish '*Birah*' prayer after the meals mentioned. The Jewish meal prayer contains the following steps: "Blessed are you, Lord Our God, King of the Universe..." That is a blessing for the creation of the world; then, thanksgiving for the inheritance of the desirable land and food: that is a thanksgiving

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<sup>1</sup>Kanichikattil, "Pneumatology in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari: Indian Perspective" in *Search for Liturgy in India*, 51-54.

<sup>2</sup>Guidelines for admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and Assyrian Church of the East, 23 November 1996, Rome.



formula; then, "Have mercy, Lord Our God on us your people Israel and your city Jerusalem..." a prayer for God's mercy, is recited. The ancient *Anaphora* of Addai and Mari bear these qualities and, hence, the liturgists agree its early origin.<sup>1</sup>

It is agreed that the old Syro-Malabar Eucharistic text (*Taksa*) has undergone a renewal after the Synod of Diamper in 1599. Archbishop Menezis of Goa and later Bishop Francis Roz SJ of the Thomas Christians made many changes in the existing Eucharistic text. With nobody's consent they thoroughly Latinized the *Kurbana* text, however not changing the Syriac language because Thomas Christians had great affinity to this language. They made many changes in the Liturgy, all in view of making the Eucharistic text more attuned to the Roman Rite. They introduced Latin vestments and *beretta* (cap) for the priest, preparatory prayers before and after the Eucharistic Liturgy, Latin prayers (in Syriac) during vesting, genuflection in the liturgy, "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" dialogue prayer before Holy Communion, etc. The Syro-Malabar Church practised these changes till the renewal in 1962. Very particular thing that happened during this period would be that the Syriac *Taksa* printed in Rome (1774) did not include the 'Institution Words' within the *Anaphora*; on the other hand, the 'Institution Words' were placed *after the Anaphora along with the elevation of the Eucharistic Body of Christ*. Probably this might be the work of Bishop Ross SJ or his predecessors. In all other liturgies the 'Institution Words' come within the the *Anaphora*.

Narsai, the illustrious Persian writer, in his homily 17 on the *Mysteries*, speaks on the mind of the priest when he

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<sup>1</sup>Jasper and Cuming, *Prayers of the Eucharist*, 9-10.

approaches the altar: The priests now come in procession into the midst of the sanctuary for *Anaphora* prayer.

## **2. Gehanta Prayers**

The *Anaphora* of Addai and Mari consists of four *Gehanta* prayers according to the present Kurbana text. Priest's prayer in the *bent position* is known as *Gehanta* prayer in Oriental Liturgy. Along with one principal prayer there would be silent prayer as preparation, prayer seeking the help of the community, and one or two canons as concluding prayers. All become a prayer circle. This is the structure of the *Gehanta* prayer in the *Anaphora* of Addai and Mari. There are four *Gehanta* prayers in the present liturgical text of the Syro-Malabar Church: First *Gehanta* is prayer for God's blessing for the fruitful celebration of the Holy Kurbana (this *gehanta* is a preparation for the whole *Anaphora* prayer); the second *Gehanta* is a praising and thanksgiving to God, the Creator of the heaven and earth, and its response; third *Gehanta* narrates God's coming on the earth in Jesus Christ from Blessed Virgin Mary for the salvation of the world; and the fourth *Gehanta* consists of prayers for the Church, for all human beings and living beings on earth, at the end of which comes the Epiclesis, the descending of the Holy Spirit upon the Eucharistic species and on the community.

## **3. Preparation for the Anaphora**

As preparation for the *Anaphora*, the priest prays in low voice for the forgiveness of his sins and sins of the community and he makes deep bows before the Throne of the Lord. Several times he kisses the altar of the Lord to express his sentiments of respect and deep faith for calling him to accomplish the inestimable act of the Sacrifice. The

silent prayer *kusappa* before the *Gehanta* is as follows: "O Lord our God, O Lord our Lord, regard not the multitude of our sins, and let not thy majesty turn away with disgust from the weight of our evil, but through Thy ineffable grace sanctify this sacrifice, and impart to it the virtue and power to remit our many sins..." It is a prayer of reconciliation as the recitation goes... "regard not the multitude of our sins..." and towards the end the *kusappa* turns to an experience of eschatological experience by stating, "... be made worthy to sing your praises with the host of angels."<sup>1</sup>

As it was mentioned earlier, the First *Gehanta* Prayer is an introduction for the whole *Anaphora* and it starts:

We acknowledge Our Lord and our God, the abundant riches of thy grace to us (repeated); for whilst we were full of sin and weakness, through the multitude of Thy mercy, though did make us worthy to be the ministers of the sacred mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ and implore Thy help for the strengthening of our soul ... upon us. (Celebrant then kisses the altar).

This *Gehanta* Prayer is not the part of the *Anaphora* of Addai and Mari. It is found in the *Anaphora* of Nestorius as a silent prayer before the *Anaphora*. The celebrant priest recites this prayer when he approaches the Eucharistic Altar from Bema in the *Anaphora* of Nestorius.<sup>2</sup> It is a silent prayer and likely been taken in the *Anaphora* of Addai and Mari. Further, it is a thanksgiving prayer for the abundant graces of God and the celebrant implores God's help for celebrating the holy mysteries.

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<sup>1</sup>Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 111-112.

<sup>2</sup>Athappilly, "Theological Dimensions of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari" in *Theology in India*, 121.

The *Exchange of Peace* is the next rite, on which Saint Chavara Kuriakose Elias wrote: "Then, with hands placed cross-wise on his breast, the priest in loud voice says: 'And we offer thee glory and honour, praise and worship, now always, world without end.' Deacon: 'Amen.' Priest blesses the people, "*slama amahon*" - "Peace be with you" and the response is given: 'And with thee and with thy Spirit.' The priest, then, symbolically shares peace with the server and people. Then the deacon reminds the people: 'My brethren, give peace to one another in *the love of Christ - bhumba d'mashiha.*" In the Syro-Malabar Liturgy, the exchange of peace is at the beginning of the *Anaphora* Prayer, not before the Holy Communion at the end as in the Latin Liturgy.

Regarding the Greeting of Peace, Narsai explains why the priest gives peace to the people. He says: "It is because the death has come to an end and corruption is destroyed through a Son of our race who suffered for our sake and raised us all." Similar idea is expressed by 'Peace be with you' because Satan is condemned and victory has been given to the children of Adam. "On the response of the people to priest's blessing, Narsai held that they call 'Spirit', not soul, which is in the priest, but the Spirit which the priest has received by the laying of the hands. By the laying of the hands, the priest receives the power of the Holy Spirit, that thereby he may be able to perform the divine mysteries." Regarding the Exchange of peace, he explains that, when the celebrant gives peace to other priests, the people within the Church exchange peace with one another. Narsai here turns to the eschatological experience of the exchange of peace. He says: "This is the peace by which the watchers (= angels) and men shall be brought into concord in the day when the glorious bridegroom comes to judge all." Also he says: "Peace is the name of Christ, who makes

all to be at peace, for it is he that has made peace between earthly and heavenly things.”<sup>1</sup> Afterwards, the deacon or server calls for the people’s prayers and attention in a long bidding:

For all patriarchs, bishops, priests and deacons, for all classes of those who by death have departed from the community of the Church and for the living; for the peace of the world and for the crowning of the year that it may be blessed and filled with the abundance through Thy goodness ... and for all of us may this oblation be accepted forever. Amen.<sup>2</sup>

Then facing the congregation, deacon reminds the community to pay attention in order to actively participate in the Divine Liturgy:

Let us all confess, and ask and implore the Lord with pure minds and contrite hearts. Stand with due reverence and attend to the things which are performed – to the tremendous mysteries which are consecrated. The priest has already begun to pray that through his intercession peace may be flourished. *Cast down your eyes and lift up your minds to heaven... Let him who prays pray in his heart: remain in silence and in fear and be praying. Peace be with us.*<sup>3</sup>

These announcements of the deacon are very important in the liturgy of Addai and Mari, since it is a call for remembering the dead, all classes of people in the world; secondly, it invites the community to pay attention in participating in the Liturgy for divine gifts. Now the unveiling of the Holy Offerings and the veil is placed

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<sup>1</sup>Kanichikattil, *Divine Liturgy in the Vision of Narsai*, 46-48.

<sup>2</sup>Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 117-118.

<sup>3</sup>Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 119-120.

around the Chalice. The offerings are now exposed and incensed by the priest before the *Anaphora* proper starts.

#### 4. The *Anaphora* Proper

The *Anaphora* proper (of Addai and Mari) begins with a Blessing over the holy offerings of bread and wine according to the text of W. Macomber. The priest says in clear words: "The Grace – *taibusa* – of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love – *humba* – of God the Father, and the communion – *sawthapuasa* – of the Holy Ghost be with us all, now and always, world without end" (he kisses the altar); the deacon or server responds saying "Amen." Then, the celebrant starts the Dialogue Prayer, Lift up Heart, *Sursum Corda*. In all liturgies, this Dialogue Prayer is present in a slightly different way at the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer. In the *Anaphora* of Addai and Mari, the prayer has got some Old Testament perspective:

Deacon: "Towards Thee, God of Abraham and Isaac and Israel, O King of Glory."

Priest: "The Sacrifice is offered to God; the Lord of All (kisses the altar).

Deacon: "It is Right and Just."

The Dialogue is a prayer to God in heaven. Following this prayer the priest continues the *kussapa*, which is very meaningful as a preparation for the principal prayer.

"Lord, Lord, give us confidence in thy sight that we may go through these living and holy mysteries with confidence and with consciences free from every stain and evil... Be pleased, Lord, to give thy blessing (repeated). Brethren, pray for me, that this oblation may be perfected through my hands." The Deacon responds: "May Christ hear thy prayers; may Christ accept this offering; may Christ glorify thy priesthood in the

kingdom of heaven... His mercy is forever. Amen." (*The Liturgy of...* page 126).

The priest, with extended hands prays the Second *Gehanta*. The prayer is first addressed to the Holy Trinity, and then it turns to God's creation. Therefore, God is worthy of glory from every mouth.

"The adorable and glorious name of the most blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, who created the world in His goodness and its dwellers in its mercy and did great favour to mortal men, is worthy of glory from all mouths, of praise from all tongues, and of worship and exaltation from all creatures." The second part of the prayer is made in the perspective of Isaiah's vision (chapter 6) of the heavenly Jerusalem. "Thousands upon thousands and myriads upon myriads of angels prostrate themselves and adore thy majesty ... and with holy Cherubim and heavenly Seraphim they offer worship to Thy Majesty" (*The Liturg...* page 128-129).

The priest now kisses the altar; raising and joining his hands says in a clear voice: "Crying out and glorifying without ceasing, and proclaiming to one another and saying." The deacon now responds: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts; the heaven and earth are full of his glory... Hosana in the highest." The second *Gehanta* prayer of Addai and Mari may be compared to the Preface of the Eucharistic Prayer of the Latin Liturgy. The Preface comes after the *Sursum Corda* dialogue in the Latin.

Meanwhile, the priest prays a silent prayer which is very meaningful. According to Saint Chavara, the priest prays to each Person of the Holy Trinity, and bows and kisses the Holy Altar several times with deep sentiments of devotion and love. This is the preparation for the next *Gehanta* prayer.

Holy art Thou, O God, the only True Father from whom all paternity in heaven and earth is named (the priest kisses the altar at the middle). Holy art Thou, O eternal Son, by whom all things were created (he kisses the right side of the holy altar). Holy art Thou, the Holy Ghost, the principle by which all things are sanctified (the priest kisses at the left side of the altar).<sup>1</sup>

This silent prayer has reference to Isaiah's vision of Heaven and also to Narsai's explanation of the "Mysteries of the Church" (Homily 17).

At this time, striking his breast, the priest now says a *kussapa*: "Woe to me, woe to me; for I am stupefied seeing that I am a man of unclean lips and live in the midst of people whose lips are unclean. My eyes have beheld the King, the Lord of Hosts... This united the earthly men in fellowship with heavenly spirits." The priest, then, asks the prayer of the community: "Brethren, pray for me that this oblation may be perfected through my hands."

### **5. Third *Gehanta* Prayer**

The *Anaphora* of Addai and Mari consists of four *Gehantas* (according to the present text of the Liturgy) of which the first and parts of the third *Gehanta* prayers are borrowed from the *Anaphora* of Nestorius. The third *Gehanta* prayer in the *Anaphora* is very important since the narratives of the suffering of Jesus who came to the world in human form and accomplished the redemption of the whole humankind comes within this prayer. The third *Gehanta* prayer in the presented Syro-Malabar text is presented in a mutilated form, absorbing certain parts from the *Anaphora* of Nestorius. This happened in the previous renewal of the

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<sup>1</sup>Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 131.



Liturgy in 1986, which the Holy Father Saint John Paul II inaugurated in Kerala. There was wide criticism on absorbing parts of the *Anaphora* of Nestorius. Still it continues to be used. In the present text of the Kurbanā, 'Institution Words' are added in the middle of the third *Gehanta*. But in the old Liturgy, the Institution Words were not presented in the third *Gehanta*; on the other hand, it was found after the *Anaphora* prayer, along with the Elevation of the Eucharistic Bread. But the correct position of the Institution Words is within the *Anaphora* prayer. The text of the Kurbanā of 1774 has the following:

And with these celestial hosts, we praise Thee, O Lord (repeated), we also thy weak and frail and miserable servants. For Thou hast done a great favour, which cannot be repaid, by clothing thyself with our humanity, that it may be vivified by Thy divinity; by exalting our lowliness, by elevating our fallen nature, by endowing our mortality with life, by forgiving us our debts... We will render Thy glory, honour, praise and worship, now always world without end." Deacon responds: "Amen. Pray with your hearts. Peace be with us."<sup>1</sup>

The third *Gehanta* prayer, as mentioned, narrates about the Father sending His son to the world, and Jesus Christ by his death and resurrection accomplishing the redemption of the humanity. Hence, it is very likely that the "Eucharistic Words" appear at the end of this *Gehanta* prayer. The Assyrian Church of the East is free to say or not to say the "Eucharistic Words" within the Liturgy. The Chaldean Catholic Church utters the "Eucharistic Words" within the

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<sup>1</sup>King, "Syro-Malabar Rite" in *The Rites of Eastern Christendom*, 499; also Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 133-134.

*Anaphora*. Scholars say that due to ‘*disciplini arcani*’ – utmost reverence – the liturgical text does not have written Eucharistic Words, but the celebrant says them by-heart. In the Syro-Malabar liturgical text of 1774, quite embarrassingly, the ‘Eucharistic Words’ were said not within the *Anaphora*, but after the *Anaphora*, i.e., before the Fraction of the Eucharistic Body of Christ.

## 6. The Eucharistic Words of Jesus

In the Synoptic Gospels, the evangelists give a vivid picture of Jesus and his disciples who celebrated the Eucharist in the “upper room” before Jesus was arrested. The upper room was chosen as the place for the institution of the most sublime Sacrament of the Eucharist. Only in Luke’s Gospel it is expressly mentioned about the *room in the upstairs*; the title “upper room” has become so symbolic in the apostolic period and later. During the Pass-Over Meal, Jesus took bread, broke it and gave it to his disciples and said: “Take this all of you and eat it; this is my body which will be given up for you” (Mt 26:26; Lk 22:19). Then, he took the cup of wine and said to them: “Take this all of you and drink from it: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all, so that sins may be forgiven” (Mk 14:24; Lk 22:20). “Whenever you drink it, do so in memory of me” (1 Cor 11:25). In the fourth Gospel, instead of the narrative of the Eucharist as in the Synoptics, what attracts us is the praiseworthy action of Jesus. Jesus, the master took off his outer garments and began to wash the feet of his disciples and dry them with the towel around his waist (Jn 13:4-6). This marvellous act of the Master was written not only in the hearts of the disciples assembled there, but eternally written in the hearts of the humanity yet to come. Did the disciples who took part in

the last supper fully understand the meaning of the words spoken by Jesus or His action of washing the feet? Certainly not. But they would have understood it at the end of *Triduum Sacrum*, the time from Holy Thursday evening till Easter Sunday morning. These days embrace the *mysterium Paschale*, they also embrace *mysterium Eucharisticum*.<sup>1</sup> Jesus loved his disciples; he also loved the humanity intensely. He took their burdens and putting them on himself, he made the supreme manifestation of his love towards the humanity by his death on the Cross.

The Greek word '*Eucharistein*' means 'to thank' and '*Eucharistia*' means thanksgiving. The unique words that Jesus spoke on the occasion of the Pass-Over Meal became the unchangeable formula in every Eucharistic celebration. Breaking of the Bread with Thanksgiving Prayer to Yahweh is the usual phenomenon in every Jewish ritual meal. But in the Pass-Over Meal, which Jesus celebrated in the Upper Room, was his last supper with his disciples. In this Thanksgiving Meal, apart from the the customary prayers, Jesus made his own innovations. Breaking and sharing the Bread to his disciples, Jesus said: "This is my Body given for you." The words of Jesus puzzled the disciples. They could not understand its meaning. But Jesus was completing his mission on Earth. His body would be broken for the world on the Calvary the next day. At the same time he would be present in the world till the end of the world. The Bread becomes the symbol of his Unique Presence in the world. The Eucharistic Prayers developed these words as "This is my Body which is broken for you for the forgiveness of sins."

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<sup>1</sup>John Paul II, *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, 2.

Similarly, Jesus took the Cup, uttered praises, and giving to the disciples, said: "This is my Blood which is poured for the forgiveness of sins." This is being continued in every liturgical celebration on the sacred altar. The words of Jesus become meaningful and true when His Body is broken, and Blood is shed on Calvary on the following day. Also in the Eucharistic narration of Corinthians, Paul says: "This is the new covenant in my Blood." Saint Paul also brings a new innovation when he explains the Eucharistic Words. In 1 Corinthians, we read: "For as often as you eat this Bread and drink this Cup, you proclaim our Lord's death until he comes." Paul definitely writes the Eucharistic practice of the Corinthian community. According to him, Eucharist is also a proclamation of Lord's death for the forgiveness of our sins. This is being continued until He comes.<sup>1</sup>

### **7. Prayer of Intercession**

The priest now prays in a low voice and at the end starts the prayers of intercession. It is a long prayer in the Old Syro-Malabar Liturgy. It is an intercessory prayer, and the priest prays to God for different categories of God's people in the name of Chris's Saving Act:

Lord, God of hosts, mercifully hear the voice of my cry, who now stands before Thee... Lord, God of hosts, receive the oblation of the Supreme Pontiff of Rome N, the head and ruler of the entire world, and for Bishop N, who now presides over our people; for the holy Catholic Church, for the priests, kings, for the honour of all prophets, martyrs and confessors ... for all those that are sick and in suffering; for all the dead who in Thy name have gone and are departed from our midst, and for all this people who

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<sup>1</sup>Refer Kanichikattil, *Search for Liturgy in India*, 37-38.

hope and look for mercy... (Then the priest prays for the forgiveness of his sins): consider not my sins and faults; but by Thy grace make us worthy to receive forgiveness of our debts and remission of our sins by the merits of the Sacred Body which we receive in true faith.<sup>1</sup>

In the renewed Kurbana of the Syro-Malabar Church (English text of 2005), the intercessory prayer is not a single prayer said by the main celebrant alone, it is adjusted in different parts for the use of the concelebrants. The intercessory prayer is very important in the present Kurbana, and it is said in loud voice. Also today inspirational prayers also are added to the intercessory prayer, taking the particular situation of celebrating the Liturgy.

#### **8. Fourth *Gehanta* Prayer**

It is the final *Gehanta* prayer of the *Anaphora* of Addai and Mari. Special mention is given to the memory of Blessed Virgin Mary in the prayer. Not only the Mother Mary, but all the just and holy Fathers who have pleased Him by celebrating the memory of the Body and Blood of Christ, is well remembered on the altar. Then, the priest prays for the peace and tranquility all the days of the world. The celebrant mentions of Christ's great ministry in the prayer: "Lord, our God, came and taught us, by his life-giving preaching, all the purity and holiness of the prophets and apostles, of the martyrs and confessors, of the doctors and bishops, the priests and deacons and of all the sons of the Catholic Church, who have been marked with the living and life-giving seal of holy baptism." (The priest makes the Sign of the Cross with his right thumb on the altar).

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<sup>1</sup>Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 136-138.

On this rite, Saint Chavara had made the following observation: "Celebrant priest places his left hand on the altar, and with the thump of the right hand he draws the Sign of the Cross with great devotion on the Mass stone (*Dapa*)."<sup>1</sup> This rite is practised in the present liturgy also, and it means that all become children of the Holy Church by the sacrament of baptism and, hence, are responsible to receive Holy Communion. The final stanza of this *Gehanta* prayer, according to scholars (like Botte), is an *Anamnesis*. It is the 'remembrance' of the Last Supper of the Lord in the liturgy, which usually comes after the Consecration.

O Lord, thy weak, miserable and poor servants, who have assembled in thy name and stand in Thy presence at this time, and have *by tradition received Thy example*, with joy and exaltation, therefore, we venerate Thy memory and go through these mysteries - great, awe-inspiring, and life-giving - of the passion death burial and resurrection of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

### **9. Epiclesis: Descending of the Holy Spirit**

It is a common characteristic of all Oriental Churches that they give great importance to the pneumatological aspect in their liturgies. The pneumatological richness in their liturgies paves the way for an authentic life in the Spirit. Oriental Christianity is more a 'life experience' than a mere doctrinal system. Hence, in Christian life, they stress the role of the Holy Spirit. From the doctrinal point of view, the western theology is very sound in pneumatological aspect, but in liturgical realm, it is not sufficiently developed. In the Eucharistic Prayer of all Eastern Liturgies, there is a special prayer to the Holy Spirit to descend upon the assembled

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<sup>1</sup>Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 141.

community and the elements of bread and wine to transform them into the Body and Blood of our Lord. The invocation prayer is a development in the Eastern Liturgies during the fourth and fifth centuries from the Jerusalem tradition.

Apart from the *Anaphora* of Addai and Mari, there are two more *Anaphoras* in the East Syrian tradition, namely, *Anaphora* of Theodore and *Anaphora* of Nestorius; both of them, according to scholars, are Greek *Anaphoras* translated into Syriac. In all the three *Anaphoras*, the *Epiklesis* follows the intercession. But it is to be noted that the *Anaphora* of Addai and Mari differs both in content and form from the *Anaphoras* of Theodore and Nestorius. Saint Chavara, on the rite of *Epiklesis*, stated (*spreading his hands on the Holy Offerings of Bread and Wine and the thumbs downwards, the priest prays*):<sup>1</sup>

“Let, therefore, O Lord, Thy Holy Spirit come down” – *nessemar ruha kandisse*. After deacon’s response, priest continues: “And may He rest upon this oblation of the servant, and may he bless it and make it holy, so that it might be for us, O Lord, pardon for offenses and forgiveness of sins and great hope in the resurrection of the dead and new life in the kingdom of heaven with all those who have been pleasing before you” (1774 Liturgical Text).

In the *Epiklesis*, there is no direct indication of the Bread and Wine *becoming* the Body and Blood of Christ by the descent of the Holy Spirit, whereas in the other two *Anaphoras* we have definite indication of the *transubstantiation* of the Bread and Wine. In the *Anaphora* of Theodore, we read: “And may the grace of Your Holy Spirit come upon us and upon this offering and may he dwell in, and descent upon ... by the

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<sup>1</sup>Thukasa, 67.

power of Your name may this bread *become* the body of Jesus Christ and this cup the precious blood of Lord Jesus Christ..." Similar is the case with Nestorius.

Narsai, the fifth century liturgical reformer of the Persian (East-Syrian) Church, speaks of the *Epiklesis* in two places in the Homily 17, *Exposition of the Mysteries*; at one place he speaks of the 'brooding and operation' of the Holy Spirit on the Eucharistic elements, and in the other place he speaks of the rite of the *Epiklesis*. Narsai explains:

He summons the Spirit *to come down and dwell on the bread and wine and make them the body and blood of King Messiah*. To the Spirit he calls, that He will also come upon the assembled congregation, that by His gift it may be worthy to receive the body and blood. It is not the priest's virtue that celebrates the adorable mysteries, but the Holy Spirit celebrates by His brooding. The Spirit broods, not because of the worthiness of the priest but because the mysteries are set upon the altar.<sup>1</sup>

Narsai speaks of the transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ. In the following line, he speaks of the resurrection effected by the Holy Spirit:

As soon as the bread and wine are set up on the altar, they show forth a symbol of the death of the Son." [Narsai here means the offertory and placing the elements on the altar.] It is also His resurrection, whereby that Spirit which raised Him from the dead comes down now and celebrates the mysteries of the resurrection of His body.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Conolly (trans.), *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai* (Homily 17), 20-21.

<sup>2</sup>Conolly (trans.), *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai* (Homily 17), 21.



Narsai's predecessor, Ephrem, in his poems fairly explains the pneumatological characteristics of the Eucharist.<sup>1</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia, in his explanation of the mystery of the Eucharist, speaks of the function of the Spirit in the Eucharist.<sup>2</sup> Later commentators, Gabriel Qatraya<sup>3</sup> and Yohannan Bar Zobi<sup>4</sup> have explained the importance of the *Epiklesis* in their explanations of the Eucharistic Liturgy. They stress on the descent of the Holy Spirit, and thereby the resurrection of the body of Christ (Rom 8:11).

G. De Vries made a detailed study on the East Syrian tradition of the sacraments. He concludes: "Only Mar Abdiso (1318) understands that the Words of Christ play a role in the consecration of the oblations. According to him, it is not the Words of Christ alone which effect the change; rather the *Epiklesis* also belongs essentially to it."<sup>5</sup> Bryan Spinks made a study on the commentary of Gabriel Qatraya, and he says that at the time of Gabriel (c. 615), one could not avoid an institution narrative in the East Syrian Eucharistic Liturgy (*Anaphora* of the Apostles).<sup>6</sup> He also says that "Both Jammo and Kilmartin (two scholars of the *Anaphora* of Addai and Mari) are mainly concerned with Qatraya's ideas about

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<sup>1</sup>Ephrem, *Hymn of the Faith* (Beck, ed.), 50; also refer *Hymn of Faith* 10:17.

<sup>2</sup>Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Woodbrook Studies* VI, 105: "After the Holy Spirit has come in this way, we believe that the element of bread and wine has received a kind of anointing from the grace that comes upon them. And we hold them to be henceforth immortal, incorruptible by nature, as the body of our Lord was after the resurrection.

<sup>3</sup>Qatraya, *Homilies and Interpretations of Holy Kurbana*, 99.

<sup>4</sup>Zobi, *L'explication des tous les mysteres divins*, 99.

<sup>5</sup>De Vries, *Sacramententheologie bei der Nestorianern*, 223.

<sup>6</sup>Spinks, "Addai and Mari and the Institution Narrative," 60-67.

consecration, and it is clear that he regarded both the Words of Institution and Epiclesis as necessary for consecration."

On the rite of Epiclesis, *Thukasa* says: As the priest says "let the Holy Spirit descent – *nessemar ruha kandisa* – together with the priest bringing both the hands one upon another in Cross-wise with the thump fingers in the downward position. He completes the prayers in devotion and blesses the Holy Objects."<sup>1</sup> In olden days the priest was raising his hands upwards. After the introduction of *Thukasa*, the hands were placed over the chalice as being done now. It is a very common symbol to represent the descending of the Holy Spirit over the holy things, or persons.<sup>2</sup>

In the Liturgy of the Apostles, the invocation prayer is quite simple, and the coming and operation of the Spirit is oriented towards the community, not to the elements of bread and wine. I. H. Dalmais, in one of his articles, supports this view. It is to be noted that, according to E. C. Ratcliff, the prayer for the invocation of the Holy Spirit in Addai and Mari is a later interpolation. To B. Botte, this prayer is as old as that of the 'Thanksgiving' prayers in the *Anaphora*.<sup>3</sup> Afterwards, there is a special prayer of thanksgiving to God for the wonderful plan of salvation of the humanity by the celebrant priest. The Doxology is the conclusion of the *Anaphora* prayer: "Offering glory and honour, thanks and worship to Thy living, holy, vivifying Name, now, always, world without end. Amen."

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<sup>1</sup>*Thukasa*, 67-68.

<sup>2</sup>Spinks, "Addai and Mari and the Institution Narrative," 63.

<sup>3</sup>Kanichikattil, *Divine Liturgy in the Vision of Narsai*, 77-79.

## Chapter 7

### CEREMONIES OF THE HOLY KURBANA The Consecration of Bread and Wine, Fraction, Consignation and Holy Communion, and Concluding Prayers

#### 1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the final part of the Holy Liturgy and it includes the ceremonies of the most essential part, namely, the Consecration of the Bread and Wine. In all liturgies except in the Syro-Malabar Liturgy (1774 text), the Consecration of Bread and Wine comes within the *Anaphora* of the Eucharistic Liturgy. A question naturally comes to mind as to why the Consecration is placed after the *Anaphora* of the Liturgical text. Earlier the Portuguese were blamed for misplacing the Consecration after the *Anaphora* prayers. According to scholars, the Synod of Diamper may not be blamed for the insertion but the Chaldean Bishop Mar Joseph who was the primate of the Syro-Malabarians (1552-1569), who had introduced the Consecration Words before the Fraction.<sup>1</sup> The reason quite often discussed was that there were no written Eucharistic Words in the most ancient form of the *Anaphora* of Addai and Mari. The faithful were not at all concerned on it since the whole ceremony was in the Syriac language which was quite unknown to them. Only in the restored text of 1962 the Consecration was placed in the present position, that is, within the *Anaphora*.

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<sup>1</sup>Podipara, "The Present Syro-Malabar Liturgy: Menezian or Rozian?" 313-331.

## 2. Preparation for the Consecration

As the preparation for the Consecration, the celebrant begins a prayer of peace and harmony addressed to Christ: "O Christ, the peace of those in heaven and the great hope of those on earth: establish, O Lord, the peace in the four corners of the world and especially in the Catholic Church and between Church and state. Put away wars from the ends of the earth and scatter those who desire wars. We may live a calm and peaceful life in all sobriety and peace of God. Not we, O Lord, not to us but to thy name give the glory."<sup>1</sup> (Priest joins his hands on his breast). Actually, this prayer is very meaningful and very appropriate at this position. But now it is made to be an optional prayer. Then comes the Psalm (51) of reconciliation: "Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy. And according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my sins. For I know my iniquities and my sins are always before me. To Thee only I have sinned... Sprinkle me with hyssop and I shall be cleansed. To Thee I have raised my eyes." After this, certain portion of the Psalm 123, which is also a reconciliatory psalm, is said. *Thukasa* here specially mentions that the celebrant priest spends time meditating upon the 'passion of Christ'.<sup>2</sup> The Psalms are reconciliatory psalms, as preparation of the celebrant and community for the Holy Communion in the present liturgy. But in the particular context of the Malabar Liturgy in the sixteenth century, it may be taken as preparation for the Consecration of Bread and Wine.

Then the server brings the *thurible* and the priest blesses it, saying: "May our prayers be fragrant before Thee, O Lord

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<sup>1</sup>Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 146-147.

<sup>2</sup>*Thukasa*, 69.

Our God, and the incense too and the server, like the censer of Aaron, the excellent priest in the tabernacle of the covenant ... without end, Amen." This is a, excellent ceremony and the priest says prayers of purification. Extending and folding his hands on his breast, the priest is incensed three times by the censer: "O Lord Our God, wash me from my iniquities and fill me with the divine fragrance of your love... Forgive me all my sins and offences, known and unknown to me." Raising his hands upon the server, he says: "Lord, Our God! Fill with fragrance this server who stands in front of your glorious and sacred altar." In a similar way, prayers of purification are said upon the community and last upon the Holy Bread and a Wine. And the preparation concludes with the Prayer: "Bless, O Lord, May your mercy draw us near to these glorious, sacred, life-giving and divine mysteries, though truly we are unworthy."<sup>1</sup>

### **3. The Consecration of the Bread and Wine**

Lord Jesus, on the night before he suffered on the Cross, shared one last meal with his disciples. During this meal our Saviour instituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the Sacrifice of the Cross throughout the ages and to entrust to the Church his Spouse a memorial of His death and resurrection. As the Gospel of Matthew tells us,

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said: "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: "Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be

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<sup>1</sup>Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 149-151.

shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins (Mt 26:26-28; also see Mk 14:22-24, Lk 22:17-20, 1 Cor 11:23-25).

Recalling these words of Jesus, the Catholic Church professes that, in the celebration of the Eucharist, bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit and the instrumentality of the priest. This is Consecration of Bread and Wine in the Divine Liturgy. Jesus said: "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world... For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink" (Jn 6:51-55). The whole Christ is truly present, body, blood, soul, and divinity under the appearances of bread and wine - the glorified Christ who rose from the dead after dying for our sins. This is what the Church means when she speaks of the "Real Presence" of Christ in the Eucharist. This presence of Christ in the Eucharist is called 'real' not to exclude other types of his presence as if they could not be understood as real (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1374). The risen Christ is present to his Church in many ways, but most especially through the Sacrament of His Body and Blood.

What does it mean that Jesus Christ is present in the Eucharist under the appearances of bread and wine? How does this happen? The presence of the risen Christ in the Eucharist is an inexhaustible mystery that the Church can never fully explain in words. We must remember that the triune God is the creator of all that exists and has the power to do more than we can possibly imagine. As Saint Ambrose said: "If the word of the Lord Jesus is so powerful as to bring into existence things which were not, then *a fortiori* those things which already exist can be changed into

something else" (*De Sacramentis*, IV, 5-16). God created the world in order to share his life with persons who are not God. This great plan of salvation reveals a wisdom that surpasses our understanding. But we are not left in ignorance: for out of his love for us, God reveals his truth to us in ways that we can understand through the gift of faith and the grace of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. We are, thus, enabled to understand at least in some measure what would otherwise remain unknown to us, though we can never completely comprehend the mystery of God. As successors of the Apostles and teachers of the Church, the bishops have the duty to hand on what God has revealed to us and to encourage all members of the Church to deepen their understanding of the mystery and gift of the Eucharist.<sup>1</sup>

*Thukasa* explains the Consecration rite as follows. The introduction to the Consecration Words is quite different from other Eucharistic liturgies, because here the Consecration is attached to the rite of Elevation of the Holy Eucharist. The Consecration begins with the priest joining his hands and saying in a low voice: "Glory be to Thy holy name, O Lord Jesus Christ, and worship to Thy majesty always, world without end. Amen" (from the rite of Elevation). Then, wiping his thumbs and index fingers on the corporal, the celebrant continues: "Who the day before his passion took Bread - *sakal lahamma* (he takes the host) into his holy and venerable hands and with his eyes lifted up towards heaven (he raises his eyes to heaven), unto Thee,

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<sup>1</sup>Fay, "The Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of Eucharist: Basic Questions and Answers" (Produced by the Committee on the Doctrine of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Approved by the Full Body of Bishops at Their June 2001 General Meeting), USA.

O God, His Almighty Father, giving thanks to Thee (he bows his head) blessed - *bharah* +++, broke and gave to his disciples saying: 'Take and eat ye all of this; for this is my body - *hanao gher pagar*.' The priest genuflects, stands and shows the Host to the people, as he says in secret: "Behold the living and life-giving bread which came down from heaven, and gives life to the entire world. Those who eat it shall not die; those who receive it shall be saved and sanctified and by it live forever" (from the rite of Elevation). Then, replacing the host on the paten, he again genuflects.<sup>1</sup>

The priest proceeds: "In like manner, after the supper (he takes the chalice) taking also the chalice into His holy and venerable hands, giving Thee thanks (he bows), He blessed +++ and gave it to His disciples saying: 'Take and drink ye all this; for this is the chalice of my blood' - *hanao gher kasa dema* - the new and eternal testament which is shed for you and for many unto the remission of sin (he genuflects and elevates the chalice)." As often as you do these things, you shall do them in remembrance of me." Then, the server continues: "I am the Bread of life which came down from heaven; I am the Bread which came down from on high, said Our Saviour..." In the present Eucharistic Liturgy, the deacon and the community sing the hymn of above verses, "I am the Bread of life ... we may enter and sing Thy praises day and night."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Thukasa, 73-75; Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 151-152.

<sup>2</sup>Thukasa, 77-78; Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 153-154.



#### **4. Eucharist Is Not only a Meal, but also a Sacrifice**

While our sins would have made it impossible for us to share in the life of God, Jesus Christ was sent to remove this obstacle. His death was a sacrifice for our sins. Christ is “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (Jn 1:29). Through his death and resurrection, he conquered sin and death and reconciled us to God. The Eucharist is the memorial of this sacrifice. The Church gathers to remember and to re-present the sacrifice of Christ in which we share through the action of the priest and the power of the Holy Spirit. Through the celebration of the Eucharist, we are joined to Christ’s sacrifice and receive its inexhaustible benefits. As the Letter to the Hebrews explains, Jesus is the one eternal high priest who always lives to make intercession for the people before the Father. In this way, he surpasses the many high priests who over centuries used to offer sacrifices for sin in the Jerusalem temple. The eternal high priest Jesus offers the perfect sacrifice which is his very self, not something else. “He entered once for all into the sanctuary, not with the blood of goats and calves but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption for all” (Heb 9:12). Jesus’ act belongs to human history, for he is truly human and has entered into history. At the same time, however, Jesus Christ is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity; he is the eternal Son, who is not confined within time or history. His actions transcend time, which is part of creation. “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings, you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will, O God’” (Heb 10:5-7). Jesus the eternal Son of God made his act of sacrifice in the presence of his Father, who lives in eternity. Jesus’ one perfect sacrifice is, thus, eternally present before the Father,

who eternally accepts it. This means that in the Eucharist, Jesus does not sacrifice himself again and again. Rather, by the power of the Holy Spirit his one eternal sacrifice is made present once again, re-presented, so that we may continue to share in it for ever.<sup>1</sup> Christ does not have to leave where he is in heaven to be with us. Rather, we partake of the heavenly liturgy where Christ eternally intercedes for us and presents his sacrifice to the Father and where the angels and saints constantly glorify God and give thanks for all his gifts: "To the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor, glory and might, forever and ever" (Rev 5:13). By the Eucharistic celebration we already unite ourselves with the heavenly liturgy and anticipate eternal life, when God will be all in all.

The *Sanctus* proclamation, "Holy, holy, holy Lord..." is the song of the angels who are in the presence of God (Is 6:3). When, in the Eucharist, we proclaim the *Sanctus* we echo on earth the song of angels as they worship God in heaven. In the Eucharistic celebration we do not simply remember an event in history. Rather, through the mysterious action of the Holy Spirit in the Eucharistic celebration the Lord's Paschal Mystery is made present and contemporaneous to his Spouse the Church. Furthermore, in the Eucharistic re-presentation of Christ's eternal sacrifice before the Father, we are not simply spectators. The priest and the worshipping community are in different ways active in the Eucharistic sacrifice. The ordained priest standing at

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<sup>1</sup>Kanichikattil, *To Restore or to Reform?* 33. Theodoe of Mopsuestia, the Antiochene Father, in his homily on the Eucharist, explains elaborately about the sacrifice of the priests in the OT and the eternal sacrifice of Jesus, and the High Priest in the Heavenly Temple.

the altar represents Christ as head of the Church. All the baptized, as members of Christ's Body, share in his priesthood, as both priest and victim. The Eucharist is also the sacrifice of the Church. The Church, which is the Body and Bride of Christ, participates in the sacrificial offering of her Head and Spouse. In the Eucharist, the sacrifice of Christ becomes the sacrifice of the members of his Body who, united to Christ, form one sacrificial offering. As Christ's sacrifice is made sacramentally present, united with Christ, we offer our self as a sacrifice to the Father. "The whole Church exercises the role of priest and victim along with Christ, offering the Sacrifice of the Mass and itself" (*Mysterium Fidei* §31; also see *Lumen Gentium* §11).

### 5. Fraction and Consignation

After the Consecration of the bread and the wine, the priest performs the fraction, a ceremony which unaccountably rose at the Synod of Diamper by the Portuguese. The celebrant genuflects and says: "We draw near, O Lord, with true faith in Thy name, to these holy mysteries; and through Thy grace we break, and through Thy grace we sign the body and the blood of Thy well beloved Son, Jesus Christ, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."<sup>1</sup>

The priest then *breaks* the host into two and placing that half in his left hand in the paten, he signs the chalice with the other half from east to west and from north to south, touching about a third of the particle, and sprinkling it with the precious blood. As the chalice is signed the priest says: "The precious blood is signed with the life-giving body of

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<sup>1</sup>King, "Syro-Malabar Rite" in *The Rites of Eastern Christendom*, 507; Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 157.

our Lord Jesus Christ, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Then, signing the half on the paten with the half in the right hand, he continues: "The sacred body is signed with the propitiatory blood of the Jesus Christ, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." He joins the two halves (separating and joining the two halves of the host means the death and resurrection of Christ) of the host above the chalice, saying: "Divided and sanctified, perfected and consummated, *conjoined* and commixed together are these holy mysteries - glorious, life-giving and divine - in the adorable and exalted name of the most glorious Trinity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ... here and all places, now and always, world without end. Amen."<sup>1</sup>

Before the last words of this prayer, the priest places the two halves of the host on the paten, one upon the other in the form of a Cross, so that the lower half is turned towards the chalice while the upper half towards the priest. This explains the relationship between the body, the blood, and the celebrant. Then wiping the fingers over the chalice, he genuflects, signs himself on the forehead and unfolds the veil spread over the mysteries.<sup>2</sup> The priest, with outstretched hands and in low voice says a prayer. This prayer is optional in the new Eucharistic text. Joining his hands, and in loud voice, the priest continues the *Canon*: "The Grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with us all, now and always, world without end + Amen."

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<sup>1</sup>Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 159.

<sup>2</sup>*Thukasa*, 87.

## 6. Holy Communion

This part of the liturgy starts with certain prayers of reconciliation as a preparation for the Holy Communion. The priest proceeds with a prayer in a low voice, which is a prayer of reconciliation: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, God of Our Fathers, and exalted is Thy name for ever. For Thou didst deal with us not according to our sins ... Thou didst liberate us from the power of darkness and invite us into the kingdom of thy well-beloved son, our Lord Jesus Christ." This is followed by another deprecatory hymn of Saint James of Nisibis: "O Father of Truth, behold Thy Son, the victim which reconciles thee. Do thou accept him, who died for me, and by him I shall be made just. Receive this oblation from my hands and be appeased towards me: remember not my sins, the sins I committed before Thy majesty, remember not my sins, the sins I committed before Thy majesty... Glory to the Father, who sent His Son for our sake; worship to the Son, who by his death on the Cross, redeemed the World; and thanksgiving to the Holy Ghost by whom the mystery of our redemption was consummated. Blessed is He who in his love gave life for us all; to Him be glory." This is a beautiful hymn of reconciliation of Saint James of Nisibis. The hymn explains the multitude of sins, on the one side, and multitude of God's mercies, on the other. Christ's passion and, at last, His death on the Cross are greater than the debts which enabled the humanity again to live by its merits.<sup>1</sup>

The deacon or the server in the meanwhile makes an announcement and offers another prayer of reconciliation: "With fear and respect let us all approach the mysteries of

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<sup>1</sup>King, "Syro-Malabar Rite" in *The Rites of Eastern Christendom*, 509-510.

the precious body and blood of our saviour, in the purity of our hearts and in the true faith. Let us recall to our minds his passion, and contemplate his resurrection... With hope of penance let us convert ourselves from our iniquities and weep over our sins, and ask mercy and pardon from God, the Lord of all, and let us forgive our companions their offences."

The people repeat five times, "Lord, forgive our sins and the offences of thy servants," in response to the prayers of the deacon. Deacon: "Let us make our consciences free from dissensions and contentions." "Lord, forgive..." All these prayers bring a feeling of reconciliation and peace for the community. Towards the end of these prayers, the priest prays in low voice: "Pardon Thou, Lord, through Thy mercy, the sins and offences of thy servants and sanctify our lips ... the fruits of glory." This is followed by *agnus Dei*, by the celebrant, a typical inclusion from Latin Rite Mass from the time of the Synod of Diamper.<sup>1</sup> When the priest says "Lamb of the living God, who takes away the sins of the world," the server responds, saying, "Spare us, O Lord." It is repeated: "Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world;" and the server says: "Graciously hear us, O Lord." "Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world;" and the server affirms, saying, "Have mercy on us." The priest, genuflecting, now elevates the host and chalice together, with the host in his hand and the chalice under it, in his left. Then, in a loud voice, the priest prays: "Make us worthy, O Lord, Our God, that we may always stand before Thee without blemish; we will together invoke Thee and say thus." The people respond with "Our Father, who ... now and

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<sup>1</sup>Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 169; *Thukasa*, 91.

always (priest signs on himself) world without end, Amen." Then the priest follows with other prayers.

The priest, having genuflected, says: "*Domine non sum dignus...* (I am not worthy that thou should enter under my roof, but say the word and my soul shall live) as in the Roman Rite, the celebrant holds in his left hand the broken host, in the form of a cross, striking his breast with the right hand.<sup>1</sup> After certain prayers the priest signs himself with the host, and he receives it in the communion. Then, he receives the chalice, having signed himself with it. Communion is given to deacon and the people of God in one species only.

### **7. Why Does Jesus Give Himself to Us as Food and Drink?**

Jesus gives himself to us in the Eucharist as spiritual nourishment because he loves us. God's whole plan for our salvation is directed to our participation in the life of the Trinity, the communion of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Our sharing in this life begins with our Baptism, when by the power of the Holy Spirit we are joined to Christ, thus becoming adopted sons and daughters of the Father. It is strengthened and increased in Confirmation. It is nourished and deepened through our participation in the Eucharist. By eating the Body and drinking the Blood of Christ in the Eucharist we become united to the person of Christ through his humanity. "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him" (Jn 6:56). In being united to the humanity of Christ we are, at the same time, united to his divinity. Our mortal and corruptible natures are transformed by being joined to the source of life. "Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of

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<sup>1</sup>*Thukasa*, 89-90.

the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me" (Jn 6:57).

By being united to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, we are drawn into the eternal relationship of love among the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. As Jesus is the eternal Son of God by nature, so we become sons and daughters of God by adoption through the sacrament of Baptism. Through the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation (Chrismation), we become temples of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, and by his indwelling we are made holy by the gift of sanctifying grace. The ultimate promise of the Gospel is that we will share in the life of the Holy Trinity. The Fathers of the Church called this participation in the divine life or "divinization" (*theosis*). In this we see that God does not merely send us good things from on high; instead, we are brought up into the inner life of God, the communion among the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. In the celebration of the Eucharist (which means 'thanksgiving') we give praise and glory to God for this sublime gift.

### **8. Concluding and Farewell Prayers**

The concluding prayers of the Syro-Malabar Liturgy primarily consist of thanks-giving prayers, namely, thanks-giving prayer of the community, deacon or the altar server, and, then, the prayers of the celebrant. Lastly, there is a farewell prayer of the celebrant and of the community. On feast days after the Holy Communion the community says (or sings) a prayer, which is well referred in the Homily 17 of Narsai: "Strengthen, O Lord, the hands which have been outstretched to receive the most holy unto the forgiveness of sins. Make them worthy to bring forth fruits everyday for your divinity. Make the lips...You open the gate to the



prayers of us all, and may our service also find entrance into your presence." On Sundays, an alternative prayer is said by the community; on the ferial days the community prays: "May the mysteries we have received with faith be to us, O Lord, unto the forgiveness of sins. Thou art the likeness alike of the servant and of the Creator, O Christ, and king of ages ... with the host of angels. Amen." Then the deacon or the server continues: "Let us all, therefore, who by the gift of the grace of the Holy Spirit, approached and were made worthy to participate in the holy mysteries - glorious, life giving and divine - thank and praise together to God who gave them." The people, then, respond: "Praise be to him for his unspeakable goodness," to which the deacon responds, "Let us pray. Peace be with us."<sup>1</sup>

There are different prayers for the feast days and ferial days, and the celebrant may choose according to the need. The priest and the deacon now join for "Our Father who art in heaven..." and the celebrant prays for the deacon or the server: "May Our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom we have ministered, whom we have served and honoured... world without end, Amen." Then, the celebrant turning to the faithful prays *hutama* (final prayer): "To Him, who pardoned our debts by His Body and blotted our sins by His Blood, be praises sung in His Church... world without end, Amen."<sup>2</sup> The celebrant now turns to the Holy Altar and kisses it and bids *farewell* to the altar.

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<sup>1</sup>Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 189-194.

<sup>2</sup>Fabian, *The Liturgy of the St. Thomas Christians of Malabar*, 201-202.

## **PART 2**

### **B. The Divine Office**

## Chapter 8

### THE DIVINE OFFICE OF SAINT KURIAKOSE ELIAS CHAVARA

#### 1. Introduction

When Father Chavara initiated renewal of the liturgy of Malabar Church, the Missal and the Lectionary of the Thomas Christians were already in fixed form with printed texts. But what remained without proper organization was the Breviary. There was neither a common text nor any uniformity in the celebration. There were a few private manuscripts available. The celebration of the Divine Office of the feasts was slowly going out of use. Almost all the writers of the period are unanimous in reporting the actual plight of the Divine Office in the Malabar Church. The Portuguese missionaries made an attempt to make the Breviary in the Latin model, as they did it with the Missal.<sup>1</sup> In the Missal, they introduced many Latin customs; they also made the Latin Liturgical Calendar obligatory in the Church. But it was not successful in the case of the Divine Office.

#### 2. Great Effort of Chavara in Compiling the Divine Office

Father Chavara's two contemporary biographers, Leopold Beccaro, his Spiritual Father, and Father Kuriakose Porukara, his successor, witness to this truth and explain the strenuous effort of Father Chavara in this field. Father Leopold wrote:

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<sup>1</sup>Podipara, *Our Rite* (Malayalam), 131.

Then the canonical offices in Syriac were recited in different places differently. In order that there may be unity of order in the recitation of the Divine Office, with the consent of the Vicar Apostolic, our Father Prior called together many Malpans (scholars) from different places in the monastery of Kunammavu and after consulting them he corrected the differences. With the intention of getting it printed, he transcribed the whole breviary in his own hand. From these acts, it is clear how much interest and desire he had in performing the sacred ceremonies of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

Father Kuriakose Porukara described it in his own way:

He desired to organize the canonical office of the priests of the Malabar Church and the rubrics of the Mass according to the tradition of the Holy Church. He also wanted, after having obtained the permission, to make these offices shorter and to establish uniformity everywhere in these things. Therefore, he collected the ancient books of the Divine Office from different places and with great care reformed its rubrics. He prepared *the Divine Office for the whole year* with great care and wrote out the whole book in his own hand. He sent this book to Rome through Archbishop Bernardine so that it may be properly examined there and after printing it to be sent to Malabar.<sup>2</sup>

There is a slightly different version of the same in the late edition of the biography of Chavara by Father Kuriakose Porukara:<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Beccaro, *A Short Biography of Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara* (2003), 11.

<sup>2</sup>Vallavanthara, *Research Notes* (Preserved at Mannanam). This is the English translation of Latin version in the *Positio*.

<sup>3</sup>Porukara, *Founding Fathers* (Malayalam), 37.

Since the Syriac books of the Divine Office was in practice in each church differently and with diversity, in order that there may be unity and uniformity everywhere, our Father Prior with the order of the Vicar Apostolic collected the ancient books from different places and gathered many Malpans at Koonammavu and after having corrected the difference, with much pain prepared the complete breviary very neatly and in an orderly way, in his own hand.

The Divine Office used by the Thomas Christian priests consisted of several parts like *Hudra*, *Gaza*, *Kaskol*, and *Kala*. *Hudra* is the collection of prayers for Sundays and moveable feasts of the Lord, and for each day of the Lent; *Gaza* is for fixed feasts of the Lord and Saints and *Kaskol* prayers are meant for ferial days; *Kala* hymns fit for various seasons. Besides, there was a book of Psalms which contained also hymns and praises from Isaiah and Pentateuch. In the Chaldean tradition there are nine liturgical seasons and they are permanent. The seasons are *Subara* (Annunciation-Nativity), *Danha* (Epiphany), *Sauma Ramba* (Fast), *Qyamta* (Resurrection), *Khaita* (Summer), *Sliha* (Apostles), *Elia-Slioa-Mosa* (Elia-Cross-Moses), and *Kudas d'Eta* (Dedication of the Church). For the priests it was not easy to take the proper prayer and recite according to different seasons. Hence, in the nineteenth century, the Divine Office was slowly disappearing from the Church. Father Chavara, when he was a seminarian, understood this truth and he compiled the Divine Office after consulting the Malpans. With the permission of Rome, when he was the Vicar General, he introduced it in the Church.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Valerian, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara* (Malayalam), 222-223.

The Divine Office was said in the Church in three parts: *Ramsa* (Evening), *Leliya* (Night), and *Sapra* (Morning). In the Syriac liturgical tradition, the day starts in the previous evening, for example the Sunday prayer starts at Saturday evening. In the Lent, there were four more parts. Hence, the Divine Offices contained in these sources were too long. On ferial days the priest had to recite three *hullale* (twenty to twenty-five Psalms); on Sunday seven *hullale*<sup>1</sup> and on feast days ten *hullale*, and on Christmas night, twenty-one, that is, all the hundred and fifty Psalms. Besides, there were other sections of the Office mentioned above. Recitation of the Divine Office, thus, was a very time consuming and tedious affair, and priests had a tendency to neglect it. Besides, the Psalms and prayers were in manuscript form and in different books which were too few and in a very poor state of preservation. Hence, creation of a manageable handy book containing sufficient number of Psalms, prayers and hymns was a necessity. Chavara took up this challenge and made very handy and compact book for the use of the Church, especially for the clergy.<sup>2</sup>

### **3. Communications to Rome for the Approval of Divine Office**

It is quite certain that Father Chavara with great difficulty completed the work of Divine Office before 1861, and when he was the Vicar General of the Thomas Christians, he sent it to the Prefect of the Propaganda Congregation in Rome

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<sup>1</sup> *Marmisa* is a collection of two or three Psalms; *hullale* is a collection of three *Marmise*.

<sup>2</sup> Mundadan, *Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara*, 272; also refer Bernard, *CMI Congregation in Early Centuries* (Malayalam, 1989), 17-19.

for the formal approval so that it could be recited in the Malabar Church. In his letter to the Prefect of the Congregation, first, he mentions: "We the priests of the TOCD and all the priests and deacons of the Chaldean Syrian Church of Malayalam (Malabar) under the protection of the Vicar Apostolic Bernardine Beccinelli put forward before you."<sup>1</sup> Then, he requests approval for the Holy Saturday Services in the Syrian Churches and, then, Divine Office.

Taking into consideration the good will of Rome, we pray for the approval of the prayers (Divine Office) to be recited on all Sundays, feast days, and days of remembrance. Now we offer Kurbana according to the feast of saints and recite Breviary of ordinary days. This is not at all suggestive. Hence, we request the approval of the Divine Office for feasts and ordinary days.<sup>2</sup>

From the letter it is very clear that Chavara finished the work of Divine Office for Sundays, Ordinary Days, and Feast Days before 1861 because the letter was sent by him to Rome on 31 May 1861. Chavara sent another letter to Rome to the Prefect of the Congregation of Faith, Cardinal Simayoni. This letter had an introduction of the Vicar Apostolic Bernardine.<sup>3</sup> The date of the letter seems to be 1864. The letter began by identifying the persons who make the application as follows:

We the parish priests, religious priests, and the deacons of the Malabar Church together write. We are very grateful to your reverence for the great concern you undertook for the scrutiny of the text of Divine Office of

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<sup>1</sup>Valerian, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara* (Malayalam), 225.

<sup>2</sup>Valerian, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara* (Malayalam), 226.

<sup>3</sup>CSK IV (Malayalam), 29.

our Church that we submitted through Msgr. Wounard (Bernard) two years ago. We are quite satisfied to know that the scrutiny of the text is nearing completion. We hope that the scrutiny will be soon finished and the book approved for our use as early as possible. Our elderly priests are hopefully waiting to see the approval of the new Divine Office of the Malabar Church.

Another letter of Chavara on the same matter of liturgy, especially the Divine Office, we find in the collection of his letters.<sup>1</sup> He wrote to the Prefect of the Propaganda Congregation dated 31 May 1869:

We humbly request you to obtain permission to recite the Divine Office for the whole year according to the Order, which we had sent to the Sacred Congregation seven years ago for approval (*Positio*, 312).

From the *Positio*, we understand Chavara and his companions were expecting the approval of the Divine Office for the last 'seven years'. In the printed text that passage is missing. Thus, it is very clear that Chavara compiled the text of the Divine Office from the existing manuscripts, when he was at Koonammavu, and sent the text to the Prefect of the Propaganda Congregation, Rome, in 1861.

#### **4. A Circular of Chavara on Divine Office to the Priests and Religious**

As it was already mentioned, when he was a seminarian, Chavara, with the help of Malpan Thomas Palackal, made attempts to prepare a better text. The experience and the training under Malpan Thomas Palackal stood in good stead for Chavara to enter upon the project of producing a new set

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<sup>1</sup>CSK IV (Malayalam), 30-31.



of Canonical Prayers. In a circular of February 1869, addressed to priests, first he spoke of the Order of the Mass already printed. Then, he refers to the Divine Office:<sup>1</sup>

Now there remains the other part of the liturgy, which is the Divine Office. The prayers of the Divine Office are very lengthy. For example, in Lent season, we have to recite 7 *hullale*<sup>2</sup>; on Sundays 10 *hullale*; for the Nativity of Our Lord 21 *hullale*. In a similar way, the Divine Office for the feasts of the saints is too long. And for many saints there are no prayers in the Missal. Because of many reasons, each one recites the prayers in his own way. While they celebrate the Mass according to the feasts of the saints, the Divine Office is that of the ordinary day.

Thus, the Divine Office was slowly disappearing from the Church because of the tedious text; further, it was a fact that there were not enough printed texts. Hence, Chavara decided to print the text under his own leadership with the permission of the Vicar Apostolic. Chavara also integrated necessary feasts of the saints and the prayers from the Latin tradition in the abbreviated text. He mentions it in the Circular:

In order to avoid such disorders, we have abbreviated the book of the Divine Office according to the order of the Vicar Apostolic and made it suit to the Missal. Since we got permission (from Rome), we tried to print Divine Office in Rome. But it was found impossible due to the particular situation there. So, we have decided to print these texts here itself under my own supervision. We

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<sup>1</sup>CSK IV (Malayalam), 130-131.

<sup>2</sup>The Psalms are arranged as *Marmise* (collection of three or four Psalms); *Hullale* (consists of three *Marmise*).

have to print the Divine Office which is in current use, and also that for Sundays, feasts, and Lent.

From the Circular that Chavara sent to the clergy and the members of his religious community, it is very clear that Chavara prepared the text of the Divine Office for the whole year, including Ordinary Days, Sundays, Feast Days, and Days of Fast. He abridged it to meet the need of the Church. In the Circular, Chavara mentioned positively the permission he got from Rome. The new Vicar Apostolic Leonardo and Leopold Beccaro had gone to Rome towards the end of 1869 to participate in the first Vatican Council. Both Father Bernard and Placid<sup>1</sup> have mentioned that through intervention of the Vicar Apostolic, they got approbation from Rome for printing the Divine Office which Chavara had prepared.

### **5. Printing the Divine Office of Sunday and Ordinary (Shimma) Days**

Since in Rome and in the whole of Europe it was a time of great turmoil, it was not possible to print the Divine Office in Rome. Hence, it was decided to print it at Koonammavu. With the money received from the priests and the seminarians as advance, letters were cut and the book of the Psalms was printed at Koonammavu.<sup>2</sup> It was expected to get the rest printed when the Vicar Apostolic and the Leopold Beccaro returned from Rome with the necessary permissions.<sup>3</sup> Father Bernard, after describing the situation

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<sup>1</sup>Bernard, *CMI Congregation in Early Period* (Malayalam, 1989), 137-138; also refer Podipara, *Our Rite*, 133-134.

<sup>2</sup>Bernard, *CMI Congregation in Early Period* (Malayalam, 1989), 138.

<sup>3</sup>Bernard, *CMI Congregation in Early Period* (Malayalam, 1989), 137-138; also refer Podipara, *Our Rite*, 133-134.

prevailing at the time of Chavara, spoke of what Father Chavara did in respect of the Divine Office. He wrote:

In the prevailing context Father Prior tried hard to bring the recital of the Divine Office in conformity with the *Taksa* (Missal) and had one part (Psalms) already printed. But due to the demise of the Prior in 1871, the work did not produce the deserved result.<sup>1</sup>

Father Bernard went on to say that Brother Ignatious, son of Aranattukara Tharakan, who was junior in the Congregation, died in 1874 after receiving the sub-diaconate. He had worked diligently to get the breviary printed. The author described how finally one book *Shimmapady* (Prayer for Ordinary Days) came into use. Later, the Office, both for Sundays and Weekdays came to be known *Azchapady* (Weekday Prayer), and Sunday lost much of its importance as the 'First Day' of the week with respect to the Syriac tradition.

Prior Chavara Kuriakose died in 1871. Our Fathers continued the work he had started in respect of the breviary and engaged in getting it printed in the order Father Prior had arranged it. But because of some difficulties the work was discontinued. But Father Scaria Thattacheril, then (1873) Vicar of Koonammav Monastery, undertook the venture and started to print prayers only of the Sundays and weekdays and he completed the printing in 1876. This was published by Archbishop (Vicar Apostolic) Leonard Mellano in 1876 for the use of the Malabar Church.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bernard, *CMI Congregation in Early Centuries* (Malayalam, 1989), 139.

<sup>2</sup>Bernard, *CMI Congregation in Early Centuries* (Malayalam, 1989), 139-140.

The printed Text is the Divine Office for Sundays and Weekdays of the year (*Azchappady*); nothing more. In the preface it was written: "the Book of Prayers for the Sundays and Weekdays, approved by Archbishop Leonardo of Saint Aloysius of Discalced Carmelites, by the Grace of God and Holy Apostolic See, dated 4 February 1876, printed at Koonammavu, during the Sovereignty of Holy Pope Pius IX." According to Father Placid, with the help of the experts the Archbishop made some corrections in the text which Chavara had compiled<sup>1</sup> for Ordinary Days (*Kaskol*) and approved for the use of the Church. This Breviary was used by the clergy and religious till the renewal of the Second Vatican Council. In 1968 and later years, new Divine Office came into use in Malayalam (three volumes), prepared under the leadership of Father Abel CMI, and with the approval of Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference. At present, more breviaries exist in the Malabar Church; the question, however, still remains as to what happened to the complete text that Father Chavara prepared with great effort before 1861. From the circumstances, it is very clear that the text prepared by Chavara was the Divine Office for the whole year, including all Sundays, feast days, and days of fast according to the Syriac liturgical seasons in different volumes. Never was it the Office only of weekdays.

## **6. Structure of the Divine Office for Sunday and Weekdays, before 1968**

As mentioned earlier, the Breviary of the ordinary days was formed taking prayers and hymns and Psalms from the Divine Office which Father Chavara had already compiled. It contained prayers for Sunday and Weekdays (*Azchappady*).

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<sup>1</sup>Podipara, *Our Rite* (Malayalam), 133-134.

As to the general structure, the prayer was divided into *Ramsa*, *Leliya*, and *Sapra*. There were differences between the prayers of Sundays and ordinary days (weekdays).

### 6.1. *Ramsa* Prayer of Sunday

The Sunday *Ramsa* started with "In the name of the Father..." then, *Puqdarkon* (your commandment), Glory to God, Our Father, etc., and was followed by a *marmissa*. *Suraya daktam* (Psalm before the evening Psalm) came next. It was followed by *marya qresak* (evening Psalms which was same for all days). Next was *suraya d'vasar* (Psalm after the evening Psalm), succeeded by *karosuza* (three sets), the *kandisha Alaha...* (holy God... holy...), *onisa d' basaliqe* (evening hymn for Sunday), and, then, *alam, nemar*. *Alam* (praise) showed all the different seasons. There were different ones for each season of the Calendar. *Suraya d'vasar* (Psalm after) came next, then, followed by "Our Father..." and the concluding prayers.

### 6.2. *Leliya* Prayer of Sunday

The *Leliya* prayer started like *Ramsa* with initial prayers, namely, "In the name of Father..." It was followed by three *marmisse* (ten Psalms). It was followed by a Psalm sung with *qalta*. It was, then, followed by *onisa d'mavtha* (a set of hymns sung sitting), *slota d'canona, canona, thesbohta* (long praising). It was followed by *Karozusa, slota*, then, *madrassa* (hymn of instruction). Next part was called *qala d'sahra* (vigil prayer, three Psalms); next was *onisa d'leliya* and *subaha* (Psalm sung with *canona*), then *thesbohta* (praising). Sunday *Leliya* was a long prayer of more than one hour. Since it continued in the night it was not concluded.

### 6.3. *Sapra* Prayer of Sunday

Morning Prayer was the continuation of the Night Prayer and, hence, no initial prayers were said. *Sapra* started with *Karozusa, slota*, and a set of Psalms called morning Psalms. Then, *onsa d'sapra* (morning hymn), *thesbohta* (praising), another *thesbohta d' Anania, Asaria, Misael*. It was followed by a *slota*, another *thesbohta* in prose. Then came *kandisha Alaha... Our Father*, and concluding prayers. Concluding prayer consisted of six parts (prayers).

The Divine Office of the weekdays was not very different from the Sunday prayer. It began with "In the name of the Father..., " *Pukdanahon...*, etc. In the weekday *Ramsa*, there was one *onisa d'ktam* before the evening Psalm and *onisa d'vasar* after. For *Leliya* there were three *marmissae* (nine Psalms), but in the original script (manuscripts), there were three *hullale* (twenty-seven Psalms). For the Divine Office conducted in the monasteries (Kerala), there were two sides, one *Basalica* (courtyard) side and the non-*Basalica* side. One side led the Psalms and hymns in first week and the other took the lead in the next week and it was continued alternately in the subsequent weeks.

### 6.4. Divine Office of Feast Days (*yaumasa d'edde*)

The clergy of the Malabar Church began to use the new text approved by the Vicar Apostolic. But there was no Office for feast days and days of fast in the original Syriac model. The clergy prayed the same text for the whole liturgical year. The monastic communities, especially Mannanam monastery, continued the Weekday Office and the prayer compiled by Chavara according to the liturgical seasons. They were familiar with this prayer for long years. Father Chavara prepared the text taking into consideration the liturgical seasons of the Chaldean tradition, as it was

practised in Kerala. The first part of that Breviary was printed at Koonammavu with the prayers of the liturgical seasons Advent, Nativity, and Epiphany. Chavara also adapted prayers for certain feast days from the Roman calendar and added to the Malabar tradition. But the Vicar Apostolic was not favourable to give approval for this text, because he was bound to keep on the Roman strategy of the time.<sup>1</sup>

The Carmelite Fathers (CMI), then, turned their attention in a different way. The monastic community continued the Divine Office for the grand feasts of the Nativity, Resurrection, the Blessed Sacrament, and *Dukrana* of Saint Thomas. They took these prayers from the text which Chavara prepared either in the printed form or the manuscript text. Next, they concentrated on a text for feast days of the whole year. As a first step, they collected the prayers for the Common Feasts (*Commune Sanctorum*) of Blessed Virgin Mary, the Apostles, the Evangelists, the Martyrs, the Confessors and the Virgins from the Office of Chavara. They were common prayers for the particular group. Then, they collected prayers for the particular saints. They thought of making a full text combining the common prayers and the particular prayers of the feast. They collected the prayers from the compact text that Chavara had made in consultation with the Malpans. Actually, here we find a difference in the planning of Saint Chavara and his followers regarding the Divine Office. Chavara planned a prayer for the whole year according to the particular liturgical season, including Sundays, feast days, and ordinary days. But his followers concentrated on *weekdays*

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<sup>1</sup>Podipara, *Our Rite* (Malayalam), 135-136.

and feast days. To the weekday prayers they added Sunday prayer also.

Thus, the ordinary clergy of the Malabar Church began to use the Divine Office of *Sunday and weekdays (Azchapady)*, while the religious (Carmelites) the prayers of *Sunday and weekdays, along with that of feast days (Perunnalpady)*. The Divine Office for the feast days included the prayers for common feast days (*commune sanctorum*) and the grand feasts of the Nativity, etc., as mentioned earlier. Later Bishop Jacob Kurialasserry of Chenganasserry gave approval for the Divine Office of feast days in 1930<sup>1</sup> and it was printed at Mannanam. The second part of the feast day prayers (particular feasts) was later printed at Mannanam. But it did not get approval from the Bishop and, hence, it was dropped. Thus, till the renewal of the Divine Office in 1968, at the wake up of Second Vatican Council, there were two Offices in the Syro-Malabar Church, Weekday Office and Feast-day Office. The ordinary clergy used the Divine Office of Sunday and/or Weekdays for the whole year, while the monks (religious) used the Divine Office of Weekdays and Feast-days as well.

Here below is given the Divine Office for the common feast days.

1. Feast of Blessed Sacrament
2. Feast of Blessed Virgin Mary
3. Feast of Apostles
4. Feast of One Apostle
5. Feast of Evangelists
6. Feast Martyrs/ One Martyr
7. Feast of Episcopates
8. Feast of Confessors

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<sup>1</sup>Podipara, *Our Rite* (Malayalam), 151-152.



9. Feast of Fathers of the Church
10. Feast of Virgins
11. Feast of Holy Women
12. The Nativity
13. Resurrection (Prayers for a Week)

## 7. The Divine Office in the Original Vision of Saint Chavara

According to Placid Podipara, the part of the Breviary prepared by Chavara was printed at Koonammavu. But we do not have the date of printing on the first part. Few copies of the book of the canonical prayers that satisfy the description given by Father Placid were found out. There is no indication on the volume as to when and where it was printed. There was no preface or letter of introduction. From the letter type it may be presumed that it was printed in Kunammavu or Mannanam. Father Placid held that the first part of the breviary prepared by Chavara was printed in Koonammavu.<sup>1</sup>

### 7.1. The Arrangement of the Divine Office

The Divine Office of Saint Chavara, as we know it today, contains the first part of the *Hudra* (cycle) according to the Malabar tradition covering the periods of Annunciation, Nativity, and Epiphany. In the structural portion, it follows the ancient East Syrian tradition. However, in its organization of the commemorations, we find the influence of Romanization that began in the Synod of Diamper. In the two editions of the *Taksa* (Eucharist) in 1774 and 1844 and of the Lectionary of 1775, we notice the tendency of the Romanization.

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<sup>1</sup>Podipara, *Our Rite* (Malayalam), 135.

The volume consists of three sections: the first section contains the Psalms and the hymns of Moses. The second section contains the order of the different offices *Ramsa*, *Suvaya*, *Lelya*, *Sapra*, and *Kuthaya*<sup>1</sup> with the common for the Sundays and weekdays with the variations of the pair and impair weeks. The third section is the *Hudra* part of the volume, and it contains the prayers for Sundays, Feasts and Commemorations, and the ordinary days within the liturgical period of Annunciation, Nativity, and Epiphany. Thus, the following are the three sections of the book: section 1: Psalms and hymns of Moses; section 2: The different Offices: Prayers before the Canonical Offices, Office of the *Ramsa*, Office of the *Suvaya*, Office of the *Leliya*, Office of *Sapra*, Office of the *Quthaya*; section 3: *Hudra*.

## 7.2. Different Offices from the Perspective of Chavara

In this organization of the Divine Office, the second and third sections are important. The second section is important for its organization of the Offices, while the third reveals the mobile parts that vary according to the liturgical season.

Today in the Syro-Malabar Church, we have *Ramsa*, *Lelya*, and *Sapra* as the Canonical Offices. But, in the earlier times, a few other offices were in use. Father Bernard, the historian of the Malabar Church, in his history of the CMI Congregation, speaking of the Divine Office says: "The Canonical prayers are generally recited as three parts, namely, *Ramsa*, *Lelya*, and *Sapra*. However, during the time of the fast (like fifty days fast before Easter and three days Nineve Fast) there are three other special parts, called *Kuthaya*, *Endana*, and *Suvaya*. Of these, *Kuthaya* is said

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<sup>1</sup>Bernard, *CMI Congregation in Early Centuries* (Malayalam, 1989), 18-19.

during the *Sapra* and *Suvaa* is part of the *Ramsa*. *Endana* is said in the middle of the day.<sup>1</sup>

The second section very well reveals the depth of Saint Chavara's knowledge of the ancient traditions and his care in safeguarding what was uniquely of the Malabar Church. It informs us that the offices like *Suvaya* and *Kuthaya* were in existence in the Malabar Church at the time of Blessed Chavara. Now these offices are not known in Malabar, as they are integrated in the other three and, hence, they have lost their specificity. It is worth noticing here that Saint Chavara (1861) was preserving these offices of *Kuthaya*, *Suvaa*, and *Endana* before Paul Bedjan was engaged in editing the breviary of the Chaldean Church (1886). Hence, Saint Chavara deserves great veneration from us for his great contribution in this field.

### **7.3. The Organization of the Hudra**

The Hudra, the third section of the volume, contains the offices for the periods of the Annunciation, Nativity, and Epiphany and for the feasts and commemorations that occur during these periods according to the *Taksas* of 1774 and 1844, and the lectionary. One of the anomalies that Chavara felt was that "the Mass was often of the Saints and the Divine Office of the weekdays without proper integration." The purpose of the reorganization was "to unify the Mass and the Canonical Prayers." Hence, in reorganizing the Divine Offices, Chavara integrated the feasts that came from the Roman tradition in the Office of the Malabar Church.

The volume ends with the eighth Sunday after Epiphany. We have not been able to find a copy of the other volumes. We presume that there were two other volumes. But the

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<sup>1</sup>Vallavanthara, Research Papers (Preserved at Mannanam).

manuscripts that Saint Chavara sent to Rome are not traceable. Hence, we do not know the details of the organization of the prayers for the other liturgical periods.

We know that Father Chavara collected all the manuscripts available from different places and consulted the *Malpans* in this regard. He has also introduced feasts from the Roman tradition. Still here we have a valid question: What are the sources that Saint Chavara used when he introduced prayers for the feasts that he had found in the Roman Missal. A search into this question is quite valuable. Chavara's attempt to get the Breviary that he had organized and approved by Rome did not realize before his death; he died in 1871. We do not know the fate of the volumes that Chavara sent to Rome in 1861 or 1862 for approbation. But we know that five years after the death of Chavara, on 4 February 1876, a Breviary greatly different from the one he had planned was introduced in the Malabar Church. A valid question arises: Why did Rome give 'no approbation' to the Breviary organized by Chavara according to the liturgical periods of the East Syrian liturgical tradition?

The work of the Saint in the organization of the Breviary, and the attempts he had made to print it show what interest Chavara had in the restoration of the ancient traditions of the Divine Office in the Malabar Church. Through his strenuous effort Chavara tried to preserve a very ancient model of the Liturgical Year that had outlived the Romanization process initiated by the Synod of Diamper. Since we do not possess all the parts of the Divine Office we cannot know the complete structure of this Liturgical Year. Yet, through the Liturgical Calendar that is extant, we can presume the structure of the Breviary organized by the Saint.

## 8. Importance of Saint Chavara's Liturgical Renewal Efforts

In the liturgical renewal efforts, the originality of Saint Chavara is that he was always in love with the traditions of his Church. This is very clearly seen in his work of the organization of the Breviary. He was faced with two problems. First, the Breviary was unorganized and was going out of practice. Second, there was lack of integration in the liturgical celebrations; the Mass was often that of the Saint and the Breviary of ordinary days. His concern for the spiritual renewal of the Church and the preservation of its traditions moved him to action.

In the nineteenth century, at the time of Saint Chavara, the liturgical books in Malabar were changing from the ancient East Syrian model into the Roman model. The liturgical books of *Hudra*, *Taksa d'Yuamasa Shimme*, and *Taksa d'Kahana*, and *Qeriyana* (Old Testament) and *Evangelion* were changing into Roman tradition of separate liturgical books. Already the *Taksa d'kudase* (*Kurbana*) and the lectionary were fixed with a lot of Romanization. Divine Office alone remained without much Roman influence as it was unorganized. It is at this moment that Saint Chavara started with organization of the Divine Office.

In his search for the tradition, he always based himself on the local sources. Two sources of the tradition were available, the text and, then, the practice. To be truthful to the textual tradition, in the organization of the Breviary, he collected all the available manuscripts and compared them, and based on the finding he corrected the books and made his own edition. In this, he consulted the Malpans, who had expertise on the texts and the traditions in the Malabar Church. As in the case of the texts, the Malpans were the best sources and the best resource persons for determining

the living traditions of the practices of celebration and rites. With this approach he attempted to safeguard the living but genuine tradition.

In the creation of the Liturgy of Hours, Chavara gave much importance to Sunday prayer. But in the publication of the Divine Office in 1876, after the death of Chavara, Sunday prayer was placed in parallel with weekday prayer. Chavara always affirmed the supremacy of Sundays in the liturgical year and wanted the spirit of Sunday to permeate the whole week. This is something very unique and reveals his liturgical genius. Saint Chavara's concern for the preservation of the ancient tradition is seen even in his borrowing from the Roman tradition. He felt that unity (even uniformity) of rituals as a good value preserved. Hence, he was not afraid to borrow from the Roman tradition. But in borrowing he referred, first, to the Oriental traditions and, then, to the Roman tradition. He asked himself, whether it goes with the Eastern tradition. This mentality is very well visible in his letter seeking permission from Rome for introducing the reading of the Gospel of John at the end of the Mass as was a practice in the Roman Mass and not to use incense in private Mass. His argument was that even the East Syrian Church follows such practices. "I request you to permit us to read the Gospel of John at the end of the Mass, for all the Rites, even the Chaldean Syrians do this. Similarly, because the use of the thuribles and incense is difficult in the private Mass, I request you to permit us to use thurible and incense in solemn celebrations only."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Valerian, *Kuriakose Elias Chavara* (Malayalam), 225-226.

### 9. Reason behind Adapting Latin Prayers

It was Chavara's concern for the spiritual promotion of the people of God and his sense of the unity of the Catholic Church that made him borrow certain prayers from the Latin Rite. He did according to the theological thinking of his milieu. We must admit that fifty years after the restoration attempts and within the milieu of the post-Vatican II, the Malabar Church still continues to have Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, Holy Hour, and more especially the Way of the Cross on the Fridays of Fast, even though we are aware that they do not belong to the East Syrian tradition. Still we continue. But the originality of Chavara was that he always insisted that this should be in accordance with the spirit of the ancient Malabar and East Syrian traditions. That is why when he borrowed the Little Office of Our Lady he transformed it in the model of *Ramsa*, *Lelya*, and *Spara*. His insistence on translating the text into Syriac and the free translation that he had made within the context of the Malabar Church revealed his love for the traditions.

In this area, his mind was that of great personalities of the Malabar Church like Joseph Kariattil and Thomas Paremackal, who felt that borrowing something from the Roman Church was not against the traditions of the Malabar Church, but whatever it be it should be celebrated in the liturgical language. In 1905, the Syro-Malabar bishops even requested Rome for a Syriac translation of the Roman Pontifical for their use. So, Chavara introduced many things from the Roman traditions but introduced it in the context of the Malabar Church.

Similarly, we have to understand Chavara in his living context, as regards his borrowing of the devotional practices from the Roman traditions. There had been a lot of devotional practices in the Malabar Church, borrowed from

the Roman tradition, and introduced by the European missionaries during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, which nourished the spiritual life of the laity, religious, and clergy alike. Saint Chavara, like any other lay person or priest of his time, nourished his spiritual life from his early childhood by such practices. He had also promoted such practices very ardently, and even introduced such practices in the Malabar Church for the good of the faithful.<sup>1</sup>

### **10. Saint Chavara Preserved the Most Ancient Malabar Tradition**

In the organization of the Breviary and the Liturgical Calendar, Chavara had contributed to the preservation of the ancient Malabar Tradition. The structure of the Liturgical Year that has been preserved in the Malabar Church through the Liturgical Calendar affirms this fact. Study of the ancient manuscripts of Lectionaries and Breviaries in the East Syrian tradition reveals different structural models. The organization of the Assyro-Chaldean Liturgical Year is attributed to the Patriarch Iso Yahb III (the seventh century). By the recommendation of Rome, the Chaldean liturgist Paul Bedjan compiled a Divine Office from the existing manuscripts in the Middle East for the use of the Chaldean Church in 1886 (Paris). Rome republished it in 1938 and suggested the same for the use of both the Chaldean and Malabar Churches. The Divine Office which Saint Chavara compiled from the available sources of Malabar (in the nineteenth century) was indeed a great treasure of the Malabar Church. It, however, never came to light in the Order Chavara had foreseen in tune with the Syriac liturgical year.

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<sup>1</sup>Vallavanthara, Research Papers (Preserved at Mannanam).



## CONCLUSION

Reform is a life process, a part of the human development. Individuals as well as communities need to undergo reform in order to survive the changing situations. Christian worship being an essential part of the Christian life, reform in this particular area is unavoidable. Christian liturgy being a splendid manifestation of the Christian faith, changes and new forms should always be encouraged, not simply for the sake of variety but in order to remain faithful to the essential purpose of liturgy.

Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara, an ecclesial luminary and leader of the Thomas Christian Church of the nineteenth century, was well aware of this fact and deeply desired a liturgical renewal in his Church. In 1861, Chavara was appointed the Vicar General of the Malabar Church by Bernardine Baccinelli, the Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly. By liturgical reform Chavara meant not simply a theological formulation of the liturgy, but wished an awakening in the sacramental life of the clergy as well as the faithful. Chavara was confident that this change in the sacramental life will invigorate a spiritual growth within the Church. All his attempts for the renewal of the liturgy must be understood from this perspective.

The saint was in sheer grief due to the sad situation of the Liturgy in the Church. After the Synod of Diamper, the liturgical life in the Church was in a declining condition. There was no uniformity in the liturgical celebrations. Priests celebrated the sacraments differently in different churches. Chavara strongly intended to bring about uniformity in the celebration of the Eucharistic Liturgy. Hence, with the advice of the Bishop, he wrote *Thukasa*

(Order) as a practical guideline for the clergy in celebrating liturgy with uniformity. For the Saint, the Eucharistic celebration was the '*celebration of the mystery of Christ*', that is, the celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ and it must be celebrated in the most perfect way.

Similarly, the Divine Office in the Church was also in a miserable state. There were no printed texts, and only a few handwritten texts were available and the clergy used different texts for the Office. The texts were not properly arranged according to different oriental liturgical seasons. With the help of the Malpans (scholars) in the Church, Chavara himself wrote the text in Syriac and compiled the Divine Office in a systematic way. With the recommendation of the Bishop, he sent it Rome for approval, though the approbation reached only after his death.

Chavara was an apostle of the Eucharist. According to his confreres, he spent long hours before the Tabernacle in the chapel in a meditative way. It was reported that his face shined like that of an angel. Others could see a spiritual glow on his face during that time. Perhaps Chavara's best contribution in the liturgical field may be that he started Forty Hours Adoration in the Malabar Church, and it had great impact in the spiritual life of the clergy and the faithful. He himself translated the prayers and lyrics, especially the Litany of All the Saints into Syriac from the Latin text. By the sweet music of the litany of All Saints, Chavara was making people feel that they adore God in the Holy Eucharist with the company of saints in heaven.

When we look back to the liturgical reform of the Western Church in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, we come across a few Benedictine Abbeys and monks who took initiative for an effective renewal in the Church.

Prosper Geranger is remembered as the Father of the liturgical renewal in the West. He refounded the famous Abbey of *Solesmes*, which initiated the renewal in France. The monks of the Abbey found out the old manuscripts of liturgy, translated them to modern languages and made a systematic study on them. When the reform reached *Mont Cesar* Abbey in Belgium, it assumed a pastoral outlook. Dom Lambert Beaudin, the genial of liturgical reform, in a conference addressed the people: "Liturgy is prayer. The people must take part in it, not merely assist at it. We are part of the Church and we give glory to God together with our whole being." Above all, Dom Odo Casel of *Maria Laach* Abbey in Germany provided a theological input for the liturgical movement. His contribution of the liturgy is the *cult mystery*; the celebration of the *mystery of Christ* provided a theological basis for the whole renewal.

Similarly, a century earlier to the Western liturgical reform, we notice that Saint Chavara took leadership for a liturgical renewal (in the nineteenth century) in the Malabar Church. The renewal started from the monasteries which Chavara himself had founded, such as monasteries at Mannanam, Koonammavu, Elthuruth, etc. There were seminaries attached to these monasteries for the clergy and religious, and that was a blessing for the dissemination of the liturgical spirit. Saint Chavara started the *Forty Hours Adoration*, first, in Koonammavu, then, at Mannanam and other monasteries. These monasteries really became the centres of Eucharistic devotion from where the sweet fragrance of Eucharistic piety spread all over the Malabar Church. The devotion to the Holy Eucharist led to the solemn celebration of the feast of *Corpus Christi* and Eucharistic procession attached to the celebration. Chavara also encouraged the *Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament* in the

monasteries and people came from distant places to participate in it.

Above all, Saint Chavara was a humble servant of the Church and God's People. He did everything for God and His people. He had no plans as his own. He gave a leadership for a spiritual growth in the Malabar Church, which also led to the realization of the common good of the people of God.

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