

THE SYRO-MALANKARA CATHOLIC CATECHISM

GOD, THE CREATOR

STANDARD - V

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

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GOD, THE CREATOR**

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23 March 2020

BENEDICTORY MESSAGE

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

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

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

God bless you all!

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

In classes one to four, we prepared the children to think of the divine mysteries of salvation history and to thank God with utmost reverence. Our effort in classes five to seven is to progressively make the students confront revealed truth. In these classes they learn about God successively as Creator, Protector and Redeemer beginning with the creation of the universe and reaching the redemptive life of Jesus.

In class five, the focus is God, the Creator. God who revealed himself through the creation of the universe and of man continued this revelation in the history of Israel. The first part of this book deals with the events from creation up to the entry of Israel into the Promised Land. As catechetical instruction should lead to worship, the second part takes up the liturgy. The structure of the church building, the sacred objects and the symbolic activities in the church are exposed in this section. The third and fourth sections of this text are about Christian witnessing. Based on the principle that instruction and worship should emerge into witnessing, the third part introduces Church History while the fourth is about Christian living. In the third part the students learn about the diseased Prelates of the Malankara Catholic Church, the present ecclesiastical jurisdictions (archi-eparchy and eparchies) and their rulers (Bishops). In the section on Christian living we meet Saints Peter, Paul, Francis of Assisi, the Little Flower and the Keralite Blesseds (Bl. Kuriakose and Alphonsa). In this manner, the holy

Bible, Liturgy, Church history and Christian living form the subject matter of the text books five to ten, as instruction, worship and witnessing, respectively. The children can learn these four subjects progressively from class five to ten. What is learned through instruction becomes an experience of God through worship. This knowledge and encounter lead to a witnessing life.

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

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

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

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

+ Thomas Mar Koorilos

Former Chairman, The Synodal Commission for Faith Formation

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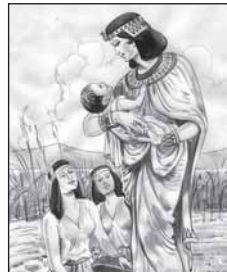
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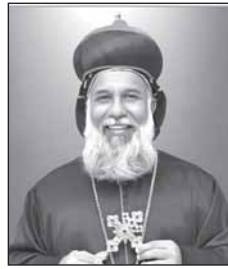
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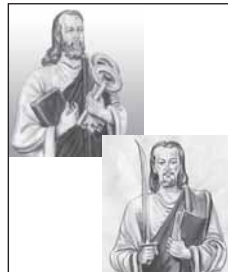
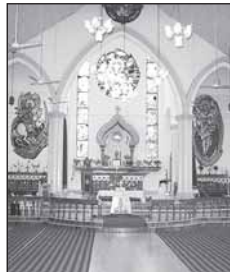
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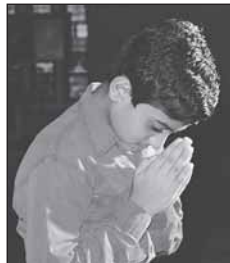
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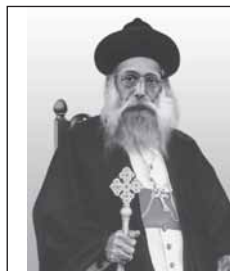
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PART - I



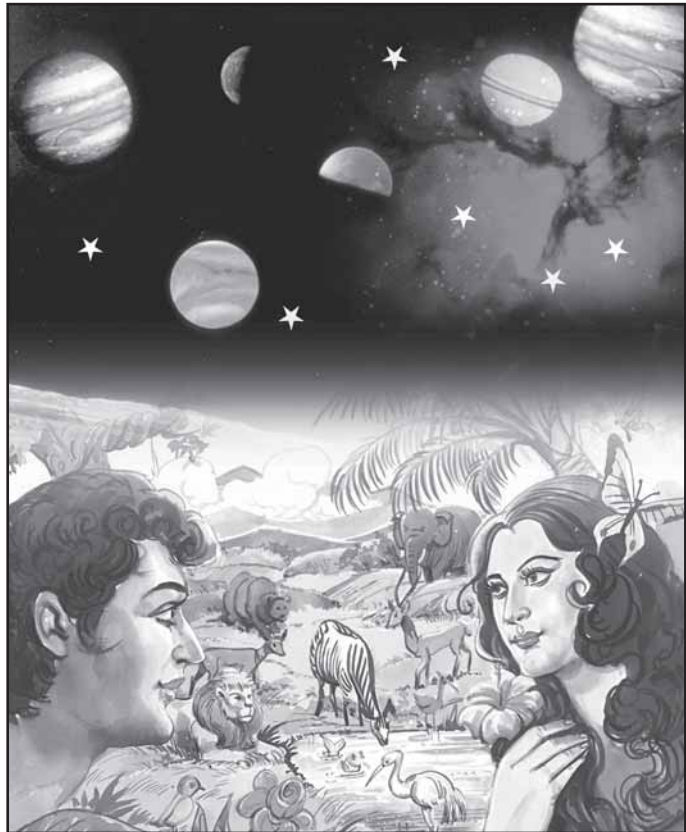
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Lesson 1

GOD, THE CREATOR

How beautiful is this visible universe! The sun, the moon, the stars, the plants and trees, the birds and animals and the waters; all give us immense joy. Man, the crown of the universe, whose goodness, love and beauty cause delight in us. It is Almighty God, who created all these and who protects them.

“**God is love**” (1 John 4:16). The universe and things in it are favours that proceed from that divine love. The individuality of the artist is apparent in his artistic creation. The



The individuality of the poet is clear in his poetic creation. So also, the glory of God is made manifest in the creation of the universe.

Creation is making something out of nothing. There existed nothing, out of which the universe was created. The Bible speaks about that void: “**The earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep**” (Genesis 1:2). It is impossible for man to make anything out of nothing or to give shape to something out of nothing. Man is capable only of giving a different shape to something already existing. Hence man is not the creator of anything. The Bible begins with the description, ‘**In the beginning God created the heavens and earth**’ (Genesis 1:1). Thus by creating the universe out of nothing, God revealed himself to be the Creator.

God created the sky and all the planets in it and the earth and everything in it. God said, **“Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it. And it was so”** (Genesis 1:11). God created the beings living in water and birds and animals. Thus by creating all kinds of living beings, God showed us that he is the source of life.

God created man in his own image and likeness. He gave him dominion over all creatures. Thus God revealed his dominion over all creatures and shared the same with man.

God created man, male and female. He made us understand that the love between man and woman is a gift of God and that it is to be exercised in accordance with the will of God.

Having finished the work of creation, God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it. He decided to set apart a day in the week for rest and worship. He desires that man worship God, the Creator.

This divine revelation is continued through Abraham and his descendants. God continued revealing his love through the prophets, kings and priests.

In the fullness of time God revealed his love perfectly by sending to earth his only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. **“God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish, but may have eternal life”** (John 3: 16). The history of revelation is the history of the love and salvation of God. This is the history of the bond between God and man.

Worship

All creatures should worship God, the Creator. Let us glorify and adore God. “Glory to you, God, glory to you, Creator; glory to you, Christ the King, who has compassion on his sinful servants”. When we say this in the prayers of the *Kauma*, we glorify God, the Creator. When we say, “O God the Father, we praise you, for you are our Creator and Protector”, in the prayer of *Ramso* (Evening Prayer), we confess and worship God, the Father, as Creator. In the Creed (Nicene), we pray as follows: “We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible”. Through this prayer we, as creatures, worship, acknowledge and confess God, the Creator. Let us glorify God, who reveals himself through the creatures.

Life Witness

We are obliged to bow our heads before God, the Creator, to understand the will of God and live accordingly. It is the chief duty of man, as creature, to glorify and worship God, as Creator.

Everything that God created is beautiful. We ought to protect nature without destroying it. Man should take care to treat the creatures according to the intentions of the Creator. Man is the crown of creation. So we have the obligation to love all and to help each other. Thus when we love everything, glorify and worship God, we fulfil our obligation toward our Creator.

Memorise

“Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord; sing praise to him and highly exalt him forever”.

(Daniel 3:57)

Questions

1. Man is not the creator. Why?
2. Through whom did God the Father reveal his love perfectly?
3. What is the purpose of the seventh day of the week?
4. How do we fulfil our obligation to the Creator?

Lesson 2

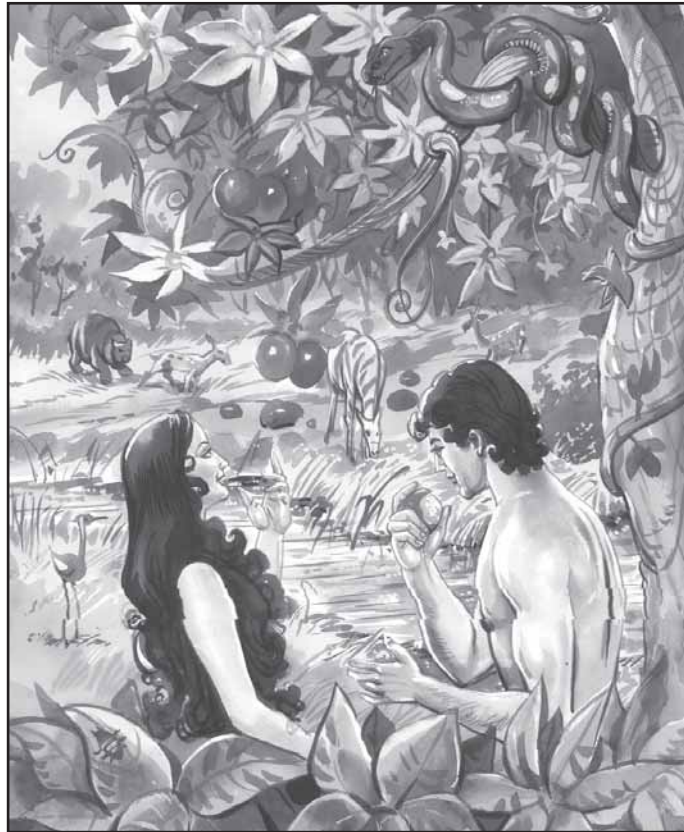
MAN GOING ASTRAY FROM THE CREATOR

God created heaven and earth and all things in it. At the end of the work of creation, he created man in his own image and likeness. God created the first parents, Adam and Eve, male and female. He entrusted man the supervision of all creatures on earth. God saw everything he created, as good.

The Beginning of Sin

God made a garden in Eden in the east after he created man. He made man dwell in the Garden of Eden in order to cultivate and protect it. There, God and man associated with each other joyfully. God provided man everything that he needed. When he made man dwell there, he commanded thus: **“You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die”** (Genesis 2:16-17).

The serpent was craftier than any other wild animal that God created. One day the serpent approached Eve. He persuaded her to eat the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge that was in the middle of the garden. The serpent told Eve, **“You will not die, for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil”**



(Genesis 3:4-5). Believing what the serpent told, Eve plucked the fruit of the tree and ate. She also gave the fruit to Adam. As soon as they ate it, both of their eyes were opened. Then they knew that they were naked, and they sewed fig leaves together; making loin clothes to wear.

In the evening, God came into the garden for a walk. Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of God among the trees. The first parents committed sin by disobeying the command of God and estranged themselves from him. God drove both of them out of the garden. The first parents believed the serpent, the symbol of evil, more than God. They now preferred to obey their own will and not obey the commands of God. Therefore, man who was now alienated from God through sin, began to alienate himself from one another. The foundation of the first sin is avarice because the created man wanted to become one like his Creator. Man lost the divine life because of his sin and he estranged himself from God.

Sin Continues

Cain and Abel were the sons of Adam and Eve. Cain was a farmer and Abel, a shepherd. Once Cain and Abel offered sacrifice to God. Cain offered a portion of his harvest and Abel the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions. God, who was pleased with Abel and his offerings, was not pleased with the offerings which Cain made. For, his offerings were not acceptable to God. So Cain was angry and sad. One day Cain led his brother Abel to the field. There, Cain murdered him. God punished Cain who killed his brother (Genesis 4:1-16).

Cain, the son of the first parents, who committed sin and went astray from God, also fell into sin. He, who hated his brother, went astray from God, his brother and from the community. Man, who defied and refused God, disowned his own brother. Thus the sin of the first parents continued in the following generation too.

Sin Increases

God saw that the wickedness of man had increased and that the thought and imagination of his heart had become evil. The Lord was sorry that he created mankind (Genesis 6:6). Man, who fell into sin, went astray from God. God destroyed mankind, corrupted with sin through a great flood. But God saved Noah and his family alone, because they found favour in his sight.

God formed a new generation through Noah. The descendants of Noah spread all over the earth. There was only one language and one mode of speech on earth. Hence, in order to stand united and to safeguard prestige, man started to build a city and a tower. Man, who ought to rely on God, relied on self and fell deeper into sin. The sin of man increased beyond control. God scattered them over the face of the earth, confusing their language, so that they would not understand one another's speech. Therefore the place where the tower stood was called Babel. The meaning of the word 'Babel' is 'confusion'.

The basis of each sin is the greed of the creature to be like the Creator. But God does not completely reject the man, who has gone astray from him through sin. God expresses his will to select particularly Abraham, the son of Terah, belonging to the genealogy of Noah, in order to save mankind. The love and revelation of God continued through the selection of Abraham.

Worship

“O! Lord, have mercy on me according to your steadfast love. Make me holy O! My Lord. Forgive my iniquities in your benevolence. O! Lord, make me worthy of your blessings and forgiveness of sins. Wipe away from me all evil thoughts and decisions of the mind O! Lord. O! Lord, save me from the deceits of Satan” (Prayer of the Third Hour).

What is evident from this prayer is the desire of man to keep away from sin and its circumstances and remain close to God. Being freed from the deceits of Satan in this world of evil, man desires to live in the path of goodness.

“Let me stand before you Lord
Keeping vigil earnestly
Should I fall asleep again
Spare me from falling in sin”
(Boutho of Mar Ephraem, Prayer of Soutoro).

Man calls God for help, so that he may not commit sin even in his sleep. He prays that by keeping vigil, he may remain in God’s holy presence. There are plenty of prayers for the forgiveness of sin in our liturgy. Through participating in the liturgy, we get absolution of sin and we become sharers in God’s grace.

Life Witness

We inflict pain on the good God when we commit sin. We cause grief to the soul, which God has deposited in us. Let us keep aloof from sin and live as good children who are pleasing to God.

Memorise

“Keep my Commandments and live”.
(Proverbs 7:2)

Questions

1. What did God command to Adam and Eve?
2. What was the reason for Eve to trespass the command of God?
3. What did happen to Adam and Eve, who trespassed the command of God?
4. Why did Cain kill Abel?

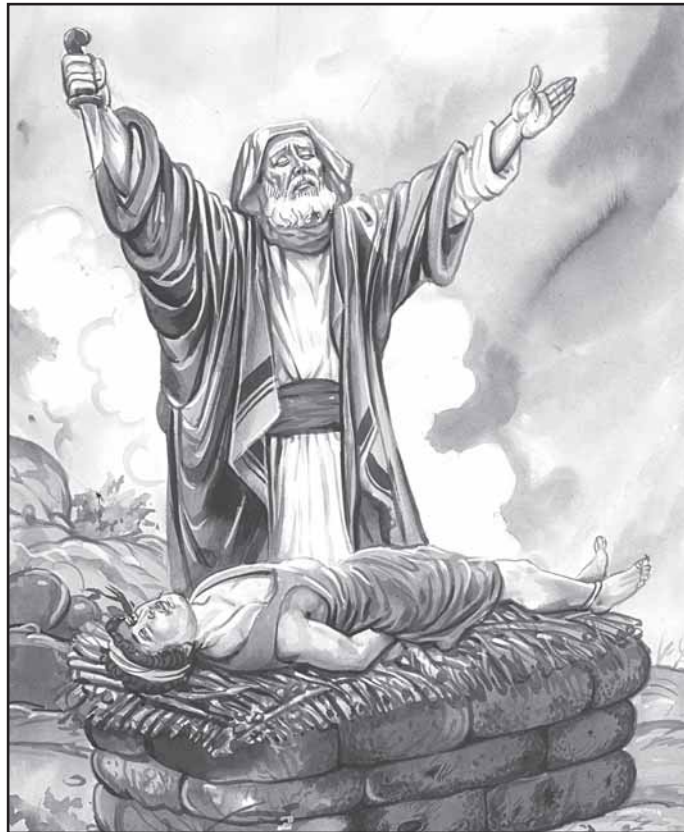
Lesson 3

ABRAHAM, THE FOREFATHER

Abraham is the son of Terah, belonging to the genealogy of Noah, the just. Abraham lived in the Nineteenth Century before Christ. He was born at Ur, in the territory of the Chaldeans. Abraham's traditional occupation was rearing sheep. He settled down in Haran together with his father Terah. Terah died there. The Lord said to Abraham: **“Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation, and I will**

bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing” (Genesis 12:1-2). Abraham went to the land of Canaan according to the command of the Lord.

Abraham took his wife Sarah and his brother's son Lot along with him to the land of Canaan. They set out on their journey with all the possessions they had acquired in Haran. At that time Abraham was seventy-five years old. After having reached Canaan, Abraham settled down in different places one after the other. He received the promise of God at Shechem that his descendants would occupy the land of Canaan (Genesis 12:7). Abraham built an altar and offered sacrifice to God, who gave him the promise. God revealed his will to



save mankind through his call of Abraham and through giving him the promises.

Abraham and Lot

Abraham and his nephew Lot, who were living together in Canaan, separated themselves for better prospects. Lot selected the fertile land of Sodom, adjacent to the river Jordan. Abraham settled down in the land of Canaan. Again, God confirmed his promise to Abraham: **“All the land that you see I will give to you and to your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth”** (Genesis 13:15-16).

Enemies captured Lot, took him captive and carried away his possessions. Knowing this, Abraham gathered his people, chased them, fought and defeated them. Thus he saved Lot. Melchizedek, the King of Salem, received Abraham, who returned after having defeated the enemies, with bread and wine (Genesis 14:1-24).

God decided to destroy the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah on the basis of their wickedness. God communicated his decision to Abraham. Abraham pleaded before God to save Lot and his family. As per the petition of Abraham, God saved Lot and his family (Genesis 19:1-19).

Covenant with Abraham

Once God said to Abraham: **“Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them; so shall your descendants be”** (Genesis 15:5).

Even though God promised offspring to Abraham, its fulfilment was delayed. Abraham was hundred years old when Isaac was born. “The Lord dealt with Sarah as he had promised. Sarah conceived and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the time of which God had spoken to him. Abraham gave the name Isaac to his son, whom Sarah bore him” (Genesis 21:1-3).

Abraham was previously known as ‘Abram’. It is God himself, who changed that name into ‘Abraham’. The word ‘Abraham’ means ‘the father of the

great nation'. So also God changed the name 'Sarai', into 'Sarah'. The meaning of the word 'Sarah' is 'Queen'.

Once God put to test the faith of Abraham. God demanded of him this: "Take your only son Isaac, whom you love and go to the land of Moriah. Offer him there as a burnt offering on the mountain that I shall show you". Accordingly Abraham set out in order to sacrifice his son. On the way Isaac asked Abraham, "The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham replied, "God himself will provide the lamb for the sacrifice".

Abraham built an altar at the place God had shown him. After arranging the wood, he bound Isaac and laid him on the altar. He took a knife in his hand to sacrifice his son. Suddenly, the angel of the Lord from heaven told Abraham, **"Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me"**. Abraham saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. He sacrificed the ram instead of his son (Genesis 22:1-14). This is truly a great expression of the faith of Abraham.

Abraham, the Father

Abraham's life was firmly founded on unshakable faith in God. He believed that the things promised by God would be fulfilled. So Abraham obeyed whatever God commanded: **"And he believed the Lord and the Lord reckoned it to him as righteousness"** (Genesis 15:6). St. Paul, the Apostle, introduces Abraham as the symbol of faith (Romans 4:3). The Church qualifies Abraham as the father of the faithful.

Abraham was the first among the forefathers of Israel. The revelations of God particularly begin with Abraham. God chose a particular generation through Abraham and made it his own. Abraham was the father of the Israelites, God's own people.

Abraham had a constant relationship with God throughout his life. He received the message of God and lived accordingly. He relied on God completely. He was ready to accept in life whatever God gave him. The faith of Abraham was that of a total dedication.

Abraham lived until he was hundred and seventy-five years old. Abraham was buried in the same cave, which he bought to bury Sarah. It was in Hebron, in the land of Canaan.

Worship

There are a lot of prayers and hymns about Abraham, our forefather, in our liturgy:

“Just as Abel’s lamb and Noah’s gifts pleased your will
And you took delight in Abraham’s sacrifice
Accept our prayers and fast
And graciously answer us”.

This hymn is sung during the preparatory service of the sacrifice of the Holy Eucharist. We entreat God to accept our sacrifice just as he accepted the sacrifice of Abraham.

In the ‘Sedro’ (a layer of prayers) of the service of House Blessing we pray, “O Lord, let our prayers be a cause of joy to you, just as the faith of Abraham, our father and your friend, was pleasing to you”.

On the occasion of the service of the blessing with the crowns in the Sacrament of matrimony, we sing thus:

“God who blessed Abraham and Sarah
In whose abundant grace
May he bless (+) these his servants
O Lord, have mercy on us”.

Here, we pray for God to bless these servants (spouses) just as he blessed Abraham and Sarah.

In the preparatory service of the Holy Mass and at the time of the distribution of the Holy Eucharist on Maundy Thursday, we sing about Melchizedek, the high priest, who welcomed Abraham:

“Be pleased with these gifts, which
We offer to your grace
Bread and wine we offer, graciously
accept them

Just as you, in olden days
Accepted from Melchizedek”.

* * * *

“This is the offering, which the high priest,
Melchizedek once offered as gift.
O Lord of heaven, supreme bridegroom
We glorify you and exalt you”.

The liturgy teaches us that our prayers
too, are acceptable before God, just as the
faith of Abraham.

Life Witness

Abraham, who received a special call from God, steadfastly believed in God. He firmly believed in God even under such circumstances of life in which no hope could be expected and moved through the path, God had shown him. Abraham is the one, who found absolute refuge in God in unforeseen sufferings and adversities. Abraham’s faith in God is a perfect model for us. Let us also believe in God like Abraham.

Memorise

“Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness”.
(Romans 4:3)

Questions

1. What did God command Abraham in Haran?
2. Why did Abraham and Lot separate themselves?
3. How did God test the faith of Abraham?
4. Why is Abraham called ‘the father of the faithful’?

Lesson 4

ISAAC, THE FULFILMENT OF THE PROMISE

Isaac is the son, born from Sarah, for Abraham after long expectation. The birth of Isaac is the fruit of the blessing of God and the fulfilment of his promise. Isaac is the second of the forefathers. The revelation that began in Abraham continues through Isaac.

The Infancy of Isaac

Isaac is born to Abraham and Sarah in their old age. When God promised that a son would be born to them, Sarah, having heard that laughed at herself. But God's promise was fulfilled without any change. The meaning of the word 'Isaac' is 'one who laughs'.

Abraham took Isaac to sacrifice him according to God's instructions. But God himself saved him. Isaac grew up with his parents.

The Promise continues

The Lord had promised that he would give the land of Canaan to the offspring of Abraham. Isaac also resided in different places one after the other like Abraham. Isaac stayed in the land of Canaan with the expectation of possessing the Promised Land. Hence even though he could go to Egypt, he continued



his residence in different parts of the land of Canaan. He did not mind even when famine and other inconveniences had occurred.

Once the Lord appeared to Isaac and said thus: **“Do not go down to Egypt; settle in the land that I shall show you. Reside in this land as an alien and I will be with you, and I will bless you; for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, I will fulfil the oath that I swore to your father, Abraham. I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands; and all the nations of the earth shall gain blessings for themselves through your offspring”** (Genesis 26:2-4).

God promised to Isaac generations of offspring and land just as he had promised to Abraham. God appeared on several occasions in the life of Isaac and confirmed this promise. Like Abraham, Isaac too believed in God. Isaac lived obeying the instructions of God. This promise was fulfilled through the generations of the offspring of Isaac.

The Sons of Isaac

Isaac married Rebekah when he was forty years old. Even after a long time, Rebekah bore no children. Isaac prayed to the Lord for the sake of his wife. The Lord heard his prayer and Rebekah became pregnant. Twins were born to Rebekah. Esau was the first to be born. His body was covered with an exceptional amount of hair. The meaning of the word ‘Esau’ is ‘one covered with hair’. Jacob gripped the heel of Esau at the time of his birth. The word ‘Jacob’ means ‘one who seizes position’. Sons were born to Isaac when he was sixty years old.

The End of Isaac

When Isaac was old, he wished to bless his children. Isaac was fond of his elder son, Esau, but Rebekah was more fond of Jacob. Once Esau sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew. Although Isaac wished to give his blessing to Esau, with the help of Rebekah, Jacob robbed it from him. Later on Jacob ran away. After some years, he returned.

Isaac resided in a place called Hebron during the end of his life. It was there that Abraham dwelt. Isaac died at the age of one hundred and eighty. His sons Jacob and Esau together buried him. He was buried in a cave near Mamre, where Abraham and Sarah were buried (Genesis 35:27-29).

Isaac believed in God completely. He believed that what God had promised to his father, Abraham, would be fulfilled with his generation. Just like Abraham, Isaac too was a firm believer in God. Just as God blessed Abraham, he blessed Isaac too. It was God, who saved Isaac when he was taken for sacrifice. From the altar God gave him a rebirth. Then God continued his promise to Isaac also.

Isaac, who climbed the mountain, carrying the wood for the sacrifice, is the forerunner and symbol of Jesus, who went up to Golgotha carrying his Cross. Because of Isaac, God blessed all the people, who lived on the land, where Isaac lived. Isaac, who lived in obedience to God, lived till the end as a bearer of the promise of God. God was revealing his plan regarding man on all occasions when he was dealing with Isaac.

Worship

Isaac, the forefather is remembered in many prayers and hymns of the liturgy. In the communion song, it is commemorated how God delivered Isaac from being sacrificed:

(Agnimayanmar...)

“The Zion planted a tree to crucify the Son
There a tree rose that begot the lamb for slaughter.
The nails were driven into the hands of
God’s only Son

There, Isaac’s hands also were bound for an offering”.

At the Communion on Maundy Thursday too, we sing:

(Rehasyam, rehasyam..)

“It is this one, who saved Isaac
Through the lamb, seen within the bush.
O Lord of heaven, supreme bridegroom
We glorify you and exalt you”.

Isaac and Rebekah are remembered during the service of the Sacrament of Matrimony, when the spouses are blessed:

(Adima Neethinjare...)

“God, who blessed Isaac – Rebekah
In whose abundant grace
May he bless these his servants
O Lord, have mercy on us”.

In the payer of the ‘Sedro’ of the deceased, we pray thus:

“O my Lord, make him/her dwell in the blessed abodes of your Father, along with your friends Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and with all the faithful, who have fulfilled your will and who slept hoping in you”. In the ordinary prayer of ‘Ramso’ (evening) for the departed also we pray:

“Make them rest in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, your servants, who have slept in your hope”.

Life Witness

Isaac is one, who lived in obedience to the will of God. Throughout his life, he upheld faith in God and he walked through the paths, God had led him. Let us try to understand the will of God and to live obeying his will. Let us glorify God, being faithful to God.

Memorise

“All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness for those who keep his covenant and his decrees”.

(Psalm 25:10)

Questions

1. Describe briefly about the birth of Isaac.
2. What was the promise God made with Isaac?
3. How does Isaac become the forerunner and symbol of Jesus?
4. What were the special characteristics of the sons of Isaac?

Lesson 5

JACOB, THE TRIBAL FATHER

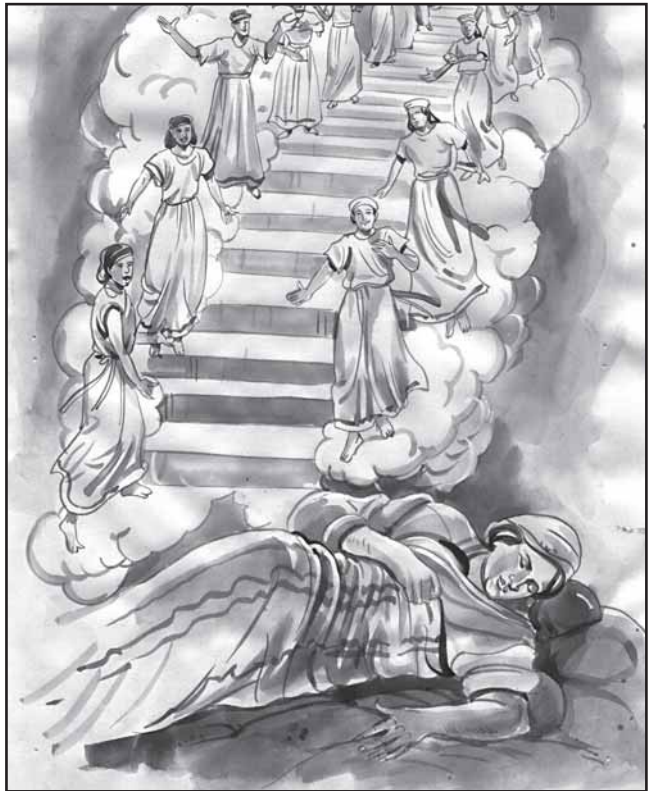
Jacob is the third of the forefathers. He is the second son of Isaac and Rebekah. As the father of the twelve tribes of Israel, Jacob has a very important role in salvation history. The promise, which God made to Abraham and Isaac, continues through Jacob. Between the twin sons of Isaac, Esau was elder. Esau was a skilful hunter and a man of the field. Hence Isaac loved Esau very much.

Right of the First-born and Blessing

According to the tradition of the Jews, the eldest son deserves the right of the first-born, the ancestral house, and the family house. But God chose from between the children of Isaac for these blessings, the younger son, Jacob. God had promised Rebekah, even when Jacob was in her womb, “I would select him”.

Once Jacob was cooking some stew. At that time Esau came famished from the field. He said to Jacob, “Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished”. In reply Jacob said that if Esau were to give him the right of the first-born, he would give the stew. Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of stew, for he was hungry and tired (Genesis 25:27-34).

When Isaac was old, he desired to give his blessing to his elder son and die. But before giving the blessing; he expressed his wish to eat a delicious dish prepared out of the meat of the wild animal of Esau’s hunting game. Having



come to know the desire of Isaac, Rebekah wished that Jacob should receive this blessing. When Esau went out for hunting, Rebekah called her beloved son Jacob and informed him the desire of Isaac. Jacob brought two choice kids from his flock as instructed by Rebekah and she prepared from them a savoury food. Esau had hair all over his body, but Jacob had a smooth skin. Therefore Rebekah made Jacob wear the costly dress of Esau, which she had with her. Jacob served to Isaac the meat cooked by Rebekah and some bread. Isaac mistook Jacob for Esau and blessed him (Genesis 27:1-29).

When Esau came to know that Jacob had snatched off his blessing, he felt hatred for Jacob. Fearing the fury of Esau, Jacob escaped to Laban in Paddan-aram with his parents' blessing. Laban is the brother of Rebekah

Jacob meets God

Jacob received the revelation of God on the way of his escape to Laban. He came to a certain place and stayed there for the night. In his sleep he had a vision. 'He saw a ladder set up on the earth', the top of which reaching to heaven; the angels of God ascending and descending on it. The Lord stood on top of the ladder and said: "I am the Lord, God of Abraham, your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your offspring. Your offspring shall be innumerable like the dust of the earth...all tribes of the earth shall be blessed through you and through your offspring". Then Jacob woke up from his sleep. He exclaimed: 'this is nothing but the house of God'. So saying, he named that place 'Bethel' (Genesis 28:10-20). The meaning of the word 'Bethel' is 'the house of God'.

When Jacob was returning from Laban to Isaac, he received another revelation of God. 'One night, a man wrestled with Jacob until daybreak. When it was dawn, the one who wrestled with Jacob expressed his desire to set forth. But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me". Then he replied, **"You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed"**. The word meaning of 'Israel' is 'one who wrestled with God'. Jacob exclaimed, 'I have seen God face to face'. So saying Jacob named the place 'Peniel'. The meaning of the word 'Peniel' is 'the face of God' (Genesis 32:22-32).

The promise, God made with Abraham and Isaac, continues with Jacob. God intervenes with Jacob throughout his life. God revealed himself to Jacob when there was severe famine in Israel and while Jacob was put up in Shechem.

The Marriage of Jacob

Jacob married Leah and Rachel, daughters of Laban. Jacob worked for Laban for twenty years continuously. After that he absconded himself from Laban along with the members of his family carrying all his belongings. He reached the land of Canaan and lived in different places there, one after the other. Jacob had twelve sons. Among them Jacob was fond of Joseph.

The Death of Jacob

When the famine in Canaan became severe, Jacob went to Egypt according to the plan of God. There he resided along with his children. When he was about to die, Jacob called his children around and blessed them all. Jacob's fourth son, Judah from Leah inherited the right of the firstborn.

Jacob's last wish was that he too should be buried in the same place where his ancestors were buried. The Egyptians, who were grief-stricken, mourned over the death of Jacob for seventy days. The Israelites are known even today by the name, which God had given to Jacob. God blessed Jacob, the forefather, in a special way and continuously protected him.

Worship

We say in the special prayer of house blessing, “You saved Lot from the fire of Sodom and you protected Jacob in the house of Laban, made him great and increased his wealth”.

Here, we pray God to bless our houses like he protected Jacob and made him great.

In the ‘Boutho’ (prayer of petition) for the departed, we sing:

(Karuna niranjavane..)

“Let them be made to rest - in the bosoms of Abraham, Isaac- and also Jacob”.

We pray here that God may bless our deceased ones and make them live with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the forefathers.

(Adima neethinjare..)

“God, who blessed Jacob and Rachel
In whose abundant grace;
May he bless these his servants
O Lord, have mercy on us”.

Through this hymn which we sing during the service of the Sacrament of Matrimony, we pray God that he may shower his blessings on the spouses, just as he had blessed Jacob and Rachel.

Life Witness

Jacob lived in accordance with the plan of God. Let us also live in submission to God.

Memorise

“The Lord is faithful in all his words,
and gracious in all his deeds”.

(Psalm 145:13)

Questions

1. How did Jacob get the right of the firstborn?
2. Explain the instances when Jacob encountered God.
3. How did Jacob get the name ‘Israel’?

Lesson 6

JOSEPH, THE RULER

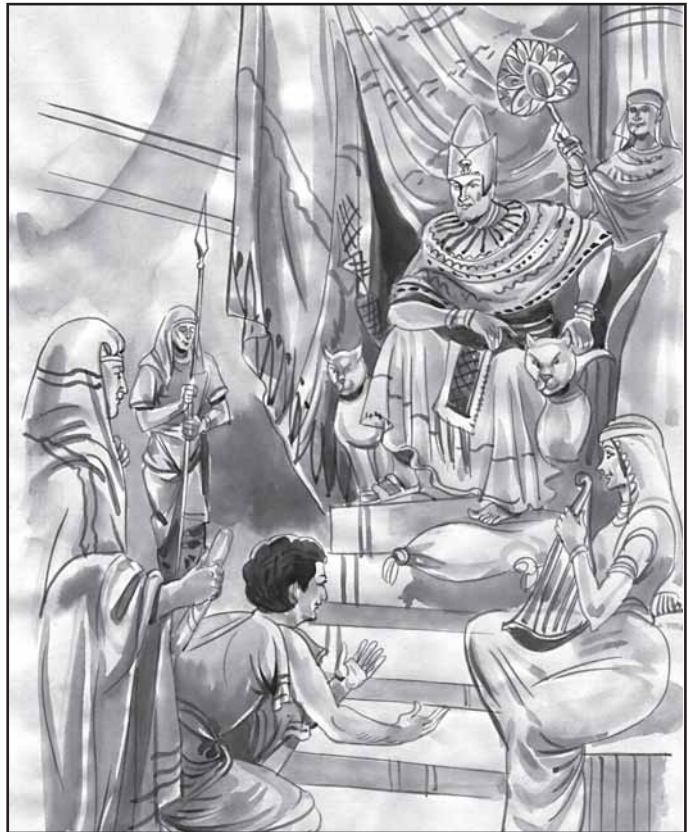
Joseph is the son born to Jacob from his wife, Rachel. He had God's grace. Joseph has a great role in the progress of the history of salvation.

Joseph is the eleventh son of Jacob. The meaning of the word 'Joseph' is 'to cause to increase'. God prepared Joseph in a special manner to lead the chosen people to the path of salvation.

The Dreams of Joseph

The occupation of the forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was shepherding. The sons of Jacob too continued this occupation. Jacob, who ran away from Laban, settled down in the land of Canaan. When the brothers found that Jacob loved Joseph more than all of them, they hated him. They did not even speak to him gently.

Once Joseph had a dream. While Joseph and his brothers were binding sheaves in the field, the sheaf of Joseph stood upright. Then the brothers' sheaves bowed down to the sheaf of Joseph. Through this dream, God gave a hint that Joseph would prosper more than his brothers and that they would have to depend upon him. His brothers hated him even more on account of this dream. On another occasion Joseph dreamt that the sun, moon and eleven



stars bowed down to him. When he said this, his brothers were jealous of him. They fostered hatred toward him.

Joseph in Egypt

Once Jacob sent Joseph to enquire about the welfare of his brothers, who had gone to pasture their father's flock. They had fostered hatred for Joseph and when they saw him, they conspired among themselves. Though they decided to murder him first, they did not do so. They stripped his robe off and threw him into a pit. Later, they sold him to the Egyptian traders, who were passing that way. They received twenty pieces of silver as the price for him. Then they slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe of Joseph in its blood. They brought this robe to Jacob. His brothers convinced Jacob that wild beasts attacked Joseph and killed him (Genesis 37).

Potiphar, an officer of the Pharaoh, bought Joseph from the traders. Potiphar entrusted Joseph with the charge of his house. The wife of Potiphar tempted Joseph to sin with her. But Joseph never did anything against the will of God. Being angry at this, she, through deceit, had placed him in prison.

Though he was locked up in a prison, the Lord was with Joseph. The cupbearer and the baker of Pharaoh (the king of Egypt was known as Pharaoh), were confined in the same prison with Joseph. Joseph interpreted some of their dreams. And they turned out according to Joseph's interpretation.

Once Pharaoh had a dream. When Pharaoh was standing by the side of river Nile, there came up out of the river seven fat and beautiful cows. Later, seven cows lean and ugly also came out of the river and stood by the side of the fat ones. These thin and ugly cows devoured the fat and beautiful cows. Then Pharaoh awoke. Again he fell asleep and dreamed a second time. Seven ears of grain, plump and beautiful, grew and rose up on one stalk. Then seven ears, thin and blighted by the east wind, sprouted after them. The thin ears swallowed up the seven plump and full ears. When Pharaoh awoke, he realized that what he saw was a dream. In the morning he called all the magicians and wise men of Egypt and although he asked them to interpret his dream, none could. At the end Joseph was brought from the dungeon at the request of the chief cupbearer. Joseph interpreted Pharaoh's dream. Seven years of great

plenty are about to come throughout all the land of Egypt. After that there will arise seven years of famine. The period of the plenty will be forgotten by Egypt. A famine will then consume the land. The plenty will not remain even in the memory of Egypt because of the famine. The famine will be so severe (Genesis 41:1-36).

Pharaoh entrusted the responsibility of encountering the famine to Joseph. He appointed him as the highest officer of the country. Joseph adopted the necessary precautions to face the famine. Joseph collected plenty of grain during the seven plenteous years.

Joseph married Asenath, a native of Egypt. Joseph was thirty years old when he entered into the service of Pharaoh. Two sons were born to Joseph. He named them Manasseh and Ephraim

When the years of famine started, there was plenty of grain in Egypt. People came to Joseph from all over the country to buy grain.

Israel to Egypt

Jacob sent his sons to Egypt when he learned that there was grain there. The brothers of Joseph, who went to buy grain, did not recognize him. But Joseph recognized them. When they came again to buy grain, Joseph revealed himself to his brothers. Thus the dream Joseph saw when he was young was realized. Jacob set out to Egypt with the members of his family and all their possessions according to the desire of Joseph. Thus they settled down in Egypt. Jacob blessed his sons and the sons of Joseph at the time of his death.

The Death of Joseph

Joseph and his father's family lived in Egypt. Joseph was hundred and ten years old. Joseph demanded that when the people of Israel finally go to the land promised by God, they would take his bones also from Egypt and bury them along with the ancestors.

God was with Joseph throughout his life. Joseph, the forefather, was an important link in the history of Israel. Joseph led his life according to what God had revealed. God continued his revelation and love through Joseph.

Worship

(Adima neethinjare...)
“God, who blessed Joseph in Egypt
In his abundant grace;
May he bless these his servants
O God, have mercy on us”.

This is the responsorial song chanted in the Sacrament of Matrimony when the spouses are blessed. All the faithful pray together that God may bless the spouses just as he blessed Joseph in Egypt.

(Nadha nin mun...)
“Just like Moses,
Who honoured Joseph,
We are also bound
To honour with due respect
The mortal remains of all Saints
So that on Day of Judgment
Ruin from us is thwarted
And they shall intercede for us”.
(Morning Prayers)

Moses brought the bones of Joseph, who died in Egypt to the land of Canaan. That is what is commemorated in this prayer. We ought to pay respect to the

Saints just as Moses honoured Joseph. They shall intercede with God for us lest we should incur chastisement.

“In your providence, you made Joseph in Egypt the ruler and chief and increased his successes and profits and safeguarded him from all adversities”. We remember during the service of the House Blessing, how God blessed Joseph particularly. By this prayer we ask that God may bless us also likewise.

Life Witness

Joseph was dear to God. He pardoned his brothers, who had maintained hatred and jealousy toward him and showed his great love for them. The example of Joseph, who stood for truth and justice, is worth imitating. God blessed Joseph abundantly since he lived in a pleasing manner before God. Let the life of Joseph be a model and encouragement to us.

Memorise

“It is good for me that I was humbled,
so that I might learn your statutes”.
(Psalm 119:71)

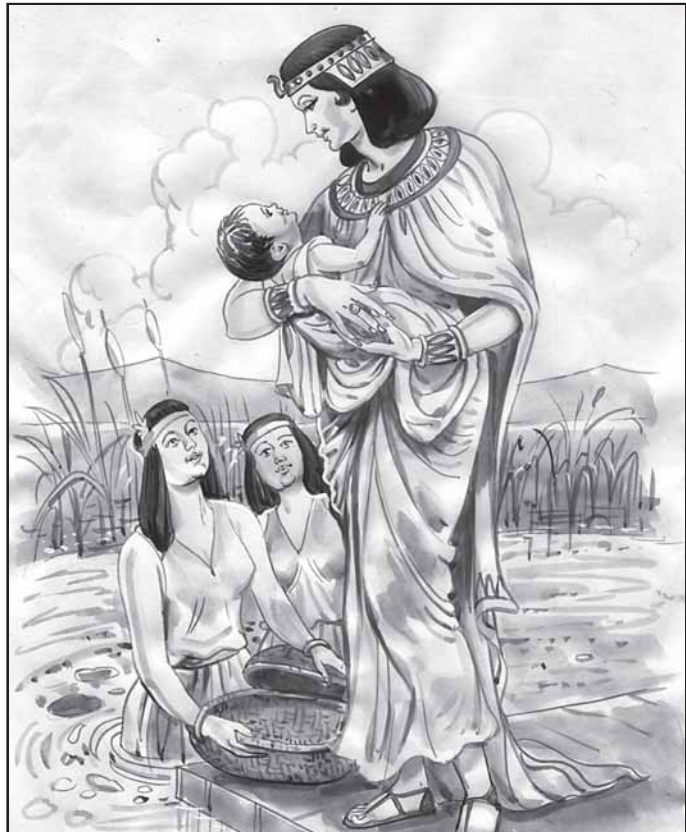
Questions

1. Who were the forefathers of Joseph? What was their occupation?
2. Why did the brothers of Joseph hate him?
3. What were the dreams of Joseph? What did they signify?
4. How did Joseph reach Egypt?
5. What was the dream of Pharaoh? How did Joseph interpret it?
6. How did the Israelites come to Egypt?

Lesson 7

GOD CALLS MOSES

The people of Israel, who came along with Jacob, grew into a great multitude. The generation of Jacob increased and spread all over the country. But after a long period, the Israelites were made slaves in Egypt. Being afraid of the strength of the people of Israel, Pharaoh ordered his men to persecute them. They killed all the male children, who were born to them, and threw them into the river Nile. Thus the Israelites were forced into slavery under Pharaoh's oppression.



The Infancy of Moses

During that period, a child was born to a couple belonging to the tribe of Levi. The child was handsome. His mother brought him up secretly for three months. After that, since it was not possible to hide him any longer, she made a basket, laid the child inside it and made it float in the river. When Pharaoh's daughter came to the river to bathe, she saw the basket and took it. She entrusted the babe, who was laid in it, to a Hebrew woman to bring it up. That woman was the mother of Moses himself. When the infant grew up she returned him to the daughter of Pharaoh. She received him as her son. She gave him the name 'Moses' as he was taken from water.

Moses grew up in the palace of Pharaoh. But Moses was conscious that he was a Jew. It caused Moses great personal pain that the Egyptians made the Jews work as slaves and they tortured them as such. Often Moses reacted against that. On account of that it was difficult for Moses to continue life in Egypt. In order to escape from being caught by Pharaoh, Moses fled secretly and reached the land of Midian (Exodus 2:11-15).

God Calls Moses

Moses, who reached Midian, married Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, the priest of the place. Moses stayed in Midian with Jethro shepherding the latter's flock.

Once Moses was grazing the flock on Horeb, the mountain of God. There, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush. The bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. On seeing this, Moses approached the bush to watch the sight closely. When the Lord saw Moses coming close, he called him out of the thorny bush. Then he told him thus: **“Come no closer. Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground. I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob”** (Exodus 3:5-6).

God descended in order to deliver from misery the people of Israel, who had been undergoing slavery in Egypt. He continued to Moses, **“I will send you to Pharaoh. You will bring my people, the Israelites out of Egypt”**. God assured Moses that he would be with him. God also entrusted Moses to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt to the broad and fertile land of Canaan flowing with milk and honey.



God gave Moses the power to work miracles, so that the Israelites and Pharaoh shall believe that it was God who sent Moses. Still Moses tried to evade from the responsibility which God had entrusted to him. Moses said to the Lord: “O my Lord, I have never been eloquent... I am slow of speech and slow of tongue”. Moses was a person who stammered. God gave him his brother, Aaron as a helper. God made Aaron as the mouthpiece of Moses.

According to the instructions of God, Moses set out to Egypt with the permission of Jethro, his father-in-law. On the way, Moses met with his brother Aaron. He explained to Aaron all the things which God had entrusted to him. Subsequently they arrived in Egypt and met with the elders of Israel. Aaron made known to the children of Israel all the things, which God had spoken to Moses. The people believed and worshipped the Lord. Thus Moses undertook the responsibility, God had entrusted to him.

Worship

(Pularkale.....)

“At the dawn- on the mountain top
Moses saw in a vision
Messengers of spiritual beings
Glorifying the Lord, God,
In a thorny bush blazing
Without consuming the same;
And he heard a voice speaking:
“Take off sandals from your feet
For, the Lord dwells in this place”.

(Sunday, Morning Prayers)

The vision seen by Moses on Horeb, the mountain of God, is commemorated here. The hymn instructs us that the house of God is holy and that we should enter it respectfully.

(Rehasyam, rehasyam...)

“It is he, whom- Moses the prophet
Has seen descending- in the thorny bush.
O Lord of heaven- supreme bridegroom,
We glorify you- and exalt you”.

(Communion song, Maundy Thursday)

This means that the faithful see and worship the Son of God in the Holy Eucharist, just as Moses saw God in the thorny bush.

Life Witness

God calls us also to fulfil his plans. God does not call us because of any of our own merits. If God calls anyone, he will give him the necessary grace too. Let us be ready to listen to his voice in our daily life and to serve for the sake of God. Let us be faithful to him forever.

Memorise

“God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise”.

(1 Corinthians 1:27)

Questions

1. Describe the infancy of Moses.
2. Describe the vision Moses saw in the thorny bush.
3. Why did God appoint Aaron as the mouthpiece of Moses?
4. How did Moses arrive in Egypt and undertake his responsibility?

Lesson 8

THE DELIVERANCE FROM SLAVERY

Moses came to Egypt from Midian according to the instructions of God. There was Aaron, his brother, with him, whom God gave as his mouthpiece. After having seen the people of Israel, Moses and Aaron approached Pharaoh to tell him to set them free. They told Pharaoh thus: **“Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go so that they may celebrate a festival to me in the wilderness’”** (Exodus 5:1). Pharaoh denied the demand of Moses and he tortured



Israelites all the more. God made Pharaoh hard-hearted. The people of Israel, who had to do extra work because of Moses, talked to him angrily. The leaders of the people of Israel met with Pharaoh and requested to have their workload reduced. But in response he increased their workload.

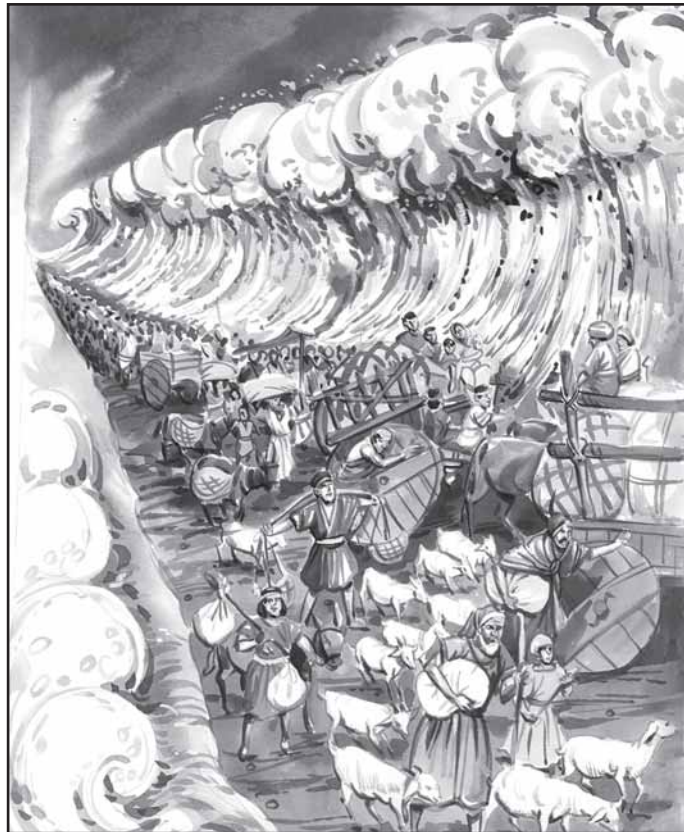
Moses, who was grief-stricken because the people talked to him angrily, made known to God his difficulties. God encouraged Moses. He reiterated to Moses, the promise he made to his fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that he would give the land of Canaan to their offspring. In accordance with the instructions of the Lord, Moses talked again to Pharaoh. Even though the demand to set free Israel was placed again, Pharaoh did not agree with it. God

made Pharaoh hard-hearted. He did not listen to the words of Moses. As God commanded, Moses wrought miracles before Pharaoh. Yet he continued to be hard-hearted. Hence God brought plagues upon Egypt.

The Ten Plagues

In order to set free the people of Israel from Egypt, God wrought many miracles. God brought ten plagues upon Pharaoh and upon Egypt. It was to liberate Israel from slavery that God brought these plagues. The power of God was manifested all over Egypt.

Through the first plague the water of river Nile was turned into blood. The Egyptians could not drink the water of the river. All the fish in the river floated dead. Following that, the whole of Egypt was filled with frogs. The life of the people became unbearable. According to the request of Pharaoh, Moses prayed and the frogs moved away from Egypt. But Pharaoh still did not send the Israelites. Next, gnats began to spread and fly increased all over Egypt. They also made the life of the Egyptians intolerable. As per request of Pharaoh Moses prayed again and the plagues left Egypt. But when his need was satisfied Pharaoh retracted his word agreed upon earlier. As a result of which God brought upon Egypt more severe plagues. In the fifth place, all animals in the fields of Egypt died. After that, boils affected all of his



people and animals alike. The hard-hearted Pharaoh did not pay heed to the words of Moses. Then God caused the heaviest hail to fall on all men and animals of Egypt. Next, the whole of Egypt was filled with locusts; consequently there remained no greenery. As the ninth plague, the whole Egypt was enveloped with darkness for three days. They could not do anything. The mind of Pharaoh did not melt even after nine plagues.

The last plague was the killing of the firstborn of Egypt by the messenger of God. The Lord thus declared: **“Every firstborn of the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne to the firstborn of the female slave, who is behind the hand mill”** (Exodus 11:5). But the messenger of the Lord did not kill any of the Israelites.

Observance of the Passover

Regarding the people of Israel, the feast of the ‘Passover’ is their most important one. The Lord commanded Moses that the Israelites should observe the ‘Passover’ on the occasion of their deliverance from Egypt. It is to be observed on the fourteenth day of the first month of the year. The meaning of the word ‘Passover’ is ‘to pass by’. A lamb for each family is to be provided. They should keep the lamb ready on the tenth day itself of the month. You have to choose a male lamb unblemished and a year old. On the fourteenth day, in the evening, the whole congregation of Israel should slaughter lambs; they shall take some of the blood of the lamb and seal with it the two doorposts and the lintel of the house. The Israelites shall eat its meat roasted over fire with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. They have to eat it with their loins girded, their sandals on their feet and their staff in their hand. All circumcised men of Israel should observe the Passover. The Israelites ate the Passover as the Lord had instructed. On that night the messenger of the Lord killed the firstborn of every man and animal of Egypt. But the messenger of God passed by without killing the firstborn of the Israelites, as blood was sprinkled on the doorposts.

The Israelites are Released

Since the firstborn of the Egyptians were killed, Pharaoh was ready to release

the Israelites. Israelites set out from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. They started with all the possessions they had. The Israelites lived four hundred and thirty years in Egypt. God had led Israel with his powerful hand.

After the Israelites had left Egypt, Pharaoh and his people were sorry for releasing them. Pharaoh and his army pursued the Israelites in order to bring them back. By that time they had reached the Red Sea. At the command of God, Moses held his staff stretched out towards the water. The water of the sea retreated on either side and the people of Israel passed over to the other side through the dry land. When the Israelites had crossed the sea, Moses turned back and raised his hand over the sea and it returned to its normal depth. And the Egyptian army of Pharaoh, who chased the Israelites, was drowned in the sea. The people of Israel glorified God, who delivered them from the slavery of Egypt through the leadership of Moses.

Worship

(Balakarodai...)

“In the days of Nibi Moses
The twelve tribes of Israel,
The Lord had ordered to eat and-
Observe the Passover.

On this evening

The table of God

Is very well set

And it is spotless and pure.

The twelve apostles of the tribes
Of the Israelites

Are engaged in celebrating

The eternal Mystery

Halleluiah, on this day at sunset”.

(The hymns of the Holy Week)

The people of Israel observed the Passover on the occasion of their deliverance from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. Similarly the apostles observed the same at the end of the life of our Lord Jesus. The first Passover, which Israel observed under the leadership of Moses and the Passover at which our Lord instituted the Holy

Eucharist, both are very important in the history of salvation. Those two Passover-evenings are remembered in this hymn.

When the Israelites celebrated Passover in Egypt, what was salutary to them, was the sealing of the doorposts and lintel with blood. Because of that the killer messenger did not destroy their houses. So also it is salutary that the priest seals the lintel and the doorposts with the holy water at the time of the service of House Blessing.

Life Witness

When afflictions and troubles occur in our life, we ought to call upon God and pray. Then God will hear our prayers and will come for our help. When we advance through the path God shows us, it will become salutary to us just like it happened to the people of Israel.

Memorise

“In my distress I cry to the Lord,
that he may answer me”.

(Psalm 120:1)

Questions

1. Explain the reason why God brought ten plagues over Egypt.
2. What was the tenth plague over Egypt?
3. How did Israel observe the Passover?
4. How was the people of Israel delivered from Egypt?

Lesson 9

THE JOURNEY THROUGH THE DESERT

The people of Israel went out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. The people, who crossed the Red Sea, continued their journey through the wilderness under the leadership of Moses. ‘The Lord went in front of the Israelites in a pillar of cloud by day, to lead them along the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, so that they might travel by day and by night’ (Exodus 13:21).



Bitter Water made Sweet

The people of Israel, who journeyed through the wilderness, did not get water to drink for days. One day they reached a place called Marah. There was water there. But they could not drink it; for it was bitter. The people murmured against Moses. Understanding the difficulty of the people, Moses cried out to the Lord. The Lord showed him a piece of wood and told him to put it in the water. When he put it into the water, the water turned sweet. The Lord protected the people of Israel and led them forward (Exodus 15:22-27).

Manna and the Quails

The people of Israel proceeded under the leadership of Moses with the

goal of reaching the Promised Land. They came to the wilderness of Sin. Whatever food the people of Israel had brought with them, at that time, got exhausted. And the people, hungry and weak, murmured against Moses and Aaron. The Lord knowing their need, told Moses, **“I am going to rain bread from heaven for you”**. Moses told the people that the Lord would give the Israelites meat to their fill at twilight and bread in the morning as much as they needed. Just as Moses had said, they got as many quails as they needed in their camp. And in the morning there was seen around their camp a thin and white thing. It tasted like wafers made with honey. When they saw that, they asked one another, “What is this?” They gave it the name ‘Manna’. The word ‘Manna’ means ‘What is this?’. God gave them manna throughout the period of forty years in the wilderness (Exodus 16:1-36).

On another occasion, in the course of their journey, God quenched the thirst of the people of Israel by giving water from a rock. When the people of



Amalek attacked the Israelites, God gave victory to the Israelites. During the time when the Israelites were journeying through the wilderness, God guarded them and protected them in a special manner.

Water from the Rock

When the people of Israel continued their journey through the wilderness of Sin, they did not have any water for many days. On account of that the people again turned against Moses and Aaron. Moses sought help from God. The Lord ordered Moses to produce water from rock and to give to the people and animals

to drink. Moses struck twice on the rock with his staff. The water gushed forth in plenty from the rock (Exodus 17:1-7).

The Covenant of Sinai

The people, who set out from Egypt reached the wilderness of Sinai. God decided to make a covenant with the people, who reached the foot of Mount Sinai. God called Moses to the top of the mountain. And there, God made a covenant with the people of Israel.

God said to Moses: **“If you obey my voice and keep my covenant you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples”** (Exodus 19:5). On Mount Sinai God gave the people of Israel the Ten Commandments. Besides these, God gave other ordinances to the people of Israel.

Though God made a covenant with Israel, during the absence of Moses, the people fell into serious fault. Instead of worshipping the one and only God, Yahweh, they made a golden calf and worshipped it. Coming down from the mountain, Moses got furious at this. He broke the tablets of the Commandments and destroyed the calf. God showed mercy to the people of Israel on account of the petition of Moses. Again God gave Moses the tablets of Commandments. The face of Moses, who came down from Mount Sinai, was shining. For, he talked with God face to face. Thereafter, Moses lived covering his face with a veil.

Israel set out on their journey from Sinai according to the command of God. The people of Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years. God instructed Moses on Mount Sinai how to construct the Tabernacle, to make the Ark of the Covenant, the Table for the Bread of the Presence and the Altar of incense. The Tabernacle was the place where there was the special presence of God. Moses made them all according to the instructions of God.

Aaron, the Priest

Aaron was always with Moses from the time God had sent Moses to Egypt. He was the brother of Moses. It was Aaron, who spoke to Pharaoh and to the people instead of the stammering Moses. Aaron had even wrought miracles at

times for the sake of Moses. Aaron is known as the mouthpiece of Moses. There was Aaron along with Moses leading the people. After the covenant of Sinai, Aaron was anointed as a priest. Aaron was to wear special vestments while entering the Tabernacle. The responsibility of the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant was given to Aaron. The responsibility of incensing the Altar of the incense also was his.

The Bronze Serpent

Since the journey through the wilderness was prolonged, the people were impatient on the way from Mount Hor to the Red Sea; they spoke against God and Moses. On account of that God sent poisonous snakes among the Israelites. They bit the people and many died. On this occasion the people became conscious of their fault. They came to Moses and said: “We have sinned by speaking against the Lord and against you; pray to the Lord to take away the serpents from us” (Numbers 21:7). Accordingly, Moses prayed for the people. As a result of the prayer, God suggested a remedy. As God commanded, Moses made a serpent out of bronze, made it stand on his staff. Those who were bitten by the poisonous snakes looked at the bronze serpent and lived. Thus they were saved from that punishment.

Israel, God’s own people, although they set out on their own to the land of Canaan, being freed from the bondage of Egypt, had to wander through the wilderness for forty years. God punished them whenever the people of Israel acted or spoke against God and Moses. But God always showered mercy on them on account of Moses’ intercession. The people of God entered the land of Canaan in the providence of God through the leadership of Joshua.

Worship

(Rehasyam, rehasyam...)

“This is the manna- God had given
To the Israelites- in the desert.
O Lord of heaven- supreme bridegroom
We glorify you-and exalt you”.
(Maundy Thursday, Communion song)

Just as God sustained the life of the Israelites by giving them manna, so also he sustains spiritual life of men, who lost the life of the soul by sin, through the Holy Eucharist.

The Israelites, who were bitten by serpents, when they looked at the bronze serpent with faith and repentance, were saved from death. The erection of ‘Gogultha’ (Cross on a pedestal) at the centre of the church in the middle of Lent, is a symbol of the raising of the bronze serpent by Moses in the wilderness. Just as looking at the bronze serpent saved the

Israelites, those who look at the Cross and bow before it, will also be saved. The basis of the figure of the serpent on top of the ‘crosier’ of the bishops is the bronze serpent Moses raised in the wilderness.

Life Witness

We should never complain against God when afflictions and difficulties come in our life. On the other hand we should entreat God’s help. Then God will show us mercy.

Memorise

“The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts”.
(Psalm 28:7)

Questions

1. How were the Israelites able to travel by day and by night?
2. What all did God do in the wilderness so that the Israelites got food and drink?
3. What did God promise in the covenant of Sinai?
4. What wrong did the people of Israel do when Moses was on Mount Sinai?
5. Who was Aaron? What was his mission?
6. Why did Moses make the bronze serpent?

Lesson 10

THE LEADERSHIP TO JOSHUA

Towards the end of the journey through the wilderness, the people of Israel reached the plains of Moab. Moses looked and saw the Promised Land from the mount of Nebo in the land of Moab. He died in the land of Moab. Moses was hundred and twenty years old when he died. He was buried there. They mourned over him for thirty days. Later there has been no other prophet in Israel like Moses, with whom the Lord spoke face to face. Moses decided before his death to appoint Joshua, the son of Nun of the tribe of Ephraim, as his successor.



Joshua – the Successor of Moses

The meaning of the word ‘Joshua’ is ‘one whose help is God’. Joshua was the servant of Moses. Moses led him to the Tabernacle in order to appoint him leader, as the Lord had instructed him. There, God gave Moses his last instructions. God said thus to Joshua at the Tabernacle: **“Be strong and bold; for you shall bring the Israelites into the land I promised them; I will be with you”** (Deuteronomy 31:23). Joshua undertook the leadership of Israel in accordance with this instruction of God.

The Leadership of Joshua

The spirit of wisdom filled Joshua. The people of Israel heard him and did as the Lord had commanded. God said to Joshua after he had taken up leadership: **“No one shall be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you.... You shall put this people in possession of the land that I swore to their ancestors to give them”** (Joshua 1:5-6).

Crossing of River Jordan

As per the command of God, Joshua instructed the priests to carry the Ark of the Covenant and walk in front of the people. The feet of the priests, who carried the Ark, touched the water. All on a sudden the flow of river Jordan stopped. The people of Israel crossed Jordan walking through the dry land. The priests stood in the middle of river Jordan carrying the Ark of the Covenant on the dry land until all the Israelites crossed the river. When the people crossed river Jordan, the priests got on land. Water began to flow in the river Jordan. The Israelites erected a memorial slab in order to maintain the remembrance of this great miracle (Joshua 3-4).

In the Land of Canaan

Following this, the people of Israel entered the land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. The Lord was with them. After having reached the Promised Land, the first city they subdued was Jericho. Later on they conquered the different parts of the Promised Land.

The Division of the Land

Joshua grew old. There were yet many places to be captured. Joshua divided the land captured among the twelve tribes of Israel. Thus they got the land, which God had promised to the forefathers, that he would give to Israel.

The Death of Joshua

Joshua gathered together the Israelites at Shechem. They renewed the

covenant with God. Joshua died when he was hundred and ten years old. The Israelites buried him in the place that belonged to him.

Worship

In the morning prayers of Monday we sing thus in ‘S’heemo’ (Book of the daily prayers)

(Kartavakunnu Daivam..)

“God is indeed our Lord
On this morning, the Israelites
Having blown the trumpets loudly
Jericho fell.
Come O brothers and you sing
Raise your voices at the dawn
Glorify God, that he may show
Mercy on earth.

This hymn invites us to glorify God so that God’s providence and grace will be in this world. In the ‘sedro’ (a layer of prayers), at sunset on Friday of Lent, we pray as follows: “Joshua, the son of Nun, became a Saint through fast and destroyed the fort of Jericho”.

Life Witness

The life of Joshua was entirely dedicated for the sake of God and for his people. Joshua kept his fidelity to God till the end of his life. The plan of God regarding the people of God is fulfilled especially through Joshua. God has plans for us, also. Let us be ready to dedicate our lives for the sake of God and his people. Let us live through the path God leads us.

Memorise

“Revere the Lord and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness”.
(Joshua 24:14)

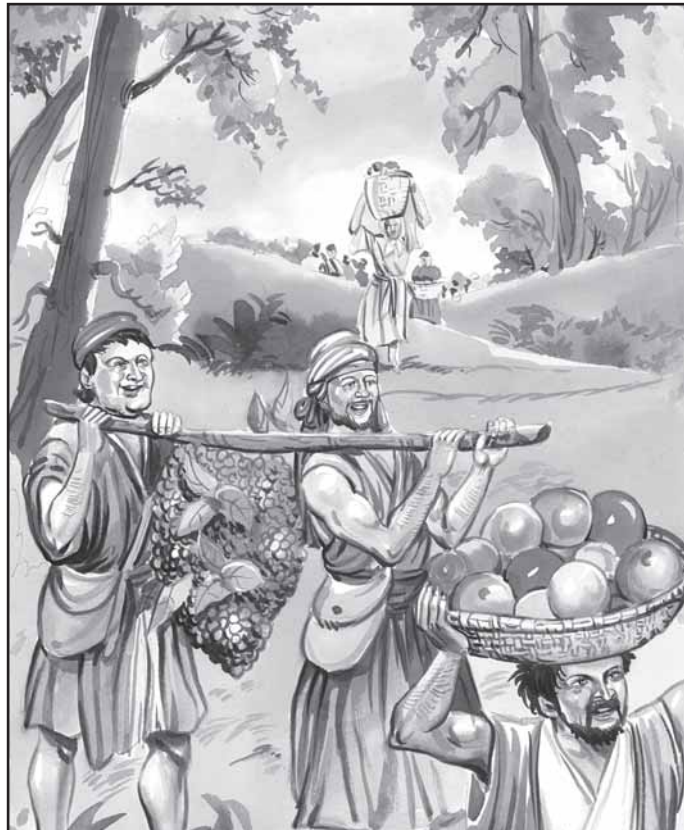
Questions

1. How did Joshua become the successor of Moses?
2. What did God ask Joshua after he took up his responsibility?
3. How did the people of Israel cross Jordan?
4. Describe the prosperity that the people of Israel gained under the leadership of Joshua.

Lesson 11

ISRAEL IN THE PROMISED LAND

The people of Israel appropriated the land of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua. God was always with them, his own people. Having defeated the Canaanites, Joshua captured the Promised Land and divided the same among the twelve tribes of Israel. It was on the east and west of Jordan that he divided the land. No particular portion was given to the Tribe of Levi, the priestly group. But the other tribes gave a portion of the property they got to the Levites, including cities and pasturelands.



The Judges

After the demise of Joshua, it was the Judges, who led the people of Israel, who had captured the land of Canaan and settled down there. They were exceptionally talented men of God. They were courageous fighters and were appointed to save Israel from external enemies. They also carried out very well their duty of bringing back to God, the people, who had gone astray from him. Jephthah, Gideon, Samson, Samuel were the chief ones among the Judges. They led Israel until the beginning of the royal rule.

Kings

When Samuel, the last of the Judges became old, the people requested that they should have a king. According to the will of God, Samuel anointed Saul as the first king of Israel. Next to Saul, David became king. He conquered Jerusalem and reinstated Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. David was the strongest king in the history of Israel. God promised that the house of David would last forever (2 Samuel 7:16). After David, Solomon undertook the rule. It was he who built the Temple of Jerusalem. After the death of Solomon, the wise, the kingdom of Israel was divided.

The ten tribes of the northern region together formed a nation, by name, Israel. Only two tribes remained in the southern country, Judea. Continuous war was waged between these two countries. Israel, which was founded in 931 B.C. was brought under the regime of Assyria in 722 B.C. The reasons for the ruin of Israel were, increase of idolatry, infidelity towards God and sin. After the fall of Israel, the kingdom of Judea survived for another one and a half centuries. Due to idolatry and sinful life, Judea too came under slavery. Judea came under the rule of Babylon in 587 B.C. Thus, both the countries shattered. Still God loved Israel, his chosen people.

Prophets

The prophets are those who revealed the will of God to the people of Israel. Their main purpose was to divert the people from evil and to lead them to God. They offered their lives to preserve the people of Israel in the faith of the only God, since they had gone after alien gods. They sounded the voice of the suffering and the oppressed. It was the prophets who advised the kings in the right direction. When the people of Israel were in exile, it was the prophets who strengthened them. They prophesied about the coming Messiah. This helped the people to be sustained in their hope. Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos were the chief prophets.

People, who remained in Hope

Many years later, the people, who were delivered from slavery, returned to Judea. They reconstructed the ruined Temple of God. The people maintained

fidelity to God. Emperor Alexander subdued Palestine in 322 B.C. Antiochus III, the king of Syria, captured Palestine in the year 198 B.C. Next, under the leadership of Judas Maccabees, the Jews won a victory against Syria. Pompeii, the Roman chief of army, captured Palestine in the year 63 B.C. With regard to Israel, even when they encountered several calamities in life, they lived in the hope that a deliverer would be born for them.

When Jacob, the forefather blessed his sons, he blessed Judah thus: **“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler’s staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him and the obedience of the peoples is his”** (Genesis 49:10). This is a clear promise about the Messiah to come. Look at the prophecy, the prophet Nathan makes to David: **“Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever”** (2 Samuel 7:16). Later on, the Prophet Isaiah said about the one to come: **“Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel”** (Isaiah 7:14).

The people of Israel fostered great expectation that a Saviour would come, who would deliver them from slavery and grant them salvation. These expectations of the people were fulfilled at the incarnation of Jesus. Jesus was born in the genealogy of David of the tribe of Judah. Thus the expectations and the prophecies concerning the Saviour were fulfilled in Jesus.

Worship

The hope for the Saviour remained prominent in the life of Israel. The prophets and forefathers revealed through parables, about the coming of the Messiah. In the Night Prayer of the Nativity, we sing thus:

(Nin murivukalilninnetten...)

“ By means of parables did God, reveal through the prophets

His holy will, in olden times, to the forefathers;

Through beloved Son- in the fullness of time

At this moment – he has spoken to us.

He, who appropriates the right, has made this world

To the one, who is born in the cave of Bethlehem.

Halleluiah- eu Halleluiah”.

Life Witness

The people of Israel, even though they were the chosen people of God, often showed infidelity to God. God, who was faithful in his promises, showed mercy to Israel and led them to the land of Canaan. Let us glorify God, who is faithful in his promises.

Memorise

“I will extol you, O Lord, for you have, drawn me up”.

(Psalm 30:1)

Questions

1. How did Joshua divide the land among the people of Israel?
2. How did Jacob bless specially his son, Judah?
3. Which are the prophecies about the Messiah, which rendered hope to the people of God?
4. Write short notes on:
 1. Judges
 2. Kings
 3. Prophets.

PART - II



LITURGY

Lesson 12

THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH BUILDING



Madbaha

Qestruma

Hykala

Mondalam

The church is the house where God dwells. According to the Malankara tradition, the church is built and dedicated, facing the East. Just as the sun rises in the East, it is believed that the Second Coming of the Lord, the Sun of Justice, is from the East. Therefore, the worshipping-congregation prays facing the East, with the expectation of the Second Coming of the Lord.

The structure of the church is similar to the temple of Jerusalem, which Solomon had constructed. In the outer portico of the temple of Jerusalem, the gentiles were allowed to enter. Only the Jews were permitted to enter the inner portico (nave). The Levites stood in the Holy place and the High priest alone entered the Holy of Holies. In accordance with this, the Malankara church too has four sections. In the eastern most part there is the sanctuary (*Madbaha*) similar to the Holy of Holies; below that there is the *Qestruma*, demarked by

rails; still below there is the nave (*Hykala*), where the faithful stand and on the western most part, there is the portico, similar to the external portico (*Mondalam*) of the temple of Jerusalem

1. *Madbaha* (Sanctuary)

The sanctuary is the Holy of Holies of the church. *Madbaha*, the Syriac word means, ‘the altar on which the sacrifice of Holy Mass is offered’ or ‘the sacrificial hall where the altar is placed’. This is called the most Holy Place, because there is the special presence and glory of God in this place. *Madbaha* is an elevated place, having nine steps from the *Qestruma*. There should be at least three steps. The nine steps we see downwards from the place where the *thronos*, the throne of God, exists are the places of the nine choirs of angels. If they are three steps, they signify the places where the three rows of army stand.

According to Dionysious, the father of the Church of Athens, the *Madbaha* signifies the ‘Immanuel’. The meaning of the word ‘Immanuel’ is ‘God with us’. It is in the *Madbaha* that Jesus Christ is with us through the Holy Eucharist. That is why, according to the Malankara Rite, at the time of the blessing of the church, prime importance is given to the consecration of *Madbaha*. The Fathers of the church qualify *Madbaha* as the symbol of heaven.

2. *Qestruma* (Area within the Rails)

This could be compared to the Holy Place of the temple of Jerusalem. The Syriac word *Qestruma* means ‘an elevated place from the floor’. This is the elevated place between the nave and the sanctuary. Since it is separated by rails, it is called in Malankara ‘place within the rails’. The priests and the deacons, who do not enter the sanctuary, stand here. This is also the place where the choir stands. Now a days, the table for prayer also is put in this place. A Cross and the Holy Bible are kept there.

3. *Hykala* (Place of Worship)

The largest portion of the church is the *Hykala*. This Syriac word means, place of worship. This is the place where the people of God stand. This could

be compared to the inner portico of the temple of Jerusalem. In the temple of Jerusalem, the women attended service, standing behind the men. This was the custom in all Syrian churches. It was Mar Ivanios, who introduced the custom of men standing on the northern side and the women on the southern side in the church.

It is very common to have a hanging lamp in the centre of the *Hykala*. It is traditional that the faithful bring oil and candle as offering to the church. Before entering the *Hykala*, the faithful bow and sign themselves with the Cross and say thus: "I will come into your house with burnt offerings; I will pay you my vows" (Psalm 66:13). Thereafter entering the *Hykala* worshipfully prostrate and pray thus: 'O Lord, I have entered your house. Heavenly King, I worshipped before your throne; forgive me all the sins I have committed against you' (Psalm 5:7). The Fathers of the Church qualify *Hykala* as the symbol of the earth.

4. *Mondalam* (Place of Solace)

Mondalam is equivalent to the external portico of the temple of Jerusalem. This is at the western most part of the church. It was in this place that in the early Church, those who haven't received Baptism, the catechumens, the penitents, those under punishment, participated in the Prayer of the Hours, and in the Service of the Word, the first part of the Holy Mass. It was in this place that the catechumens studied the faith and prayed. It was also in this place that the church committee assembled to discuss the affairs of the church in ancient times. Today this place is being used for reading of the Scriptures before the procession around the church.

Mondalam, Hykala, Qestruma and Madbaha exist on gradually elevated places. This elevation indicates the growth from the state of sin to the state of grace.

Worship

The second Sunday of the Liturgical Year is known as '*Hudos Eetho*'. The meaning of this word is 'the renovation of the church'. On that day, in the hymn sung after the Gospel, the sanctity of the church and the perfect sanctity of the sanctuary are specially remembered.

(Parisudhalayamullil...)

“It is fire, the sanctuary
Indeed fire, the Sacrifice
Fire of course encircles it
Yes, it is served by fire.
Beware you, priests of God,
Am Halleluiah, eu Halleluiah
Lest the fire consume you”.

Life Witness

The church is the house of God. Therefore it is holy. Let us behave with respect and devotion in the church.

Memorise

“My house shall be called a house
of prayer for all the nations”.
(Mark 11:17)

Questions

1. Why is the church built facing the East?
2. Describe the construction of the temple of Jerusalem.
3. Which are the four sections of the Malankara church? Describe each one.

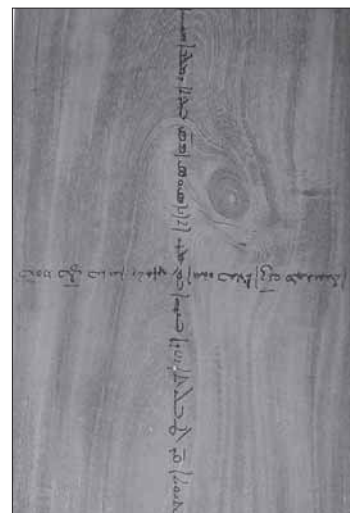
Lesson 13

THE HOLY THINGS IN THE CHURCH

The church is the house of God. The worship held in the church is the foretaste of the heavenly experience. The construction of the church and the holy things used in it recall the presence of God. This lesson deals with the holy things in the church.

1. Thronos (Throne)

The meaning of the Syriac word *Thronos* is 'Throne'. Since the presence of the Heavenly Father is on the *Thronos*, it is the throne on which the Heavenly King is seated. That signifies the Mercy Seat (Hebrew 9:5) of the temple of Jerusalem. Since the crucifixion, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ are made present through the Holy Eucharistic Sacrifice, the *Thronos* signifies also the mountain of Golgotha and the tomb of the Lord. It has also the name 'the Table of Life', since the Holy *Qurbana*, the Bread of life, is celebrated on the *Thronos*. It is again called 'altar', because the Holy *Qurbana*, the Sacrifice, is offered on the *Thronos*. *Thronos* represents our Lord. That is why the faithful, looking at the presence of God in the church, devoutly pray.



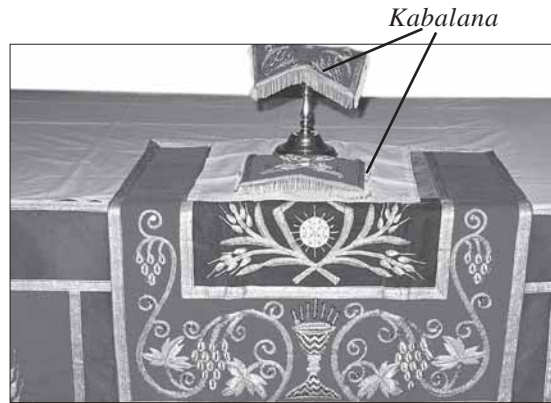
2. Tablet (Little Altar)

Tablet is a small plank on which the chalice and paten are placed for the offering of the Holy *Qurbana*. The use of the tablet is indispensable even

on a consecrated *Thronos*. On urgent occasions however, Holy *Qurbana* may be offered on the tablet, even if there is no consecrated *Thronos*. The tablet signifies the Cross of salvation. It is because of that, that the tablet is made of wood in Malankara. The tablet is consecrated, anointing with sacred oil (*mooron*) on one side. On the other side, the name of the bishop, who consecrated that and the date of its consecration, will be written in Syriac in the form of a Cross. This signifies the apostolic authority of the bishop.

3. The Corporal (*Virikoottam*)

The tablet is placed in the centre of the *thronos*, above which the tri-coloured Corporal is spread and chalice and paten are arranged on it. The colours of the corporal are white at the centre followed by green and red. The white stands for the community of the faithful, namely, the Church; the green represents the earth and the red symbolizes the universe.



4. The Altar Cover (*Chithola*)

The silk cloth, used to decorate the *Thronos* is the Altar Cover (*Chithola*). This represents the fine silk linen, with which our Lord was covered at the time of his burial. This cover signifies the glory of God seated on the throne. Since the One God is known in three Persons, the altar cover is divided into three sections. The same colour of the three sections shows that the three Persons of the Trinity are identical in essence. The central section with the Cross signifies the Son; the left one stands for the Father and the right, for the Holy Spirit. The Cross in the middle section signifies the '*Sleebo*', the sign of Salvation. This also signifies the eternal relationship of Christ, who is incarnated, in the Trinity.



5. The *Susoppo* (White Veil)

This is a white linen, which is used to cover the chalice and paten. This signifies the unseen state of God hidden in the Holy Mysteries. This also reminds the rock that produced water to the twelve tribes of Israel in the wilderness and the stone that was placed at the entrance of the tomb of our Lord.



6. The Holy Cross

The Cross, at the centre of the *Thronos* represents Jesus. According to the eastern tradition, the Cross, represents not only the passion and death of our Lord, but also the risen Jesus. We use the Cross, without the figure in the Malankara Rite.



7. The Candles

The lighted candles of the *Thronos* reveal the presence of God. The light that shines from the candle teaches that the faithful



should return from the darkness of sin to the light. Out of the thirteen candles placed in the sanctuary, twelve represent the twelve apostles and the candle in the centre, the presence of God.

8. The Curtain

The curtain reminds the sanctity and the mysterious aspect of the *thronos*. According to the Old Law, the curtain showed the separation between the Holy Place

of the temple of Jerusalem and the place of the Holy of Holies. The separation of heaven from earth is signified through the curtain. Just as Christ, the High Priest offers the intercessory sacrifice for mankind; the priests intercede for the faithful.

9. The Table of the Word

The faithful get two kinds of spiritual food from the church; the holy Body and Blood of our Lord and the holy Word of God. The first they get from the *Thronos* and the second from the Table of the Word.

10. The Censor

The Censor signifies the Mother of God and the fire, God who dwelt in the womb of the Blessed Virgin. The first of its chains signifies God the Father, the second and the third, the incarnated God and man, and the fourth signifies God the Holy Spirit. The ring that unites the chains above, signifies the unity of the Holy Trinity, the twelve bells on the chains signify the twelve apostles and the seventy-two links represent the seventy-two announcers.

The upper cup of the censor signifies the heavens, the lower cup, the earth, and the coal in the cup, the sinners and the fire signifies the Holy Spirit. Men, who are likened to black coal due to sin, are filled with the Holy Spirit and made like fire, due to the presence of God. The smoke that rises from the censor shows that the prayers and spiritual exercises of men are being offered as gifts to God.



11. The Chalice and Paten

The Chalice is the cup in which the wine, specially prepared for Holy Mass, is kept. The paten is the plate on which the bread, specially prepared for Holy Mass, is kept. The chalice and the paten symbolize the golden vessel in which the manna was preserved in the Ark of the Covenant. They also signify the tomb of our Lord.



12. *Kabalana*

This is the red cloth used to cover the chalice and paten.

13. The Fan and the Bell

The sound of the fan and bell is the sign of the divine presence and the praise of the angels. The fan is the instrument that signifies the presence of the angels standing around the *Thronos*. Having the resemblance of a fan, this signifies the wings of the Seraphs.



14. The Tabernacle

This is the box used to specially preserve the Holy Eucharist.

In short, the holy things used in the church, remind us the presence of God. Therefore we should have respect for the things used in the church.



Worship

The Cross is one of the holy things of the worship. The Cross is called in Syriac 'Sleebo'.

We sing thus in the *Kukilion* of the *Sleebo* (Prayer of Incense), how to venerate the Cross and how to make the sign of the Cross:

(Jeevan nalkum nal sleebaye..)

“O good Cross, that imparts life to men at all times

We will ever worship;

We will sign as pledge of hope and Salvation

Upon our foreheads;

Indeed – the Cross

Shall save us from the armies of Satan

Throughout day and night.

Barekmor”.

Life Witness

All the holy things of the church are related to things divine and they reveal them. Hence respect for the holy things is a sign of respect and veneration shown to God.

Memorise

“How lovely is the dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!”

(Psalm 84:1)

Questions

1. What all does the *Thronos* signify? Explain.
2. What are the symbols of the different colours of the Corporal?
3. What does the Altar Cover signify? Why is it divided into three sections having the same colour?
4. Why the Cross without figure is used in the Malankara Rite?
5. What does the censor signify?

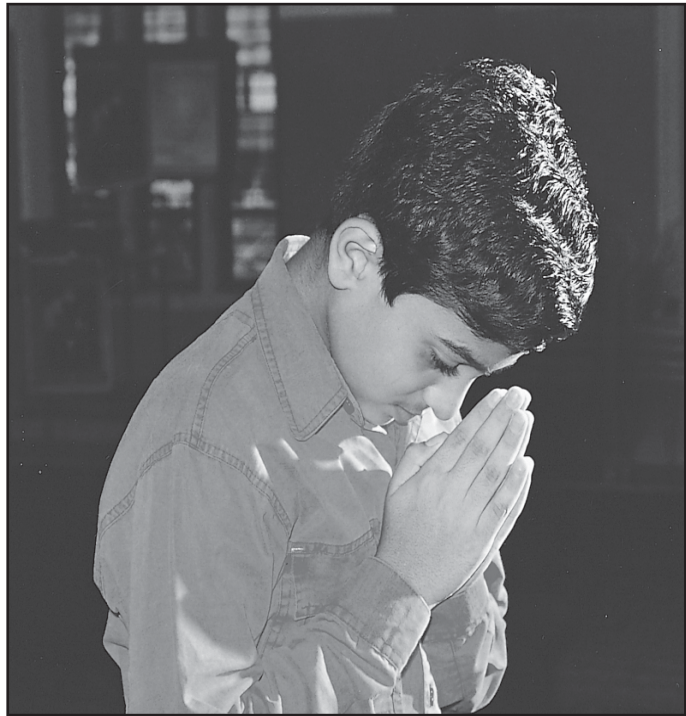
Lesson 14

THE SYMBOLIC ACTIONS OF THE LITURGY

The Malankara liturgy took its origin from the Antiochean liturgy. Compared to the other liturgies it has many symbols.

Symbol

The symbols are the signs we use to understand certain realities. For example, from the kiss that a mother gives to her child, we understand the mother's love. Here, the kiss is a symbol. Similarly, in our daily life, we use many symbols. Let us try to understand some of the symbols we generally use in our liturgy.



1. The Practice of Praying Facing the East

It is our tradition to face the East and pray. The early Church considered Jesus Christ as the Sun of Justice. Therefore the early Church gave special importance to the East, the direction of the rising of the sun. Besides, the Church received the instruction and hope from the apostles that our Lord will come again from the East. On account of this, we look forward to the second coming of our Lord. That is why we pray facing the East (Matthew 24:27, 30). It is for this reason that the Malankara churches are constructed in the East-West direction, that the Holy Mass is offered facing the East, and that we bury our dead, their head facing the East.

2. Making the Sign of the Cross

In our liturgical performances, we make the sign of the Cross. That is, we make the sign of the Cross when we praise the Trinity, when we utter the word '*Sleeba*' (Cross), when we kiss the Cross and when we receive a blessing.

'Cross' is a symbol. Through the Cross we commemorate the salvific events of our Lord. God saved mankind through his death on the Cross. Therefore we honour, revere and respect the Cross.

We recall to mind through making the sign of the Cross, the truth that the Son of God descended from heaven to the earth and through his death and resurrection made us, who were in sin, the children of God.

When we make the sign of the Cross, we remember the sufferings of our Lord and we identify ourselves with them.

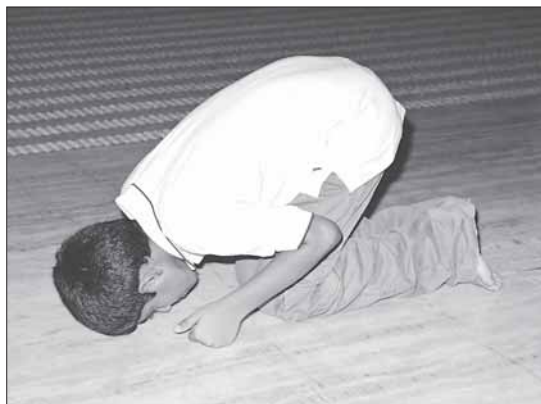
The Cross exists forever as a sign of the relationship of God with man and that of men among themselves. We see the true model of abandonment and love in the Cross. We see through the Cross Jesus Christ, who died and resurrected.

3. To Pray Standing

We keep standing while we participate in the Holy Mass and in the Prayers of the Hours. This is indeed symbolic. God is our Father and we are his children. To pray standing expresses the freedom due to children and at the same time our devotion to the Father. Besides, it is signified through this that we are the children of the Resurrection. Since God is the King of kings, we do not sit before God during the time of our official prayers. As a sign of honour, we bow our heads and prostrate.

4. Prostration

We bow down with our foreheads touching the ground, meditating on our



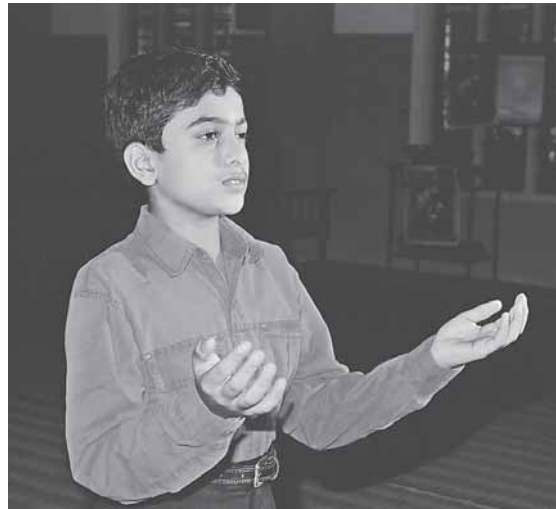
Lord's prostrating thrice on the garden of Gathsemane and in complete submission to him. This signifies the complete submission of the creature to the Creator.

5. Bowing the Head

We bow our heads in humility in order to receive the blessing of God. To bow the head is a sign of humility and submission. We pray standing with our heads bowed often during the celebration of the Holy *Qurbono*.

6. To Pray Standing with Hands Raised

When we say the 'Our Father', we hold our hands open and raised. Similarly, the priest often prays in the Holy *Qurbono* holding his hands open. This is the sign of offering us and the world before the holy presence of God and of receiving blessings and grace from him. To hold the hands pressing across the chest and to stand holding the hands folded are signs of reverential fear and devotion to God.



7. The Incensing

The incensing is an indispensable factor in our liturgical life. We have the incensing at the Holy *Qurbono*, official prayers, and administration of Sacraments and at the celebration of the other services. Incensing is the symbol of the rising of our prayers to heaven. Incensing is held as a sign of sanctifying and honouring persons and places.

8. The Procession

We hold different types of processions in our liturgical services. The procession we make during the Holy *Qurbono*, is held within the sanctuary only. Chiefly there are four processions during Holy *Qurbono*: (1) at the

beginning of the public service, (2) after blessing the censor, (3) before receiving the Holy Eucharist and (4) after receiving the Holy Eucharist.

All these are solemn processions held within the sanctuary only. In all these, there will be the censor, lighted candles and the ringing of hand bells, fans and the big bell, which increase the solemnity, religiosity and the attractiveness to the procession.

We conduct a procession, besides the afore-mentioned ones, outside the sanctuary, but within the church, and on the occasion of the celebration of feasts, to the shrines outside the church as well. There are different meanings for each of this. However, the processions we hold during the liturgical services remain as symbols of pilgrimage. The ecclesial life is a pilgrimage. The life of the Church is the pilgrimage of the people of God, toward the heavenly Canaan or toward the kingdom of heaven; a pilgrimage from slavery to freedom, from sin to eternal life and from darkness to life. Hence all the afore-mentioned processions represent this nature of pilgrimage.

Worship

The incensing is the symbolic action in the liturgy. We sing during the Holy Qurbano to accept our incensing just as that of Aaron and Zachariah:

(Velivu niranjoreeso...)

“Just as the incense of Aaron and priest Zachariah
And the prayers of Phinahas, which removed the death;
Accept our incense also
We entreat you, merciful Lord”.

Life Witness

We will be able to participate in the liturgy in a lively manner and with conviction by studying more deeply the symbolism contained in our liturgy. Through that, the liturgy will become for us more fruitful and blessed.

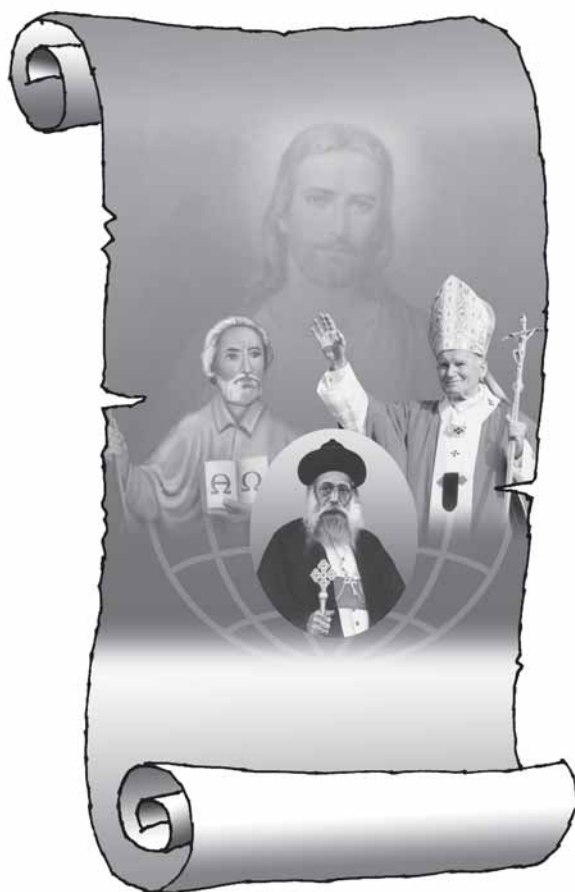
Memorise

“We ponder your steadfast love,
O God, in the midst of your temple”.
(Psalm 48:9)

Questions

1. What is a symbol?
2. Why prayers are said facing the East in the Malankara Liturgy?
3. What all do we remember when we make the sign of the Cross?
4. Why is special importance given to incensing in the Malankara Liturgy?
5. What does procession mean in the Malankara Liturgy?

PART - III

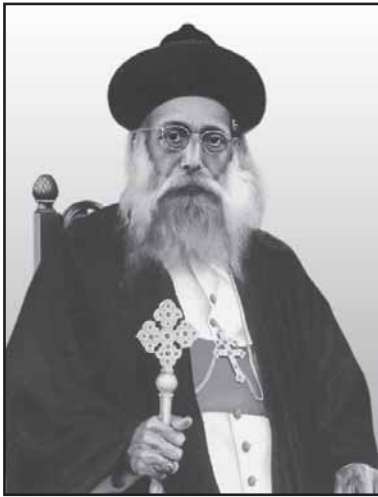


CHURCH HISTORY

THE DECEASED PRELATES OF THE SYRO- MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH

St. Thomas, the Apostle and the disciple of Christ, came to Kerala, India in the year 52 A.D. to preach the Gospel. The Christian community which he gave shape blossomed into a local Church. They were known as “The St. Thomas Christians”. They were in communion and good relationship with the Persian and the Roman Catholic Church. The Portuguese who came to Kerala in the 16th Century forced the introduction of the Latin liturgy and other practices upon the Christians of this locality. As a result of this there arose a division among the Christians of Kerala in 1653 with the Oath of *Coonancross*. A group of people got separated from and were no longer in communion with the Catholic Church and they were known as *Puthenkoottukar*. They made communion with the Jacobite Church of Antioch in 1665 and they were known as Jacobites. A group of this separated community regained communion with the Catholic Church on September 20, 1930 under the leadership of Most Rev. Archbishop Geevarghese Mar Ivanios. The event of regaining the communion is now called the ‘Reunion Movement’. The community which regained communion with the Catholic Church is known as the Syro-Malankara Catholics.

We got many prelates to lead the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, to teach and sanctify her from the year 1930. They were learned, holy and ideal pastors. We remember in this lesson, the twelve deceased prelates of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. The topic under discussion in this lesson is the following prelates: Mar Ivanios the founder of the ‘Reunion Movement’, Mar Theophilos the co-founder, Mar Dioscoros, Mar Severios, Mar Athanasios, Mar Yoohanon, Mar Ephraem, Mar Gregorios, Mar Philoxinos, Cyril Mar Baselios the first Catholicos, Mar Divannasios and Mar Timotheos.



1. Geevarghese Mar Ivanios (1882 – 1953)

In different periods, Archbishop Mar Ivanios was known under different names: Panickar, the Deacon, M.A. Father, Principal of the M.D.Seminary, Professor of the college at Serampur, Founder of the Bethany Ashram, Abo Geevarghese, The Metropolitan of Bethany, The Architect of the Reunion Movement, Mar Ivanios, the Metropolitan and the Newman of India. All these names signify his personality and the different movements to which he gave leadership.

Archbishop Mar Ivanios was born on September 21, 1882 in the Parampil Panickerveettil at Mavelikara. He scored a Master's Degree from Madras Christian College and Vattasseril Mar Divannasios, the then Malankara Metropolitan ordained him priest on 15 September 1908 in the Seminary at Parumala. He established the Bethany Ashram on 15 August 1919 and on 8 September 1925, the Bethany Convent. He was consecrated Bishop on 1 May 1925 at Niranam after the name, Mar Ivanios. He became the Metropolitan of Bethany on 13 February 1929.

Mar Ivanios was born and brought up in the Jacobite Church, separated from the Catholic Church. The disputes and disturbances of his Church prompted him to get reunited with the Catholic Church. He started the process for reunion in accordance with the instructions of the Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in 1926. When everything had been arranged for the reunion, the other Bishops receded from it. Mar Ivanios, finally discovered the true Church, and reunited with the Catholic Church on 20 September 1930, along with four other members.

He became the Metropolitan Archbishop of the Archieparchy (Archdiocese) of Trivandrum on 12 March 1933. During his Apostolic Ministry, he established many Churches, schools and the Mar Ivanios College. Thus, His Grace engaged

himself in various circles of the society. On 15 July 1953 Mar Ivanios passed away and he was entombed at St. Mary's Cathedral, Pattom, Trivandrum. Because he has given leadership and accomplished a wonderful victory which became the greatest movement for Reunion in the 20th century, and the sanctity of his life, the process has begun for His Grace to be raised to the status of the Saint. He was elevated as "Servant of God" on 14 July 2007.

2. Jacob Mar Theophilos (1892 – 1956)



Jacob Mar Theophilos was born on February 29, 1892 at Olassa near Kottayam in the Kalappurackal family. He was a teacher and became a member of the Bethany Ashram in 1920 and was ordained priest in 1924. In 1929, he started working as the Bishop of Bethany along with Mar Ivanios, the Metropolitan. Together with Mar Ivanios, he got reunited with the Catholic Church on 20th September 1930. He undertook the responsibility of the Eparchy (Diocese) of Tiruvalla in 1932.

During his time as Bishop there, many Churches and schools were established. He passed away on June 27, 1956 and he was entombed at St. John's Cathedral, Tiruvalla.



3. Thomas Mar Dioscoros (1884 – 1943)

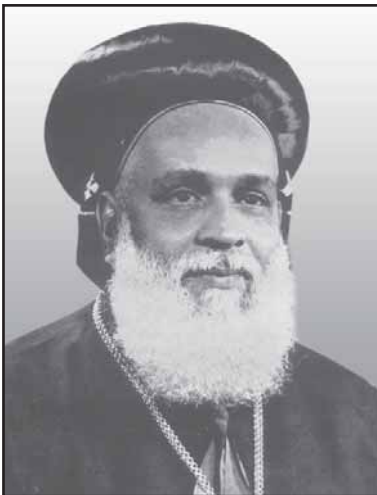
Metropolitan Mar Dioscoros was a prelate belonging to the Patriarchate Party of the Canaanite community, who was reunited to the Catholic Church. Thomas was born on 4th January 1884 at Chingavanam, near Kottayam. He was ordained priest at the age of 28, and later Bishop after the name, Mar Dioscoros. The desire for

reunion with the Catholic Church gradually grew in the mind of the Bishop. His Excellency was reunited with the Catholic Church on November 22, 1939. He passed away on February 12, 1943 and was entombed at St. Mary's Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Thirumoolapuram.

4. Joseph Mar Severios (1894-1955)



Joseph Mar Severios was born at Anikkad, near Mallappally on April 7, 1894. He worked as a teacher and was ordained priest in 1929. He was ordained as Metropolitan of the Diocese of Niranam after the name Severios in 1933. He was vigorously protesting against the Reunion Movement. But like St. Paul, God brought him to the true faith and ever since worked as an ardent apostle of reunion. His Grace reunited with the Catholic Church making his profession of faith before Most Rev. Mar Ivanios on November 29, 1937. He was appointed Bishop of the Eparchy of Tiruvalla in 1938. His Grace passed away on January 18, 1955 and his mortal remains were preserved in the tomb at St. John's Cathedral, Tiruvalla.



5. Zacharias Mar Athanasios (1908-1977)

Zacharias Mar Athanasios was born at Thirumoolapuram, near Tiruvalla in 1908. After his basic education, he reunited with the Catholic Church at the age of 30. After priestly formation he was ordained priest at the age of 38. He became the third Bishop of Tiruvalla in 1955. He passed away on 28 September 1977 and was buried at St. John's Cathedral, Tiruvalla.



6. Isaac Mar Yoochanon (1930-1987)

Isaac Mar Yoochanon was the fourth Bishop of Tiruvalla. Isaac was born in 1930 at Veliyanad, in the district of Ernakulam. After completing his education in Rome, he became a priest and in 1978 he became the Bishop of the Eparchy of Tiruvalla. His Excellency passed away on 28 April 1987. He was buried at St. John's Cathedral, Tiruvalla.



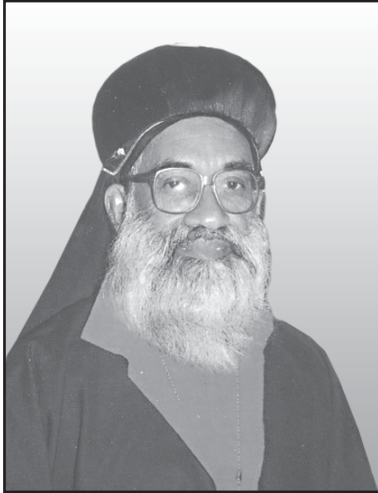
7. Benedict Mar Gregorios (1916-1994)

Benedict Mar Gregorios was the second Metropolitan Archbishop of the Archieparchy of Trivandrum. He was born at Kadamankulam-Kallooppara, near Tiruvalla in 1916. After completing his Higher Secondary education, he became a member of the Catholic Church and joined the Bethany Ashram and was ordained priest in 1944. He was the principal of Mar Ivanios College and he became the Auxiliary Bishop in 1953 and in 1955 he was appointed as the

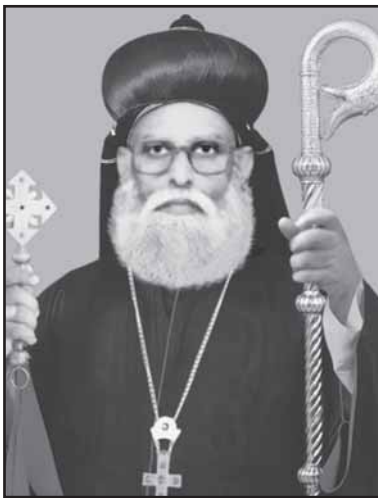
Archbishop. He led the Syro-Malankara Church for 41 years and passed away on 10 October 1994. His mortal remains were interred at St. Mary's Cathedral, Pattom, Trivandrum.

8. Lawrence Mar Ephraem (1928 – 1997)

Lawrence Mar Ephraem was the Auxiliary Bishop of the Archieparchy of Trivandrum and the first Metropolitan of the Eparchy of Marthandom. He was

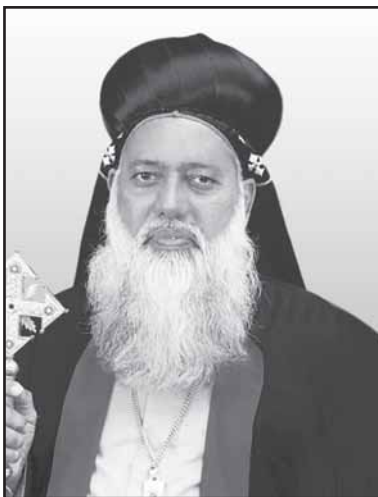


born in 1928 in the Neyyattinkara District. He was ordained priest in 1953. He had his postgraduate education in Rome. He was ordained as Auxiliary Bishop of Trivandrum in 1980. When the Eparchy of Marthandom was erected in 1996, he was appointed as its first Bishop. He passed away on 8 April 1997 and his mortal remains were buried inside the Christuraja Cathedral, Marthandom.



9. Paulos Mar Philoxinos (1928-1998)

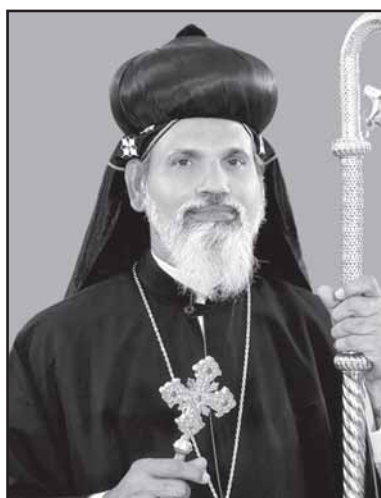
While being the Metropolitan of the Independent Syrian Church of Thozhiyoor, Paulos Mar Philoxinos reunited with the Catholic Church in 1977, after searching for the truth for a long time. Paulos was born in 1928. After his graduation, he became a priest in 1961 and was appointed Bishop in 1967. He passed away on 3 November 1998 and was buried at St. John's Cathedral, Tiruvalla.



10. Moran Mor Cyril Baselios Catholicos (1935-2007)

Moran Mor Cyril Baselios is the first Major Archbishop - Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. He was born on 16 August 1935 at Ullannur near Pandalam. He joined the Bethany Ashram in 1951 and was ordained priest on 4 October 1960. He did his higher studies in Rome and America. He was declared first Bishop of

Bathery on 18 November 1978. He was consecrated Bishop on 28 December 1978 at Tirumoolapuram by Benedict Mar Gregorios. He was appointed Archbishop of Trivandrum and the head of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church on 14 December 1995. During his Episcopal ministry the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church was elevated as a Major Archiepiscopal Church with Synodal system. He was appointed Major Archbishop Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church on 10 February 2005 and he was known as Moran Mor Cyril Baselios Catholicos. He passed away on 18 January 2007 and was buried at St. Mary's Cathedral Pattom, Trivandrum.

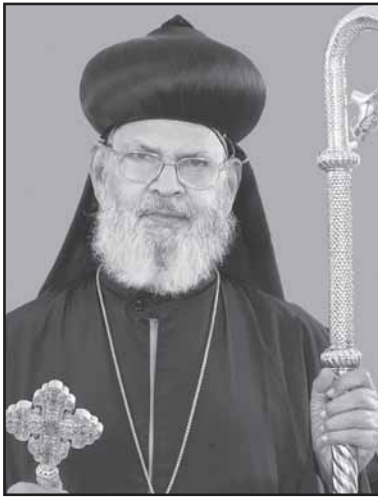


11. Geevarghese Mar Divannasios (1978-2018)

Geevarghese Mar Divannasios is the first Bishop of the Eparchy of Puttur. He was born on 1st November 1950 at Kunnanthanam near Tiruvalla. He received Priestly Ordination on 20 April 1978 and he was appointed the second Bishop of the Eparchy of Bathery on 5 February 1997. The Eparchy of Bathery was bifurcated on 15 April 2010 and the Eparchy of Puttur was established and he was appointed the first bishop of Puttur. Due to his ill health, he resigned his Episcopal Ministry in the Eparchy of Puttur on 24 January 2017. He passed away on 16 January 2018 and he was buried at St. John's Cathedral, Tiruvalla.

12. Geevarghese Mar Timotheos (1928-2019)

Geevarghese Mar Timotheos was the fifth bishop of Tiruvalla and he was born on 2 February 1928 at Amayannoor near Kottayam. He was ordained priest on 4 August 1953. He was the rector of the Minor Seminary at Tiruvalla more than 25 years and he was the Vicar General of the Eparchy of Tiruvalla. He became



the Bishop of Tiruvalla on 6 August 1988. In 2003 he retired from his Episcopal Ministry and he passed away on 4 June 2019. He was buried at St. John's Cathedral, Tiruvalla.

According to our tradition Bishops are known as Metropolitans and they are the successors of the Apostles of our Lord. Hence, the faithful consider their closeness and heavenly intercession, a blessing. With regard to the Church, the dates of their demise are blessed days of commemoration. We will be blessed by remembering them.

Worship

We sing during Holy Qurbano:

(Nam Daivasuthanmaravan...)

“So that we be God’s children
Those who taught us during life
We shall recall to our minds.
In your heavenly home O Lord
Give them eternal bliss with
Your holy and blessed ones”.

Through this hymn, the Church commemorates the Fathers, who taught the true faith.

(Chartum neethiye nin...)

“Your priests shall be crowned with justice
And your Holy Ones, with glory Hall..
eu Hall...

Do not turn away your anointed face
Concerning David, your servant;
If your children were to observe
Hall....eu Hall...

All my precepts my witness, I
command: Barekmor.

Subho... Menolam...

(Suchiyodu sudhya ..)

The feet that trod the sanctuary
With deserving purity

Let them step into Paradise

And live with the heavenly souls
Staumenkalos...

(Nadha nalkeeduka punnyam..)

“O Lord, grant your divine grace,
Halleluiah...

To the deceased priests and deacons,
who did serve you faithfully,

In churches and monasteries during their lifetime,
They celebrated your body and blood in their hands
So that debts are remitted, in the sanctuary;

Your body- will blot out punishments

And your pre-cious blood, all their sins
They shall stand at your right side and sing praise to you. Barekmor

Subho..

To Simon, the head of the apostles, the Lord

Said these words which pertain the Priesthood of Jesus,

“I do entrust you as ste-ward of my household

And I give the keys of heaven, as well as the earth,

If you bind, I shall also bind

If you loose, I shall also loose.

If you entreat for sinners, I shall-answer you. Moriyo...

(Parichil mudanjoru nal mudikal..)

The beautiful crowns, woven well

Are preserved on the thronos;

They shall be crowned on those priests

Who serve in an unblemished way.

Or

(Acharyesa Misiha....)

High Priest, Messiah, to the priests, who administered Sacraments’

Grant unto them, your grace, O Lord, glory to you".

When this ‘Kukilion’ is sung, the Church commemorates the deceased prelates and priests.

Life Witness

We receive the apostolic faith through our venerable Prelates. Let us try to learn this true faith more and remain in it.

Memorise

“Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you, consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith”.

(Hebrew 13:7)

Questions

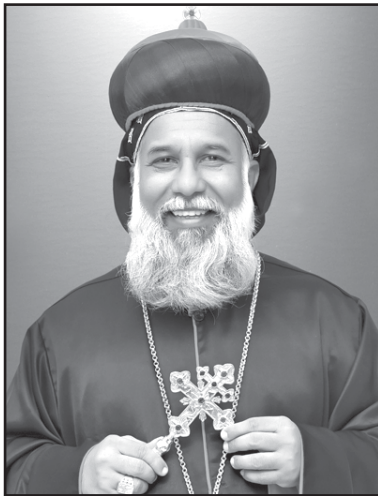
1. How did Archbishop Mar Ivanios get reunited with the Catholic Church?
2. Write short notes on the deceased Prelates of the Malankara Catholic Church.

Eparchies and Metropolitans of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church

The Syro-Malankara Catholics are those who were reunited to the Catholic Church on 20 September 1930, under the leadership of Archbishop Mar Ivanios. The history of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church begins with the history of the St. Thomas Christians in India founded by St. Thomas, the Apostle of Jesus, in 52 AD. The Syro- Malankara Catholic Hierachy was established on June 11, 1932 through the Apostolic Decree '*Christo Pastorum Principi*' for the Syro- Malankara Catholics of the Eparchies of Trivandrum and Tiruvalla.

Today there are 12 Eparchies and 14 Metropolitans for the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos is the Father and Head of this Church and the Major Archbishop of the Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum. Thomas Mar Koorilos the Metropolitan Archbishop of Tiruvalla, Joseph Mar Thomas the Metropolitan of Bathery, Vincent Mar Paulos the Metropolitan of Marthandom, Yoohanon Mar Theodosius the Metropolitan of Muvattupuzha, Josua Mar Ignathios the Metropolitan of Mavelikkara, Samuel Mar Irenios the Metropolitan of Pathanamthitta, Geevarghese Mar Makarios the Metropolitan of Puttur, Jacob Mar Barnabas the Metropolitan of Gurgaon-Delhi, Philipos Mar Stephanos the Metropolitan of USA and Canada, Thomas Mar Eusebius the Metropolitan of Parassala, Thomas Mar Anthonios the Metropolitan of Khadki-Pune are the Metropolitans of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom the former Metropolitan of the Eparchy of Pathanamthitta and Abraham Mar Julios the former Metropolitan of Muvattupuzha were retired from their Apostolic Ministry in 2019 and now they are Bishops Emeritus. The Syro-Malankara Catholic Church has about 500,000 faithful, about 1200 parishes and mission stations, about 800 Eparchial priests and 200 religious priest, and about 2000 religious nuns. Many educational Institutions, Hospitals, Churches, and Social Welfare Institutions are functioning in the Church.

According to the Western Canon law the term ‘diocese’ is known as *Roopatha* in Malayalam language and according to the Eastern Canon law the term ‘Eparchy’ is known as *Bhadrasanam* in Malayalam. Both diocese and Eparchy are the same. A territorial area which is under the governance of a Bishop is understood as Diocese or Eparchy. According to the tradition of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church the term ‘Eparchy’ is commonly used and Bishops are called Metropolitans.



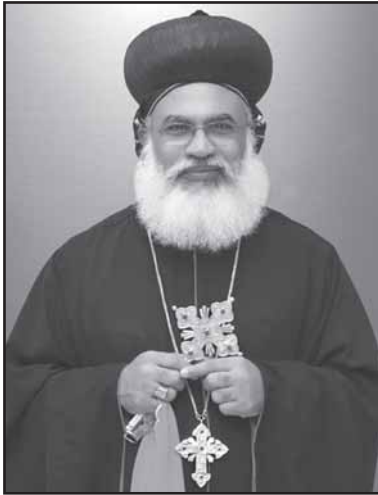
Moran Mor Baselios
Cardinal Cleemis
Major Archbishop-Catholicos

1. Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum

The Major Archieparchy which was established on 12 March 1933 gave birth to four Eparchies and it exists as the Central Eparchy of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. It has about 180,000 faithful, 143 priests and 216 parishes. Metropolitan Archbishop Mar Ivanios (1930-1953), Archbishop Mar Gregorios (1953-1994) and Major Archbishop Cyril Mar Baselios Catholicos (1995-2007) have led the Major Archieparchy through the path of its growth. Their spiritual leadership and foresight have helped a lot for the growth of our Church.

Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos, the Father and the Head of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, is the Major Archbishop of the Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum. He was born on June 15, 1959 at Mukkoor near Tiruvalla. He received the priestly ordination on 11 June 1986 for the Eparchy of Bathery. He was anointed Auxiliary Bishop of Trivandrum and Apostolic Visitor of Europe and North America on August 15, 2001. He became the Metropolitan of the Eparchy of Tiruvalla on 2 October 2003 after the retirement of Mar Timotheos. The Eparchy of Tiruvalla was elevated to Archieparchy on 10 June 2006 and he became the Metropolitan Archbishop of the Archieparchy of Tiruvalla. He was elected by the Holy Synod as the second Catholicos of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church on 10 February 2007 and he became the successor of Moran Mor Cyril Baselios Catholicos. He was enthroned as the

second Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Syro -Malankara Catholic Church and Major Archbishop of Trivandrum on 5 March 2007 at St. Mary's Cathedral, Pattom. He was appointed as Cardinal on 24 October 2012 by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI and he became the Cardinal of the Universal Church on 24 November 2012.



Archbishop
Most Rev. Thomas Mar
Koorilos

2. Archieparchy of Tiruvalla

The Archieparchy of Tiruvalla was officially established on 6 November 1933. This Eparchy which lies spread out in the Districts of Pathanamthitta, Alleppey, Kottayam and Idukki. It has 138 priests, 135 parishes and 40,000 faithful. The eparchy of Tiruvalla was elevated to Archieparchy on 10 June 2006 and Isaac Mar Cleemis was appointed as the first Metropolitan Archbishop of Tiruvalla. The Archieparchy of Tiruvalla gave birth to three Eparchies: Bathery, Muvattupuzha and Puttur. Mar Theophilos (1933-1950), Mar Severios (1950-1955), Mar Athanasios (1955-1977), Mar Yoohanon (1978-1987), Mar Timotheos (1988-2003) and Mar Cleemis (2003-2007) gave leadership to this Archieparchy. Archbishop Thomas Mar Koorilos leads the Archieparchy of Tiruvalla at present.

Thomas Mar Koorilos was born at Niranam on 19 October 1958 and he was ordained priest on 30 December 1985. He was anointed Auxiliary Bishop of the Eparchy of Tiruvalla on 17 July 1997. When the Eparchy of Muvattupuzha was established in 2003, he was appointed the first Metropolitan. He took charge as the Metropolitan Archbishop of the Archieparchy of Tiruvalla on 1 May 2007 onwards. At present he is the secretary of the Holy Episcopal Synod of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church.

3. Eparchy of Bathery

The Eparchy of Tiruvalla was bifurcated on 28 October 1978 and the Eparchy of Bathery was established as the third Eparchy of the Syro-Malankara Catholic

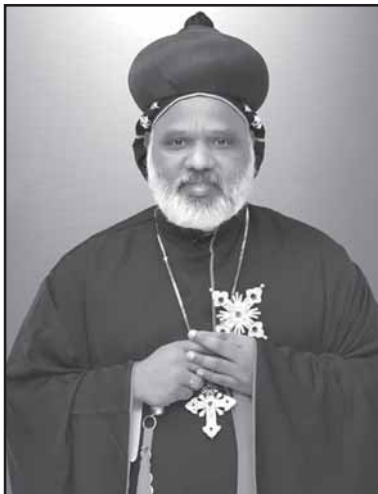


Most Rev. Joseph Mar
Thomas

Church. This Eparchy has 107 parishes, 92 priests and 30,000 faithful. Cyril Mar Baselios was the first Metropolitan of the Eparchy of Bathery. After his appointment as Metropolitan Archbishop of Trivandrum, Geevarghese Mar Divannasios undertook the Apostolic Ministry of the Eparchy of Bathery on 5 February 1996. The Eparchy of Bathery was bifurcated and the Eparchy of Puttur was established on 15 April 2010 and Geevarghese Mar Divannasios was appointed as the first Metropolitan of the Eparchy of Puttur. Joseph Mar Thomas was appointed as the third Metropolitan of the Eparchy of Bathery on 13 April 2010 onwards and he leads the Eparchy at present.

He was born on 20 April 1952 at Vadasserikkara near Pathanamthitta. He received the order of Priesthood on 23 December 1978 from Archbishop Mar Gregorios. He was appointed as the Auxiliary Bishop of Trivandrum and the Apostolic Visitor to North America and Europe on 5 January 2005.

4. Eparchy of Marthandom



Most Rev. Vincent Mar
Paulos

For the faithful of the district of Kanyakumari of the Syro- Malankara Catholic Church, the Metropolitan Eparchy of Trivandrum was bifurcated and the Eparchy of Marthandom came into existence on 16 December 1996. In this Eparchy of the Tamil Region, there are 84 Churches and 60 priests and about 70,000 faithful. Lawrence Mar Ephraem, who was for a long period Auxiliary of the Metropolitan Archieparchy of Trivandrum, was appointed as the first Metropolitan of Marthandom on 23 January 1997 and he passed away on 8 April 1997. After that, Yoochanon Mar Chrysostom was appointed

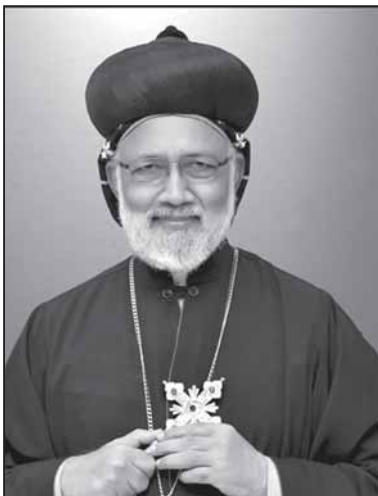
Bishop of the Eparchy of Marthandom. When the Eparchy of Pathanamthitta

was established on 20 March 2010, Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom was appointed as the first Metropolitan. Vincent Mar Paulos was appointed as the third Metropolitan of the Eparchy of Marthandom on 13 March 2010.

He was born at Kumarankudy in the district of Kanyakumari, Tamilnadu on 20 February 1964. He received the order of Priesthood on 2 January 1991 from Archbishop Mar Gregorios at his home parish Anakkara. He was consecrated as the third Metropolitan of the Eparchy of Marthandom on 13 March 2010 by Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos. He is the first native Metropolitan of the Eparchy of Marthandom.



Most Rev. Yoohanon Mar
Theodosius



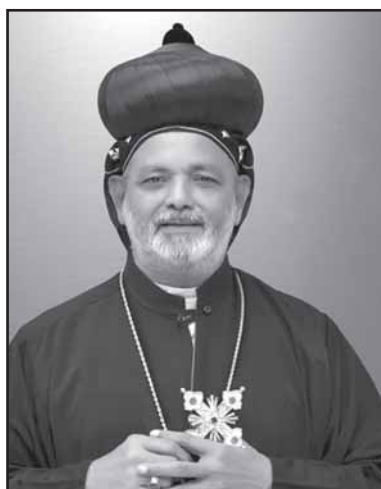
Most Rev. Abraham Mar
Julios

5. Eparchy of Muvattupuzha

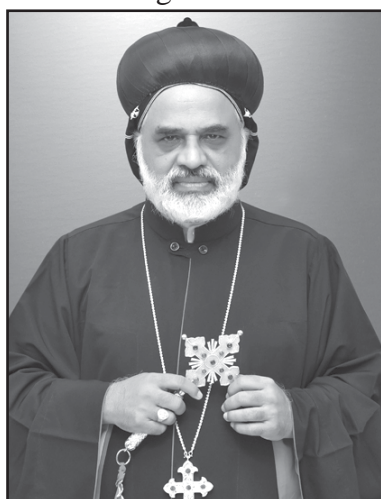
The Eparchy of Tiruvalla was bifurcated on 6 February 2003 and the Eparchy of Muvattupuzha was established as the fifth Eparchy of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. In this Eparchy there are 70 Parishes, 58 priests and 15,000 faithful. Thomas Mar Koorilos, the Auxiliary Bishop of Tiruvalla, was the first Metropolitan of this Eparchy. When he was appointed as the Archbishop of Tiruvalla, Abraham Mar Julios was appointed as the second Metropolitan of this Eparchy on 18 January 2008. He retired from his Apostolic Ministry on 12 June 2019.

Yoohanon Mar Theodosius became the third Metropolitan of the Eparchy of Muvattupuzha on 12 June 2019. He was born at Puthusserybhagam near Adoor on 8 April 1959. He was ordained priest on 22 December 1985 by Archbishop Mar Gregorios. He was consecrated as Bishop on 21 September 2017 at Adoor by Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos and he took charge as the Curia Bishop and the Apostolic Visitor to Europe and Oceania. At Present he leads the Epharchy of Muvattupuzha.

Abraham Mar Julios retired from his Apostolic Ministry on 12 June 2019. He was born at Kadamankulam, Kalloppaara near Tiruvalla on 25 May 1945. He received his Priestly Ordination on 10 October 1970 at Kadamankulam from Mar Athanasios, the Metropolitan of Tiruvalla. He was consecrated as Bishop on 9 February 2008 at Muvattupuzha by Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos. He was the second Metropolitan of the Eparchy of Muvattupuzha (2008- 2019) and at present he is Bishop Emeritus, leading a retired life.



Most Rev. Joshua Mar Ignathios



Most Rev. Samuel Mar Irenios

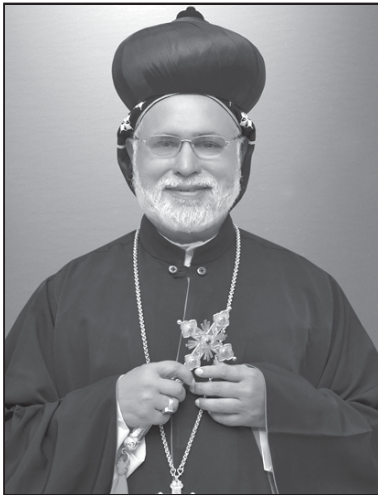
6. Eparchy of Mavelikara

The Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum which extends from Chengannur to Kaliyikavila, the border of Tamilnadu in the south, was bifurcated and the Eparchy of Mavelikara was established on 5 March 2006. This is the sixth Eparchy of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. It has 96 parishes, 74 priests and 26000 faithful. Joshua Mar Ignathios, the auxiliary Bishop of Trivandrum, was appointed as the first Metropolitan of the Eparchy of Mavelikara on 5 March 2006.

He was born at Kizhaketheruve near Kottarakkara on 24 May 1950. He received the priestly ordination on 2 April 1978 from Archbishop Mar Gregorios. He was consecrated as the auxiliary Bishop of Trivandrum on 29 June 1998 by Cyril Mar Baselios Catholicos. He became the first Metropolitan of the new Eparchy of Mavelikara on 5 March 2006.

7. Eparchy of Pathanamthitta

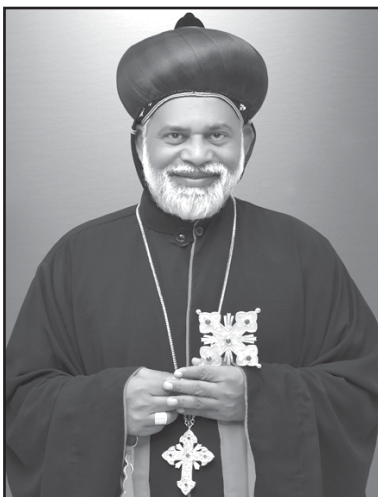
The Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum was bifurcated and the new Eparchy of Pathanamthitta was established on 20 March 2010 and this is the seventh Eparchy. At present there are 100 parishes, 113 priests, 40,000 faithful in this Eparchy. Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom was the first Metropolitan of this Eparchy and he retired on 8 June 2019.



Most Rev. Yoohanon Mar
Chrysostom

Samuel Mar Irenios the auxiliary Bishop of Trivandrum was appointed as the second Metropolitan of this Eparchy on 8 June 2019 and he leads the Eparchy at present. He was born at Kadammanitta near Pathanamthitta on 13 May 1952. He received priestly ordination on 22 December 1978 from Archbishop Mar Gregorios. He was consecrated as the Auxiliary Bishop of Trivandrum by Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos on 13 March 2013.

Yoohanon Mar Chrysostom, the first Metropolitan of Pathanamthitta, was born at Kadammanitta near Pathanamthitta on 19 May 1944. He was ordained priest on 5 May 1973 by Archbishop Mar Gregorios. He was consecrated as the Metropolitan on 29 June 1998 by Cyril Mar Baselios Catholicos and he became the second Metropolitan of the Eparchy of Marthandom. When the Eparchy of Pathanamthitta was established, he was appointed as the first Metropolitan on 20 March 2010. After the 9 years of his Apostolic Ministry he retired on 8 June 2019 and at present he is Bishop Emeritus, leading a retired life.



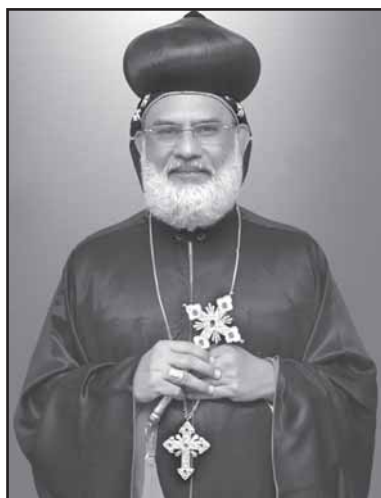
Most Rev. Geevarghese Mar
Makarios

8. Eparchy of Puttur

The Eparchy of Bathery was bifurcated and the new Eparchy of Puttur was established on 15 April 2010. In this Eparchy, which lies spread out Karnataka and Tamilnadu, there are 25 parishes, 27 priests, and 3200 faithful. Geevarghese Mar Divannasios was appointed as the first Metropolitan of this new Eparchy of Puttur on 15 April 2010. He retired from his Episcopal ministry due to ill health on 24 January 2017 and he passed away on 16 January 2018.

After the death of Mar Divannasios, Geevarghese Mar Makarios was appointed as the

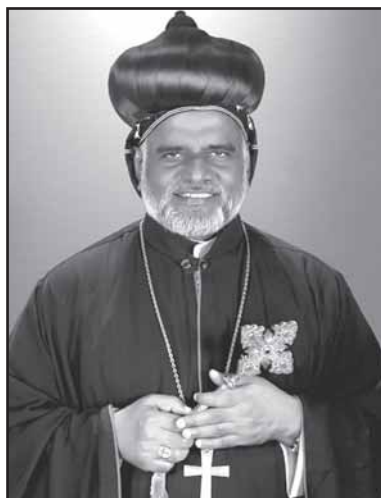
second Metropolitan of the Eparchy of Puttur on 30 September 2017 and he leads the Eparchy at present. He was born at Noojibalthila, South Canara in the state of Karnataka on 16 July 1958. He received the priestly Ordination on 1 May 1986 from Cyril Mar Baselios. He was consecrated as Bishop on 21 September 2017 at Adoor by Moran Mor Baselios Cardinal Cleemis Catholicos.



Most Rev. Jacob Mar
Barnabas

9. Eparchy of Gurgaon (Delhi)

Eparchy of Gurgaon which was the first Eparchy outside the Canonical territory of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church in India was established on 26 March 2015. This is the ninth Eparchy of our Church. This Eparchy includes 22 states in North India and it has 24 parishes, 67 mission stations, 19 priests and 5000 faithful. Jacob Mar Barnabas was appointed as the first Metropolitan of this Eparchy on 1 May 2015. He was born at Neerettukavu near Ranni on 3 December 1960. He joined as a member of Bethany Ashram and he received priestly ordination on 2 October 1986. He was consecrated Bishop on 10 March 2007 and was appointed as the Apostolic Visitor of the Syro-Malankara Catholics outside the canonical territory in India on 22 March 2007.



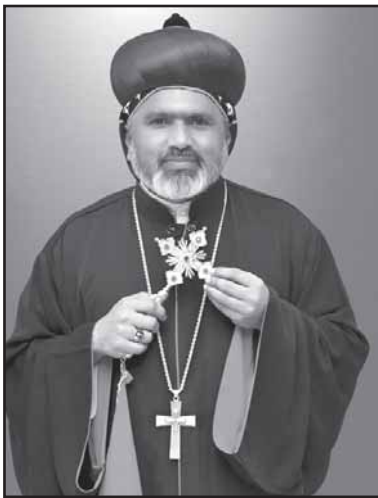
Most Rev. Philipos Mar
Stephanos

10. Eparchy of USA and Canada

An Apostolic Exarchate was established for the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church in United States of America on 14 July 2010. Thomas Mar Eusebius was appointed as the first Bishop of the new Exarchate and the Apostolic Visitor to Canada and Europe and he assumed the office as the first Bishop of the Exarchate on 3 October 2010. The Eparchy of USA and Canada was established on 4 January 2016 and this is the tenth Eparchy of our Church. The new Eparchy was officially inaugurated and Thomas Mar Eusebius was installed as the first

Bishop of the Eparchy on 23 January 2016. He was later appointed as the Metropolitan of the new Eparchy of Parassala on 5 August 2017.

Philipos Mar Stephanos was appointed as the second Metropolitan of the Eparchy of USA and Canada on 28 October 2017 and he is leading the Eparchy at present. He was born at Karimpanamkuzhy near Ranni in the district of Pathanamthitta on 9 May 1952. He received the priestly ordination on 27 April 1979 and he was consecrated as Auxiliary Bishop of the Archieparchy of Tiruvalla on 13 March 2010. He did his Apostolic Ministry at Kattappana for seven years.



Most Rev. Thomas Mar
Eusebius

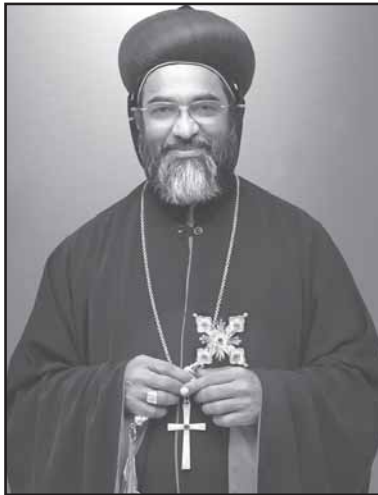
11. Eparchy of Parassala

The Major Archieparchy was bifurcated and the Eparchy of Parassala was established on 5 August 2017 and it is the eleventh Eparchy of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. It has 103 parishes, 40 priests and 33000 faithful. Thomas Mar Eusebius was appointed as the first Metropolitan of this new Eparchy on 23 September 2017. He was born at Mylappra near Pathanamthitta on 6 June 1961. He received the priestly ordination on 29 December 1986 and he was consecrated Bishop on 21 September 2010 at Pattom, Trivandrum. He exercised his Apostolic Ministry as Apostolic Visitator to America,

Europe and Canada and first Bishop of the Eparchy of USA and Canada till 5 August 2017.

12. Eparchy of Khadki (Pune)

The Exarchate of Khadki (Pune) was established for the faithful of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church outside the canonical territory in South India on 26 March 2015. Thomas Mar Anthonios was appointed as the first Bishop of the new Exarchate on 30 May 2015. This Khadki Exarchate was elevated as an Eparchy on 23 November 2019 and Thomas Mar Anthonios took charge as the first Metropolitan of this new Eparchy on 14 January 2019. This Eparchy has 35 parishes and mission stations, 25 priests and 10,000 faithful.



Most Rev. Thomas Mar
Anthonios

Thomas Mar Anthonios was born at Adoor in Pathanamthitta District on 25 November 1955. He joined the Bethany Ashram and he received priestly ordination on 27 December 1980 from Cyril Mar Baselios and he was consecrated as the first Curia Bishop on 13 March 2010.

Bishops or Metropolitan are the successors of the twelve Apostles of Jesus Christ. The authority to teach, sanctify and lead a local ecclesial community is given to a Bishop. A Bishop therefore is the custodian of the true faith. A faithful can live as a true believer only when he accepts, acknowledges and follows the Apostolic Authority of a Bishop.

Hence each faithful is obliged to accept and acknowledge fully the Apostolic Authority. Let us pray for all the Metropolitan in our Church every day.

Worship

(Agnimayanmar are..)

“Together with the Reverend Bishops,
Priests and Deacons
The Lord has appointed as servers on this
earth”.

Jesus Christ continues his service on
earth through the Bishops, Priests and the
Deacons.

This is remembered in this hymn, sung
at the time of Communion in the Holy
Qurbono.

Life Witness

The Most Reverend Prelates are
representatives of God and the successors
of the Apostles. We ought to honour and
respect them.

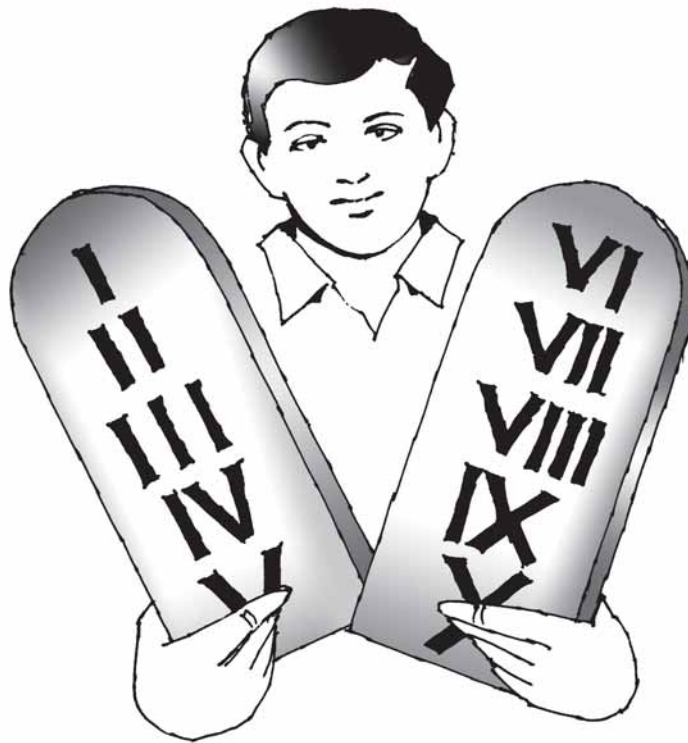
Memorise

“Obey your leaders and submit to
them”. (Hebrew 13:17)

Questions

1. Which are the Eparchies of the Malankara Catholic Church?
2. Who are the present Metropolitan of the Malankara Catholic Church?
3. Write short notes on each Eparchy.

PART - IV



CHRISTIAN LIFE

Lesson 17

SAINTS PETER AND PAUL, THE APOSTLES

St. Peter was the head of the apostles. St. Paul was the apostle of Christ, the most powerful missionary of the early Church and is known as the first Theologian of the Church. Sts. Peter and Paul were the two pillars of the foundation of the Church.

St. Peter

The previous name of Peter was Simon (Mark 1:16, Luke 5:3). The name, 'Peter' takes its origin from the Greek-Latin word 'Petra' which means 'rock'. It was Jesus, who gave this name to Simon. Peter was the son of Jonah of Galilee and the brother of Andrew, the apostle.

Bethsaida was the native place of Peter (John 1:44). Jesus called Peter when he was fishing at the shores of the Sea of Galilee (Matthew 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20, Luke 5:11) He left the net and boat and followed Jesus.

It was Peter who professed the divinity of Jesus (Matthew 16:16) and often spoke for the other disciples (Acts of the Apostles 1:15, 2:14). Wherever the names of the apostles are mentioned, the name of Peter comes first (Matthew 10:2, Mark 3:16, Luke 6:16). He was the eyewitness of all the main happenings of the public life of Jesus. Peter was present at the time of the Transfiguration of Jesus, at the cure of the daughter of Jairus, at the prayer of Gethsemane and when Jesus walked upon the waters. Jesus explains certain fundamental truths



in answer to the enquiries of Peter (Matthew 15:15, Mark 10:28, Luke 18:28). Peter, who confessed Jesus once, denied him at another time. But, through total conversion, he confessed him again. Peter was the first apostle to know about the resurrection of Jesus (Mark 16:7; Luke 24:34). After his resurrection, Jesus gave to Peter the special authority to lead the Church (John 21:15-19). Thus among the apostles, Peter had the first position. Jesus appointed Peter as the head of the Church by founding the Church on Peter, the rock and by entrusting the authority to lead the Church through the holy saying 'Feed my lambs'.

It was Peter, who led the early Church. St. Paul recognises the first place of Peter. It is Peter, who selected another one instead of Judas and spoke as the representative of the apostles. It is Peter, who preached the Gospel to the Gentiles first and convoked the Council of the apostles at Jerusalem and made the crucial decisions. Peter went to Rome in order to preach the Gospel. There he preached the Gospel while undergoing persecutions. He was crucified in Rome, head down in 67 A.D. under the rule of Emperor Nero. The mortal remains of Peter were deposited on the Vatican hills. It is here, the Basilica of St. Peter's, is built. Peter is the first Pope. His Holiness Benedict XVI is the 265th Pope. Peter bore witness to Jesus throughout his whole life.

St. Paul

St. Paul is one, who dedicated his whole life to the preaching of the Gospel and for the spread of the Church. He became a victim of the sword for the sake of the Gospel. It is from his Epistles and from the Acts of the Apostles that we chiefly get the information about the apostolic life of St. Paul and about his profound spiritual thoughts.

Historical Background

Paul was born at Tarsus, the ancient city of Cilicia in Asia Minor in 1 A.D. (Acts of the Apostles 22:3). He was born in the tribe of Benjamin, and had the citizenship of Rome. The previous name of Paul was Saul. The meaning of the Hebrew name Saul is, 'that which is asked to God'. It was after his conversion that he received the Roman name 'Paul', which means 'small'. Saul, who was



well versed in Greek language, was trained as a disciple of Gamaliel, the Jewish scholar. He learned the law correctly and belonged to the group of the Pharisees, who observed the laws scrupulously. His conversion took place at about 36 A.D. Paul, who is known as the ‘Apostle of the Gentiles’, made three missionary journeys. There are 14 Epistles in the Bible attributed to Paul.

The Last Days of Paul

Paul became a martyr in Rome during the persecution of Emperor Nero (around 67 A.D.). Paul was beheaded. His tomb is in Rome.

Paul – a Model for Christians

Paul, who esteemed his Jewish origin, worked to persecute the Christians and thus to blot out the name of Jesus from the face of the earth. On the way to Damascus, Jesus converted Saul and renamed him Paul. The words of Christ, “I am Jesus whom you are persecuting” (Acts of the Apostles 9:5) were a turning point in the life of Paul. Paul was ready thereafter to bear witness to Jesus, the crucified and resurrected, zealously. Paul deeply felt his conversion and preached the Gospel everywhere with zeal and without fear. He gave up everything in order to possess Jesus. He felt proud of the sufferings, which he endured for the sake of Jesus. St. Paul said “Let it not happen to me to find greatness in any other thing than in the Cross of Christ”, and “It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me” (Galatians 2:20).

Worship

According to the tradition of Antioch, there is great importance given to the apostles of Christ in the liturgy. 'The feast of Sts. Peter and Paul' is celebrated in the Church on 29th June. The 13-day fast is observed in the Malankara Church in honour of these Saints. This is known as 'The Fast of the Apostles'.

The feast of the conversion of St. Paul is celebrated in the Church on 25th January. We commemorate St. Peter on the first Sunday after the 'New Sunday' (Sunday after Easter). We sing the following hymn in honour of Peter, the apostle, in the holy Mass after the reading of the Gospel:

(Nadha vilicheyyunnu thunakkai varika..)
(Lok Moriyo korenan ...)

"He did cast and has caught Peter,
fisherman

And had asked him to leave his job of
catching fish,

Cast your net joyfully to catch all men
So that they may enter the world of lasting
life;

Simon did cast his net in Rome

Many, indeed, left worshipping gods;

And they obtained life before the Lord
through their faith".

We sing the hymn "Paulose sleeha' in
the Holy Qurbono, before the reading of
the Epistle of St. Paul:

"Preaching of Paul, holy apostle, I heard:

'If someone shall teach anything

Other than what I have taught you,

Though he be heaven's messenger

Accursed shall in the Church.

Diverse doctrine spread on earth.

Many are those who embrace them,

Who stands firm in God's teachings

He shall ever be called, blessed".

Life Witness

Sts. Peter and Paul built up the Church and made her big. They bore witness to the Christian life through their life of faith. We will also become lofty models of Christian life, if we, hold on to the hands of Jesus, like them and go forward through our persecutions and our oppositions.

Memorise

“I have been crucified with Christ;
and it is no longer I who live,
but Christ who lives in me”.
(Galatians 2:20)

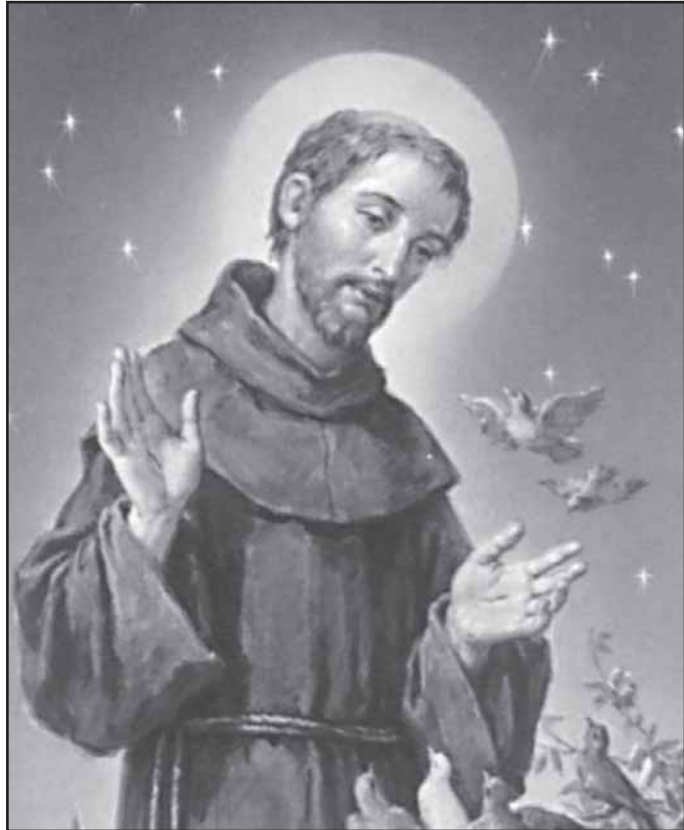
Questions

1. What are the indications the Bible gives, that St. Peter is the head of the apostles?
2. Describe the martyrdom of St. Peter.
3. From where do we chiefly get knowledge about St. Paul?
4. Describe the historical background of St. Paul.
5. How was the conversion of St. Paul?
6. What was the attitude of St. Paul towards the Christians after his conversion?
7. Describe the missionary zeal of St. Paul.

Lesson 18

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Francis of Assisi is a Saint in the Catholic Church known otherwise as 'The Second Christ'. The heavenly seeds of Spiritual Revolution, which he sowed, are producing fruits even today all over the world. The endeavours, which St. Francis made 'to sow love where there is hatred, to pour forth joy where there is sorrow', now make him honourable. Francis remains as a means for us to find Jesus. The life example of Francis will help us all to become saints.



Birth and Childhood

Francis was born on 26th September 1182 in the village of Assisi in Italy. His father was Peter Bernard and Pikka was his mother. The name 'John' was given to the child at the time of his baptism. His mother taught him to make the sign of the Cross and when he could speak she taught him to say small prayers. Devotion towards Jesus and Mary was instilled in the boy. Besides, he was taught the practice to sacrifice self and to give alms. As the child grew up, certain characteristic virtues were seen in him. He expressed solicitude and steadiness in doing anything. The special quality most clearly seen in the boy

was his compassion for the poor. Francis expressed his readiness to give anything to the needy. It is this virtue of his character that raised Francis later on to the heights of spirituality.

Vocation

In his youthful enthusiasm, Francis was ready to do any daring thing in order to earn name and prestige. So he took part in war whenever possible. Once he came to the battlefield against Germany with his armour on and carrying weapons. Francis saw a dream on the previous day of the starting of the war. In that dream, God asked Francis, “Francis, where are you heading to?” He replied, “I am going to fight”. The voice of God resounded again, “Francis, which is better, to serve the master or the servant?” Francis replied, “The Master”. Again the voice: “If so, why do you serve the servant?” Francis asked, “Lord, what shall I do?” God’s voice: “You go back”. Then Francis went back. That was the beginning of his return from war to peace. That disappearance was to undertake poverty, suffering and peace instead of ‘name and prestige’.

During that period, Francis had a vision in which he was summoned to repair a church under the verge of ruin. When he tried to do the work, he received the insight of his call at the reading of the Gospel (Matthew 10:7-20) during the celebration of the Holy Mass. The call to renounce everything for the sake of the Gospel shook Francis. “If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give the money to the poor” (Matthew 19:21), “Take nothing for your journey” (Matthew 10:10), “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their Cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). These words of the Scripture, greatly influenced Francis. Thus, Francis, who belonged to a wealthy family, left his home and all possessions and followed Jesus as a perfect pauper.

When Francis began to live like this, he got many disciples. Their life style was to preach the Gospel, to do work in the towns and countryside, and to pray for a long time during night. They had no worry about the morrow. Their only hope was in God. This life style made it possible to found the Franciscan First Order. Following that, he started in the Catholic Church the Franciscan

Second Order for women (religious women) and the Franciscan Third Order for those who lead family life.

The Noble Qualities of Francis

St. Francis was a perfect lover of mankind. Once he cleansed the ulcers of a leper. Immediately the ulcers he touched were healed. He often gave even his own clothes to others as alms. Francis, who accepted poverty, was the symbol of humility. Francis longed for peace and he was a lover of the universe.

The Last Moments

Francis used to pray that he should be made a sharer in the passion of Jesus and in the love, Jesus had for the children of men. He answered his prayer. Jesus gave Francis his five wounds, the sign of his love and sufferings, to carry them on his own body as a privilege.

Francis slept in the Lord on 3rd October 1226. Pope Gregory IX declared him a Saint on 28th July 1228. St. Francis and the members of his Religious Congregations started many good practices in the Catholic Church. To celebrate Holy Mass placing the Cross on the altar, the mode of preserving Holy Eucharist in the tabernacle, to ring the bell and say the angelus thrice a day, to make the crib and to make the Way of the Cross etc., are their contributions.

The Malankara Catholic Church and St. Francis

We pray in the Holy Mass, “Lord, remember those who have assiduously preached your Gospel and confirmed the Holy Church in true faith”. We specially remember in our mission activities this Saint, who offered his life for the Church and seek his intercession.

We have in our Church many priests and faithful, who have their names after St. Francis. In the same way, we have several churches established in the name of St. Francis. St. Francis is the patron of the Malankara Catholic Youth Movement (M.C.Y.M).

Life Witness

St. Francis, who left everything for love of God, gives us the impetus and strength to love God above all and to love others unselfishly. Let us imitate his example.

Memorise

“If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven”.

(Matthew 19:21)

Questions

1. Describe the childhood of St. Francis.
2. Explain the event of the vocation of St. Francis.
3. What were the noble qualities of St. Francis?
4. What are the contributions rendered by the Franciscan Religious Orders to the Catholic Church?
5. Explain the circumstances how St. Francis left everything and followed Jesus?

ST. THERESE OF LISSIEUX

Life History

Little Therese – Therese Martin was born at Alençon, in France on 2nd January 1873. Therese was the youngest child of Martin and Celine, a devout and exemplary couple. Little Therese was from childhood very loving, zealous and energetic. Her beloved mother passed away when she was four years old. After that, the family of Therese shifted residence to Lissieux. After the death of the mother, it was her elder sister, Pauline, who was



her mother and teacher. Pauline took great care to bring up Little Therese in divine piety, virtue and in Christian values. It was very pleasing to Therese to obey the instructions of her elder sister. Thus, Therese grew up as a good child of God.

The fact that Mary and Pauline, her elder sisters, joined the convent of the Carmelites caused pain to Little Therese. But, a desire to dedicate herself as a little flower to Jesus sprouted up in her. But the rules of the Convent did not permit the acceptance of a nine-year-old child in a convent. Although she expressed her desire to the Bishop to enter the convent at the age of 15, the Bishop remarked ‘She is too young’. She informed the Holy Father Pope Leo XIII, of her desire to dedicate herself to Jesus. Understanding her zealous

desire, the Holy Father agreed to fulfil her desire. Thus before she reached sixteen years, Therese entered the convent.

Sr. Therese

Therese was the beloved of all in the convent. She got the grace of God in abundance to observe the religious rules in obedience and to grow in the love of God and neighbour. Thus, Therese was able to grow in the practice of holy life. The sanctity of life and spirit of self-dedication of Sr. Therese, when she was only 22 years old, persuaded her superiors to appoint her as mistress for the training of the novices. Therese progressed in her new assignment with full zeal and rooted deeply in prayer and in divine confidence. The life of Little Therese was a perfect model for the novices.

Sr. Therese discovered, a short cut for the development in sanctity in her life, and that was to do the little things in her life in a perfect manner for the love of God. Her sole aim in life was to offer her life entirely to Jesus and to shine as a little flower in the garden of Jesus.

The Short cut of the Sanctity of life

Little Therese lived in this world only for 24 years. By that time she built up a life of holiness. Little Therese bade good bye and went to the presence of God on 30th September 1897. It was the Holy Father Pope Pius XI, who canonised Therese in the year 1925. St. Therese is ever the model and heavenly intercessor for those who seek this short cut of holiness.

Therese, the Missionary

It was the ardent desire of Little Therese to do missionary work for the Church of Christ. The rule of the Carmelite Convent has given importance to prayer to enhance the strength of all missionaries. Hence, Little Therese gave special importance to pray zealously for the missionaries and to offer her small sacrifices before the divine presence for the success of the missionary effort. It is this missionary zeal that persuaded the Church to make her, who never went out for any missionary work, the patroness of the missionaries.

The Malankara Catholic Church and Saint Therese

St. Therese is one of the protectors of our Church. She is always praying for us in heaven for our spiritual advancement. Mar Ivanios entreated the intercession of St. Therese to impart the strength of prayer to the Reunion Movement. Let us be happy that St. Therese is praying for us so that we grow as good children of Jesus and as good children of the Church.

St. Therese and I

St. Therese, who desired from an early age to grow up as a good daughter of Jesus, is a model to me always. I also desire to grow up as a good child of Jesus. The short cut of St. Therese will help me to realise my desire. The prayer, humility, dependence on God, love and spirit of sacrifice of St. Therese will make my life pure and happy. I will invoke the intercession of St. Therese in my life.

Prayer

O Little St. Therese, behold I offer my desire to grow up as a child of God to your intercession. I entreat you to pray for me always.

Memorise

“As he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct”.
(1 Peter 1:15)

Life Witness

The life of the Little Flower, St. Therese was one, founded on the love of God. In like manner, let us also try to grow in the love of God.

Questions

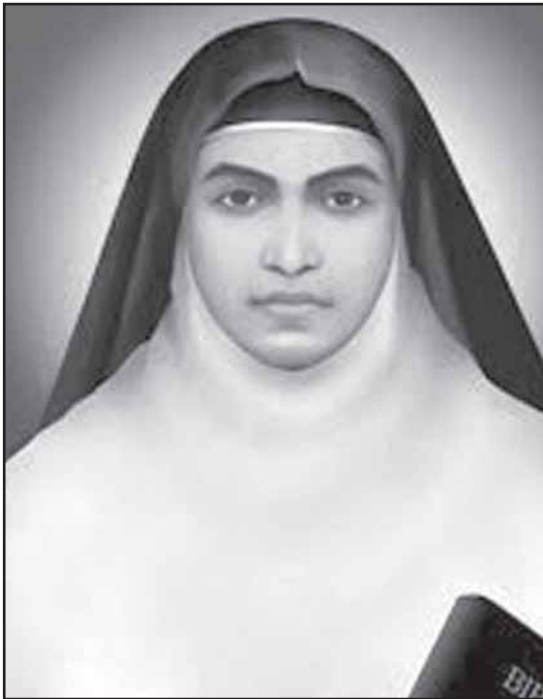
1. Explain the childhood of St. Therese.
2. How did St. Therese become a religious?
3. Write short notes on:

The sanctity of the life of St. Therese; St. Therese, the Missionary; St. Therese and the Malankara Catholic Church.

THE SAINTS OF THE KERALA CHURCH

God alone is holy. At the same time, we, the children of God are called to share in the holiness of God. Saints are those who especially participate in the sanctity of God. Through the elevation of a person into Sainthood, the Church proclaims officially that he is in eternal happiness with God. Since they are living with God in heaven, they can intercede and pray for us. Hence we request the intercession of the Saints. We should follow the example of the Saints and try to grow in holiness. The title 'Blessed' is the official recognition of the Church given before one is raised to the rank of Sainthood. In this lesson we deal with those who are raised to Sainthood in Kerala Church.

1. Saint Alphonsa (1910-1946)



Alphonsa was born at Kudamaloor, near Kottayam, in the family of Muttathupadathu as the daughter of Joseph and Mary on 19 August 1910. Alphonsa's mother died when she was three months old. Her father and grandmother fondly brought up the child, who had lost her mother. She was baptized at the Kudamaloor Church on 26 August and was named Annakutty.

Alphonsa's desire was to become a religious nun for the love of Jesus after her school education. But all the members of her family wished to give her in marriage. Alphonsa was very beautiful. So there were many marriage proposals. At the interest of the family members, her marriage was fixed. But Alphonsa, who cherished great interest

in religious life, did not agree with it. She had to undergo many torments on that account.

After the course of Standard VII, she joined the Clarist convent. She got sick after her religious profession. However, she gave love to all and accepted sufferings most willingly. She passed away at the age of 36, on 28 July 1946. Pope John Paul II declared Alphonsa, Blessed, at Kottayam on 8 February 1986. Pope Benedict XVI declared Alphonsa, Saint on 12 October 2008. The feast of Saint Alphonsa is celebrated on 28 July.

Alphonsa, who was born in an ideal Christian family, was very careful in spiritual matters from her childhood. Her life, replete with virtues such as humility, love, compassion and deep devotion to God, was pleasing to everyone. Alphonsa who, earnestly desired to become the spouse of the Lord at a very early age, was prepared to undergo any sacrifice for that. The life history of Saint Therese imparted great inspiration to Alphonsa. The life of Alphonsa, who joined the convent, was very close to the Lord. Alphonsa was an example to everyone in the convent for the practice of obedience and other virtues. A good part of the sixteen years of Alphonsa's religious life was filled with sufferings, physical and mental. But Alphonsa was prepared to suffer them joined with the passion of our Lord. She accepted suffering as a gift from God and a means of sanctification. Let us imitate that life which spreads the fragrance of holiness.

2. Saint Father Chavara Kuriakos Elias (1805-1871)

Elias was born on 10 February 1805 as the son of the spouses, Kuriakos and Mariam in the family of Chavara, in the village, Kainakari



of the district of Alleppy. He learned many languages even before he joined the Seminary. Elias received the Order of Priesthood in November 1829. The parishioners considered Fr. Chavara as a Retreat Preacher. He gave leadership for the establishment of the C.M.I. Religious Congregation at Mannanam in 1833. Fr. Chavara tried to start schools along with Churches in order to enlighten the people of Kerala in reading and writing. His literary works are very much renowned. Fr. Chavara shone in the spiritual realm as one who propagated the devotions of the 'Dedication of the Family to the Sacred Heart of Jesus' and the 'Forty Hour Adoration'. He worked a lot for the amelioration of the suffering in society. Prayer, meditation and penance made him a man of God.

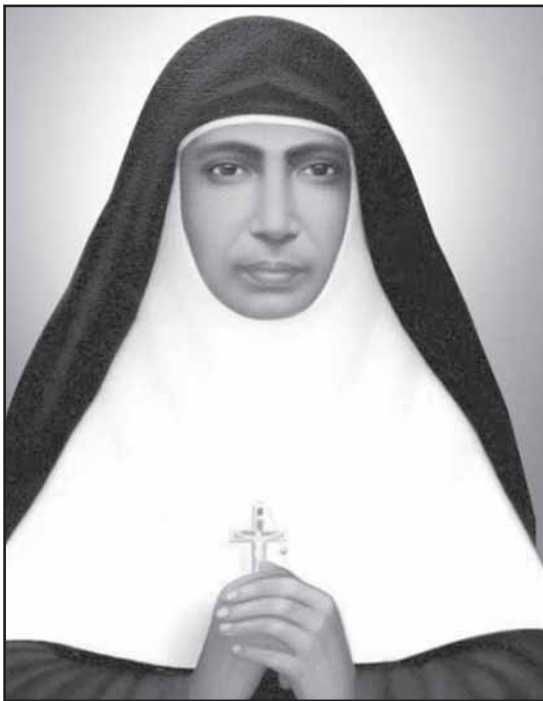
Fr. Chavara passed away at Koonammavu on 3 January 1871. Miracles continue to take place on account of the intercession of Fr. Chavara. Pope John Paul II declared Fr. Chavara, Blessed, at Kottayam on 8 February 1986. Pope Francis declared Fr. Chavara, Saint on 23 November 2014. The feast of St. Chavara Kuriakose Elias is celebrated on 3 January. Let us imitate his holy life in our daily life.

3. Saint Euphrasia (1877-1952)



Euphrasia was born on 17 October 1877 at Kattoor village near Trissur, in the family of Eluvathingal as the daughter of Anthony and Kunjethy and was named Rosa. She joined a member of the Carmelite convent at the age of nine. She received the religious profession on 10 May 1897 from Mar John Menachery, Bishop of Trissur and she received the name Euphrasia. She did the ministry for 45 years as a religious nun. She passed away on 29 August 1952. Pope Benedict XVI declared Sr. Euphrasia, Blessed on 3 December 2006 and Pope Francis declared Sr. Euphrasia, Saint on 23 November 2014.

She had deep faith to the Holy Eucharist and she spent long time for prayer in front of the Tabernacle. Hence she was known as a moving Tabernacle. She had also a deep faith to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and she was called as Euphrasia of Sacred Heart of Jesus. She kept a profound devotion to Mother of God. During her life time many people visited her for intercessory prayer and she prayed for them. Hence she was also known as 'Praying Mother'. The feast of St. Euphrasia is celebrated on 29 August. Her deep faith in Jesus Christ, devotion to Mother of God and profound prayer life is a model for us.



4. Saint Mariam Thresia (1876- 1926)

Mariam Thresia was born at Puthenchira near Mala, Trissur in the family of Chiramel as the third daughter of Thoma and Thandama on 26 April 1876. When she was at the age of twelve her mother died and she led a deep prayer life. She expressed zeal in Christian faith and devotion to God from very early age. In spite of the lack of basic education, Mariam Thresia knew to read and write. She founded a House for Prayer at the age of 37 (1913) at Puthenchira with her three friends. Mar John Menachry, the

Bishop of Trissur, elevated this congregation as 'Holy Family Sisters' and appointed Mariam Thresia the Superior of this new Congregation. She passed away on 8 June 1926 at the age of fifty. Pope John Paul II declared Sr. Mariam Thresia, Blessed on 9 April 2000 and Pope Francis declared her Mother, Saint on 13 October 2019. The feast of St. Mariam Thresia is celebrated on 8 June.

She started social ministry among all people without any discrimination of caste and religion. She visited many families which were facing enormous

problems and she gave consolation to them. She also visited sick people and did the ministry of healing through prayer. Sanctification of the families, empowerment of women, healing ministry for the sick, care for the orphans, education are the various ministries she started at that time. She recognized the need of the people at that time and she witnessed Jesus Christ. She practised the love of God and love of the neighbour in an extraordinary way. Let us follow the holy life of St. Mariam Thresia especially her love of God and the love of the neighbour.

Life Witness

The Blessed of the Church are those who have wholly dedicated themselves to Jesus. Let us imitate the good qualities shining forth in their lives.

Memorise

“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their Cross and follow me”.
(Matthew 16:24)

Questions

Write short notes on:

1. Saint Alphonsa.
2. Saint Father Chavara Kuriakos Elias.
3. Saint Euphrasia.
4. Saint Mariam Thresia.

THE PRAYER OF THE SOUTORO

The Introductory Prayer and the Kaumo Petition

O merciful God, the voice of our prayer knocks at your door; deny not your devotees the petitions of their needs. We call upon Thee O God to assist us in our infirmities. O Good One, listen to the voice of our supplication and grant our petitions in your mercy.

THE SUPPLICATION OF MAR EPHREM

(Karthave Krupa Cheyyaname)

Lord your mercy shower on us
Having pleased with our deeds
Grant us from your treasury large
Mercy, blessing and pardon.

Let me stand before you Lord
Keeping vigil earnestly
Should I fall asleep again
Spare me from falling in sin.

Guard me Lord during daytime
Lest I transgress your command
If I commit sin in sleep
Let your mercy pardon me.

Grant me Lord a restful sleep
Because of your humbling Cross
Let me enter not the path
Of wicked dreams in my sleep.

During this night guard me Lord
While I sleep most peacefully
Let me not be ruled over
By foul thoughts and wicked men.

Give a watch of wise angels
Let them guard my whole body
Subdue lustful tendencies
For I consumed your body.

Let your blood be a watcher
To my peaceful sleep, O Lord
In your image you made me
Let me be free from all sins.

On body, your handicraft
Be pleased to place your right hand
Like a shield you protect me
With your fortress of mercy.

When my body calmly rests
Watch over it with your might
Like a sweet smoke of incense
Let it rise before your throne.

May your mother plead for me
And Satan not approach me
By your sacrifice on Cross.
Forbid him lest he kill me.

Fulfil your work in me Lord
And save my life by your Cross

Due to the love that sustained me
Waking up I shall praise you.

Grant me Lord a peaceful eve
And a righteous night as well
So that I shall know your will
And fulfil it willingly.

Christ, Saviour, you are the light
And you have abode in light
Sons, who are born of the light
Always worship you alone.

Jesus, Saviour of the world
We praise you, who dwells in light
Shower your grace upon us Lord
Both on earth and heav'n above.

O Lord God, we give you praise
Praise a thousand, thousand fold
Innumerable praises raise
Shower your grace upon us all.

Praise to you Lord, we praise you,
Whom angels serve and worship
Lord of vigilants and angels
Hear our prayers and answer.

Praise to you Lord, One true God
One and truly one alone
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
Three in one and one in three.

Praise to you Lord, who hears
Prayers of your humble folk
And accepts tears of those
Repentant, as gift offered.

Lord, we, sons of earth praise you
countless as leaves of the trees
You, whom vigilant angels serve,
And messengers sing praises.

With true knowledge and wisdom
We ought sing praises to Him
Who exists as one true God
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

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

Observe a forty-day-fast
And feed those who have no food
And shall pray seven times a day
Like David, son of Jesse.

Moses, prophet Elijah
Observed fast for forty days
Jesus conquered his enemy
Observing forty days' fast.

Those prayers, which rose on heights
From sea, dungeon and furnace
Likewise let our petitions
Open the door of your mercy.

Lord, who listens to prayers
And grants meek supplications
Having heard our petitions
Please, be reconciled with us.
Kurieleison, Kurieleison, Kurieleison

The Dedication of the Night

O Holy Father, guard us by your Sacred Name. O Son of God,
Our Saviour, protect us by your victorious Cross. O Holy Spirit,
Make us worthy abodes of your indwelling. O Lord, God, shelter
us always under your divine wings. Amen.