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This book draws a vivid sketch of the History of the Malankara Catholic Church from the apostolic times till the present day.

The Malankara Catholic Church

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THE MALANKARA CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Archbishop Geevarghese Mar Ivanios
(1882-1953)



Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios
(1916-1994)



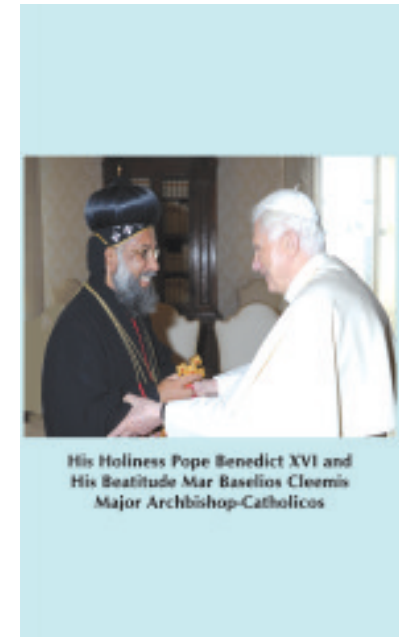
The Late Bishops



Major Archbishop-Catholicos
Cyril Baselios (1935-2007)



His Beatitude Mar Baselios Cleemis
Major Archbishop-Catholicos



His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI and
His Beatitude Mar Baselios Cleemis
Major Archbishop-Catholicos

**THE MALANKARA
CATHOLIC CHURCH**

G.Chediath

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CATHOLIC CHURCH**

Translated
by
A. J. Joy Angemadathil



OIRSI No. 366

**Kottayam
2012**



Archbishop Mar Ivanios, Cheppad Philipose Remban with the Reunited Priests and the Priests who served in the Malankara Catholic Church (1940)



The first ten members of the Sisters of the Imitation of Christ who reunited the Church with the Founder, His Grace Archbishop Mar Ivanios, in 1930
Mothers (sitting) Maxa, Salga, Shina, Huba, Denaha, Thrisus (standing) Hymnus, Basim,



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INTRODUCTION

This book gives a brief description of the Malankara Church from the apostolic times till today. The history up to the historic Reunion of Archbishop Mar Ivanios with the Catholic Church in 1930 is given in summary form. The history of the *Reunion Movement* under the leadership of Mar Ivanios, the emergence of the present day Malankara Catholic Church and its growth in the past 82 years (1930-2012) is rather clearly treated.

The first 15 chapters serve as a door to the rest of the book. These chapters speak about the origin of this Apostolic Church and its ecclesial life till 1930. The Malankara Catholic Church did not originate in 1930. It had, in fact, its origin from the preaching of St. Thomas, one of the twelve Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. It continued as the one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church till the 17th century. The 16th/17th c. developments in the Indian Church led to factionalism and split in the Church. In 1653 there occurred a revolt, known in history as the *Coonan Cross Oath*, of almost all the Thomas Christians against the undue interference in the life of the Church by the Portuguese, who were the colonial power in those days. Eventually one section came under the influence of the West Asian Syrian Orthodox Church and later under the West European Anglican Church. That group lost the full Catholic communion and came to be known as the *Puthenkuttukar* (people of the new allegiance). The other group, which formed the majority, was known as the *Pazhayakuttukar* (people of the old allegiance) and they are today's Syro-Malabar Catholics. History witnessed several further splits in the *Puthenkur* community: a small group formed the *Thozhiyur Church* (1772), another group became CMS-Anglican (1836), another group became Reformed Jacobites or Marthomites (1889), a fourth group became Orthodox (1912) and one group reunited with the Catholic Church (1930) and the rest formed a separate registered Society as the Jacobite Syrian Church (2003).

There were continuous efforts from the part of *Puthenkuttukar* and *Pazhayakuttukar* for reestablishing the lost unity of the Church. But none of the attempts succeeded. In 1926 the bishops of the Orthodox faction entered into ecumenical negotiations with the Roman Catholic Church. They deputed Mar Ivanios to enter into negotiations. They demanded that their autonomy should be maintained and their bishops should have the right to take care of their faithful wherever they are. Rome agreed to receive them into full and visible Catholic communion and they in their turn agreed to accept the Pope as the successor of St. Peter in the ancient See of Rome. There was a mutual recognition and mutual acceptance as a result of the negotiation. The community was received into the Catholic communion as a Church *sui juris* or as an Individual Church. Thus the lost full communion of 1653 was regained in 1930 through the historical Reunion. A new door was opened for all Thomas Christians who desired to enter into the visible and full Catholic communion. Of course, all the participants in the negotiation were led by the ecclesiology of those days.

The reunited group emerged into a vigorous Christian community. It became a dynamic missionary Church. It has contributed its own share in the integral human development of the people in this part of the globe. There was mutual enrichment for the Roman Church and the Malankara Church because of the Reunion. It is the unique ecumenical Movement of the 20th century, which was crowned with success. It has become a bridge Church between Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism. With the post-Vatican ecclesiology of the Catholic Church, there is ample chance for further dialogue and negotiations for full and visible communion.

May I express my heartfelt thanks to Rev. Prof. Dr. Andrews Mekkattukunnel for kindly including this work in the OIRSI Publication. May I thank Rev. Fr. C. M. George, Rev. Dr. Philip Chempakasery and Fr.C.C.John for their suggestions and corrections. I am very happy to dedicate this work to the Major Archbishop Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis Catholicos.

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1

The Malankara Catholic Church Its Apostolic Origin

Our Lord Jesus Christ sent his twelve disciples to the four corners of the world as heralds of the Good News of salvation, which is “to give great joy to the entire world”(Lk 2:10). He sent them by giving them “all authority in heaven and on earth”(Mt 28:18). Being strengthened and fortified by the reception of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost day, they became His witnesses “in Jerusalem and in all Judaea and Samaria and to the end of the earth (Acts 1:8). They preached to all the nations repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Lk 24:47). The Lord worked with them and through them and confirmed the message by the signs that attended it (Mk 16:20). The Apostle Thomas was one among the twelve.

St. Thomas in India

St.Thomas preached the Gospel in Kerala and the other parts of India and laid the foundation for the Christian Church here. On account of it, he is regarded as the Apostle of India. The Christians here are known as *Thomas Christians (Marthoma Christianikal,)* in the sense that they received the Gospel message through his preaching. Even today they are known as *Thomas Christians*.

Like the other disciples of the Lord, Thomas was also from Galilee in Palestine. He was a fisherman by profession. We know little either about his early life or relatives. He readily responded to the call of Jesus and gladly followed him. He was known by the name Thomas, meaning twin born. The Greek word for Thomas is *Didymus* (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:15; Acts 1:13). In the Gospel according to John, there are three special references about Thomas (11:8ff. 14: 5ff; 20:28-29). In some of the ancient manuscripts of this Gospel, 14:18-23, we see *Judas Thomas* or simply Thomas instead of *Judas*. In John 21:1-4 we see *Thomas who*

is called *Didymus*. In the ancient Church, especially in the Churches in Asia Minor, there were traditions about St. Thomas. He is referred to also in the Apocryphal literature. Two Apocryphal Gospels and one *Acts of the Apostles* are known after him.

The Preaching of the Gospel

St. Thomas sent Thaddeus (Addai) to Edessa to preach the Gospel. Parthia and India were the apostolic fields of St. Thomas. Travelling through Mesopotamia, Persia, Media, Hircania and Bactria, he proclaimed the Gospel. However, he is known as the *Apostle of India*. He passed more than once through North India and South India. He formed several believing communities throughout India and thus laid the foundation for the Apostolic Christian Church in India. The undeniable and authentic evidence of his apostolic activity in India is the living tradition of the Thomas Christians in South India.

Two specific reasons are pointed out for his arrival in India: *First, the Jewish presence in Kerala*. There were Jewish colonies in Kerala in those days. They were merchants, who later on settled in Kerala. He came here in search of the Jewish settlers. He spoke to them and preached the Good News in the Aramaic (Syriac) language and through them to the other people in the land. *Second, the travel facility to India and to West Asia*. When it was discovered that with the blow of the Monsoon winds one could reach India in less time, there occurred an unprecedented growth in the trade relation between Kerala and the West. Kodungalloor (Cranganore) became a great trade centre between China and Europe in those days. Possibly St. Thomas might have come to India with these regular merchants.

The Seven churches in Kerala

St. Thomas established seven churches in Kerala. *Seven* could be understood in the sense that he established several Christian communities throughout India. Remaining with the newly formed communities for long periods, he bore witness to the Gospel and confirmed them in the faith. However, the Christian communities in seven places in Kerala do distinctly claim the unique tradition of St. Thomas. They are

Kodungalloor (Cranganore), Palayur, Paravur (Kottackavu), Kokkamangalam, Kollam, Chayal (Nilackal) and Niranam (Thrippaleswaram).

Malankara Church

On his arrival from West Asia, St. Thomas descended at a place called *Malyankara* near Kodungalloor. It was there that he first proclaimed the Gospel and founded the Church. On account of this, the Church founded by St. Thomas in India is known as the *Malankara Church*. According to some, the word *Malankara* means also mountainous region or the land of mountains. In the ancient documents, the Church founded by St. Thomas was known as the *Malankara Church*. All the other names seem to be of later origin. The Christians were known as *Malankara Nazranikal* and *Mar Thoma Nazranikal*. The presence of the Jews and the nature of the Church point to the fact that the Malankara Church was Semitic in its origin. There were Jewish colonies in all the seven centres where he founded the Christian communities. The first converts to Christianity could be from among the Jews. The Dravidians who inhabited South India also might have joined the Church. Thus the Christian community might have been a mixture of Jews and Dravidians and also of some Buddhists. But according to some previous writers, the original Christian community was of Brahmin (Nambudiri and Nair) converts.¹ St. Thomas himself might have introduced the divine worship for his followers. As he witnessed at the Last Supper how the Lord offered the sacrifice of bread and wine as His body and blood, he might have introduced here the holy Eucharist, like the other Apostles in other places (1 Cor. 11: 23-26). He taught the faithful to pray in the correct way and led them to Christian liturgy and worship.

Martyrdom

St. Thomas went from Kerala to Chozhamandal (today's Tamil Nadu). His apostolic activity was centred on Chinnamalai at Mylapore in Chennai (Madras). According to some legends, the ruler of Mylapore and his brother received the Good News and became Christians. Many

¹ See the references in: Bosco Puthur, (ed.), *St. Thomas Christians and Nambudiris, Jews and Sangam Literature-A Historical Appraisal*, Kochi, 2003.

people were attracted to the new faith and adopted it. However, some did not like the new preacher. They developed hatred towards the Apostle. While he was in prayer, some one assassinated him by hurling a spear at him. Thus he bore witness to the Good News by shedding his own blood and passed from the terrestrial abode to the heavenly Jerusalem for his eternal reward. His disciples buried him at Mylapore and later on there arose a Cathedral above his sepulchre. At present the tomb of St. Thomas is in the Cathedral of Mylapore.

Relics

During the third century the relics of St. Thomas were transferred to Edessa (Urhai/Sanliurfa) in today's South Eastern Turkey. We are not quite sure of the circumstances of this transfer. Owing to certain unknown factors, we find the number of Christians reduced in Mylapore. That might have been an occasion of its transfer from there to Edessa. When the Islamic attacks got heightened and strengthened in West Asia, the relics were transferred to the Kios Island on the West coast of Asia Minor in 1143. Later, in 1257 it was once again transferred to Ortona, on the Eastern shore of Central Italy. There it is kept under the main altar of the St. Thomas Cathedral. One of the arms of St. Thomas was brought to Maastricht/The Netherlands most probably during the Crusades. It is kept there in a silver reliquary in the Basilica of St. Servaas. Once in seven years during the Heiligdomsvaart² it is shown to the public together with many other famous relics. In 1953 His Eminence Eugène Cardinal Tisserant, the then Secretary to the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, brought a part of the relics to Kerala. It is kept at the St. Thomas Church at Azhikode in Kodungalloor, where St. Thomas first landed. Every year the Christians in Kerala commemorate the memory of St. Thomas on third July. After the Second Vatican Council (1962-5), the Catholics all over the world celebrate his commemoration on this day in accordance with the tradition of the Thomas Christians. The Western Church used to celebrate it formerly on December 21st, the day when the relics were transferred to Ortona, in Italy³.

² Pilgrimage to the holy place.

³ M. Gielen, *St. Thomas, the Apostle of India*, Kottayam 1990 (ed. G. Chediath); X. Koodapuzha, *Christianity in India*, Kottayam 1998; Idem, *Bhâratha Sabhâcharithram*, Kottayam, 1998; G. Chediath, *Mar Thoma Sleehayude Indian Sabha*, Kottayam, 2001.

2

St. Thomas the Apostle of India

Certain Historical Evidences

Thomas is known as the Apostle of India. Today it is widely recognized by all. Various evidences can be presented with regard to his evangelical activities in India. Having come over to Kodungalloor, he laid the foundation for the Malankara Church.

The Living Tradition of the Thomas Christians

There exist here in India even today living and dynamic Christian communities bearing the name *Mar Thoma Christianikal (Thomas Christians)*. Kodungalloor, the place where St. Thomas landed first, the Christian communities he formed in India, the seven churches he founded, the hills and mountains where he sat in meditation and prayer, the place of his martyrdom and his sepulchre are the telling evidences of this living tradition in South India. There are several legends connected with the places visited by St. Thomas. One could still find families in Kerala proudly boasting of their forefathers, who were baptized and of members who were being raised to priesthood by St. Thomas himself. The Malankara Church celebrates the feast of St. Thomas on 3rd July. It is an ancient tradition in Malankara, where it lasted for eight days unlike in the other Church traditions. The Thomas Christians in India gave an extraordinary importance to the feast of St. Thomas (*Dukrana*). This is not an imported tradition from the other Churches, but was native to the Indian soil. This living tradition has been orally transmitted down through the centuries and spread in the form of songs and hymns. Though they were written down only later, their antiquity cannot be questioned. *Thoma Parvam (Remban Paatt), Margamkali Paatt, Veeradiyanpaatt*

(*Panappaatt*) and the like are the ancient forms of songs distinctly related to the life and works of St. Thomas. The Malankara Christians used to sing them on festive occasions. These songs do clearly relate to the missionary activity of St. Thomas in India.

Testimony of the Fathers

Many of the early Fathers of Christian antiquity give testimony to the Apostolate, martyrdom and tomb of St. Thomas. Fathers like St. Ephrem (+373), St. Gregory Nazianzen (+390), St. Ambrose (+397), St. John Chrysostom (+407), Gaudentius (5th c.), St. Jerome (+420), St. Paulinus of Nola (+431), St. Gregory of Tours (+594), St. Isidore of Seville (+636) and Bede the Venerable (+735) connect St. Thomas with the Indian Apostolate.⁴

St. Ephrem says:

“The evil one wailed:

The Apostle whom I slew in India,

Is before me in Edessa.

He is here wholly and also there.

I went there; there was he;

Here and there I have found him and been grieved....

The bones that the merchant carries,

Or was it then that they carried him? ...

That bag of Thomas has slain me,

For the secret strength that dwells in it tortures me.”⁵

In a Hymn attributed to St. Ephrem we read:

“Blessed are you, like unto the solar ray from the great orb;

Your grateful dawn dispels India’s painful darkness.

⁴A. E. Medlycott, *India and Apostle Thomas*, London, 1905; H. Perumalil –E. R. Hamby, (ed.) *Christianity in India*, Alleppey, 1972; Yousif, P., *The Apostle Thomas in the Witness of St. Ephrem of Nisibis*: C. Payngot, *Homage to Mar Cariatti*, Rome, 1987, p.72-88; X. Koodapuzha, *Christianity*, p.33-37.

⁵ *Carmina Nisibena* 42,1-2; A. E. Medlycott, *op. cit.* p. 22-23. P. Yousif, *art. cit.* p.79-80.

You, the great lamp, one among the Twelve,
Replenished with the oil from the Cross,
Flood India’s dark night with light.

Blessed are you, whom the Great King has sent,
That you should espouse India to His Only Begotten;
Above snow and linen white,
Thou the dark bride did make fair.

Blessed are you, who have adorned the uncomely,
So that having become beautiful and radiant,
She might advance to her Spouse.

Blessed are you, O thrice blessed City!
That has acquired this pearl,
None greater does India yield.”⁶

St. John Chrysostom says:

“We do not know where the tombs of most of the Apostles are.
But the tombs of Peter, Paul, John and Thomas are famous.”⁷

Ancient Documents

Ancient documents like *The Teaching of Addai* (3rd c.), *Acts of Thomas* (3rd c.) and *The Passion of Thomas* (6th c.) bear testimony to the Apostolate of Thomas in India. It is found in *The Teaching of Addai*:

“India and all the countries in it and all its inhabitants and even people in far off places beyond the Oceans received priesthood from St. Thomas.”⁸

⁶ Breviary of the Syrian Antiochene Church : quoted in A. E. Medlycott, *op.cit.*p.24-27.

⁷ PG. 63:170: *Homily on the Ep. to the Hebrews*, 26:2 (Heb. 11: 20-22); *NPNF* (2nd Series) 14. p. 482.

⁸ A. Vööbus, *The Synodicon in the West Syrian Tradition*, Vol. I, Louvain, 1975 (*cscs* 367/Syri 161) p. 209: syr. Text; *cscs* 369/syri 162, p.195 (tr.).

The Liturgical Traditions

The liturgical and ecclesiastical traditions of the Eastern and Western Churches bear witness to the Apostolate of St. Thomas in India. East Syrian, Antiochene, Latin, Byzantine and Ethiopian traditions clearly attest that India was the mission field of St. Thomas the Apostle.

In the East Syrian liturgy we read:

“O, Thomas, the Indians inhaled the fragrance of life through your admonitions... The Lord has deigned to grant Saint Thomas to his faithful Church as a treasure found in India...who for the faith was pierced by a lance... The Messiah anointed Peter as the High priest of Rome. Likewise, O, Thomas, you earned from the Indians a similar reverence... Thomas took the route to India to demolish the temples of demons, and to extirpate the immorality prevailed among the people.”⁹

“St. Thomas was pierced with a lance in India. His body is at Edessa (Urhai), having been brought there by the merchant Haban. A great festival”¹⁰

In the West Syrian tradition we read:

“O, blessed one, you go forth as a ray of the Sun to dissipate the dark night of India... Through you He has converted the Indians to the true faith and baptized them in the name of the Trinity.”¹¹

The Malankara Christians used to make frequent pilgrimages to the tomb of St. Thomas at Mylapore. Several travellers and pilgrims from abroad also had visited the tomb. Nevertheless, records about the very early centuries are not available. But many such visitors and historians prior to the 17th century had recorded that the tomb of St. Thomas is at Mylapore. Such are Marco Polo (13th c.), John of Monte Corvino (13th

⁹ A. E. Medlycott, *op. cit.* p.40-41.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* 23: a liturgical note for July 3.

¹¹ T. Bernard, *A Brief Sketch of the History of the St. Thomas Christians*, Trichinopoly, 1924; idem, *Mar Thoma Christianikal*, Vol. I, Palai, 1906; Vol. 2. Mannanam, 1921; T. Nangachiveettil, *Asiayile Marthoma Sabhakal*, 2 Vols. Trivandrum, 1982.1985.

c.), Oderic (14th c.), Amr (14th c.), John Marignoli (14th c.) and Nicolo Conti (15th c.).¹²

The Portuguese excavations had dug out the remains of a huge church at Mylapore. It has been proved that the bricks used for constructing the sepulchre of St. Thomas belonged to the first century. *Mylapore* was also known as *Calamina*, *Qualimaya*, *Myloof*, *Mylan* and *Calamena*. All the scholars who had investigated into the historical evidences concerning St. Thomas have established and recognized incontestably his apostolate and martyrdom in India.¹³

¹² A. Mundadan, *Traditions of the St. Thomas Christians*, Bangalore, 1970; idem, *History of Christianity in India*, I, Bangalore, 1984.

¹³ P.J. Podipara, *The Thomas Christians*, London-Bombay, 1970; X. Koodapuzha, *Bhâratha Sabhâcharitram*, p.111-116.

3

The Malankara Church up to the 16th century

We have very few written documents regarding the early history of the Malankara Church. In the absence of the written historical documents its early stages are called dark ages. It is difficult to present a clear picture with the available records.

The Persian Connection

The later documents show that the Malankara Church in its early period had maintained contact with the East Syrian or Persian Church in West Asia. But it is not easy to say as to when the Malankara Church had commenced its connection with the Persian Church. Some see it since the time of St. Thomas the Apostle. Both the Persian and the Malankara Churches consider St. Thomas as their common father. Several Particular Churches in the Persian Empire claim to have been founded by St. Thomas. Syriac, his mother tongue, was one of the factors that united these Churches. It was the language of trade and commerce throughout the Eastern lands. Syriac had a similar status in the East, as Greek and Latin had in the West. The early Christians in the Euphrates and Tigris valley were predominantly of Semitic origin and spoke Syriac. On his arrival in India, he might have preached the Good News first to the Jews here through Syriac or Aramaic medium and through the Jews he might have preached also to the non-Jewish population. If we look into the method followed by the Apostles everywhere (Acts 13:46), this conclusion seems to be correct. The Apostles had enjoyed the gift of tongue too.

In the beginning it was with the Church at Fars near the Persian Gulf that the Malankara Church had its immediate contact. By the

fourth century, the Church at Seleucia –Ctesiphon, (the capital of the Persian Empire) began to exert its authority over the other Churches throughout the country. But it is difficult to say for certain as to when the Malankara Church came under the Seleucian jurisdiction. One can be sure that till the 7th century, Malankara Church was not under the Seleucian or Persian Church. It is possible that from the Apostolic time till the 7th century, there were local bishops as the successors of St. Thomas. According to local tradition, St. Thomas ordained two local men bishops and seven presbyters. The successors of these leaders gave leadership to the Christian communities here in India.¹⁴

There is a reference in Gelasius of Cizicus (5th c.) that a certain John of Persia and of Great India participated at the Council of Nicaea (325).¹⁵ After the Council of Nicaea, Gelasius alone connects John with India. But neither in the list of the participants in the Synod of Nicaea, nor in the Church histories of subsequent period, do we find the name of this above-mentioned John. Church historians, like Socrates, Sozomen or Theodoret do not connect John with India. Therefore, the later evidence given by Gelasius is not beyond doubt.

From the seventh century onwards, the Persian bishops mention the Indian Church here and there. The Patriarchs Isayahb II (628-46), Isayahb III (650-60), Sliba Zeka (714-28), Timothy (778-823) and Theodosius (853-8)¹⁶ speak about the Indian Church. Isayahb II sent bishops to India. Isayahb III describes a situation where the Church in India had no bishops. He accuses Simon, the bishop of Rewardashir in Persia, for creating such a situation.¹⁷ Sliba Zeka recognized the Metropolitan status of the Indian Church¹⁸. In his epistle to the Indian Church, Timothy speaks of how the bishops were ordained in India. He points out that in the matter of electing and ordaining a Metropolitan, the faithful have to follow the directives not of the local king, but of the Patriarch. He instructs that it is only after obtaining the approval of the

¹⁴ E. Tisserant- E.R. Hambye, *Eastern Christianity in India*, Calcutta, 1957.

¹⁵ *Ecclesiastical History*, 2:17.

¹⁶ *BO*. 3. 2. 439; G.T. Mackenzie, *Christianity in Travancore*, Trivandrum, 1901, p.5.

¹⁷ *Liber Epistolarum: Ep. 14 (CSCO11/12) 252/182; Ep. 16: p.256-260/185-8.*

¹⁸ Abdiso, *Epitomae Canonum*, Part.8, ch.15: *BO* 3.1. 346; 3.2.438; P. J. Podipara, *The Thomas Christians*, 65.

Patriarch that the king needs to be informed of the appointment of the Metropolitan.¹⁹

The evidences and records of the Portuguese missionaries show that when they came here they saw East Syrian (Persian) bishops only. There was in 1301 a certain Bishop, *Mar Jacob Episcopa* here.²⁰ In 1490 Mar Yohannan and Mar Thoma came here from Persia. In 1504 three more bishops came, including a certain Mar Jacob. Mar Thoma resided at *Kollam (Quilon)* and Mar Jacob at *Kodungalloor*. Mar Jacob died in 1550/2. Subsequently another Persian bishop named Mar Yausep (1556-69) came from Persia as the head of this community. In 1558 again a certain Mar Abraham came. Mar Yausep died in 1569 in Rome. Mar Abraham died in 1597 in Kerala. And he was the last Persian bishop who ruled the undivided Malankara Catholic Church in India. With his death, the Malankara Church lost forever its hierarchical relationship with the East Syrian or Persian Church.²¹

We are not certain from which time onwards the Persian bishops began coming to this Church. It has not been proved that the East Syrian bishops were continuously presiding over this Church from the time of St. Thomas the Apostle. It cannot also be concluded that no one from the natives became the bishops here. Bishops were the spiritual heads in the Churches. The temporalities of the Church were administered by the local leader, the Archdeacon (*Arkan, Arkadiakon*).

Some Visitors

There are hints that some leaders of the other Churches had visited the Malankara Church: Pantaenus (+190), David of Basra (295), Theophilos (354), Cosmos (522-5) and Bodh (6th c.) were a few of them. Eusebius (+339) in his *Ecclesiastical History* speaks of Pantaenus that he came to India and saw a copy of the Gospel of Mathew in

¹⁹ Ibn at-Taiyib, *Fiqh an Nasraniya*, II (tr.) (CSCO 168), p.120-1.

²⁰ Codex Vatican Syriac, 22; P.J.Podipara, *The Hierarchy of the Syro-Malabar Church*, Alleppey, 1976, p.42.

²¹ BO 3. 590-2; A.Mingana, *The Early Spread of Christianity in India*, Manchester, 1926, p.36-37; Ms. Syr. Paris, 25.fol.7: a letter of Mar Jacob, written to the Patriarch Mar Simon in 1504

Aramaic with the Christians here.²² Basing on Eusebius, Jerome (+420) also makes a mention of it. It cannot be ascertained for certain that Pantaenus came to Kerala.²³ Cosmos visited India and later he wrote a book, "*Universal Christian Topography*". He speaks of Christian communities in Ceylon and Kerala: "In the country called *Male*, where pepper grows, there is also a church and at another place called *Kalliana* there is, moreover, a bishop who is appointed from Persia". *Male* is another form of *Malanâd* or *Malankara*. Kerala was the only place in ancient times where pepper had been cultivated.²⁴ A certain Daniel from India helped Mar Kumi in Persia to translate the Greek Bible into Syriac. This reference is found in the *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* by Isodad of Merv (9th c.).²⁵

Immigrations

There had been Christian immigration to Kerala from time to time. Three are the most important immigrations:

1) *The Immigration to Kollam*: There had been immigration to Kollam in the third century from the Eastern coast. Religious persecution in 293 at the Eastern coast had been attributed to this immigration. Seventy-two families reached *Kollam (Quilon)* from Kaveripûpattanam. There is a legend that the *Manigramakkar*, a group of merchants found at Kollam and Kayamkulam, are the descendants of this immigration.²⁶

2) *The Immigration of Knayithomman*: There had been several immigrations to Kerala from West Asia. One among them was the immigration under the leadership of a certain merchant called *Thomas Knanaya (Knayi Thomman)*. They are said to have settled at the Southern part of *Malyankara* at Kodungalloor. So they are known as *Thekkumbhagakkar (Southists)*. The Knanaya community believes that their ancestors migrated to Kerala during the 4th century. But others

²² *Ecclesiastical History*, 5:10.2-3.

²³ Ep.70: PL 22. 667; NPNF, Second Series, vol.3. p. 370.

²⁴ PG 88.446; A.Mingana, *op.cit.* 19-20; M.Mundadan, *History, I*, 99-100.

²⁵ M.D. Gibson, (ed.). *The Commentaries of Ishodad of Merv*, in *Horae Semiticae*, V.2.p.22/34; G Chediath, *Ishodad, Puthiyaniyamabhâshyam*, Kottayam, 2002, p. 98.

²⁶ C. V. Cherian, *A History of Christianity in Kerala*, Kottayam, 1973, p. 64. n. 14.

are of opinion that the immigration took place in the 9th century. There are at present Catholics and Jacobites in this group. They permit marriage only from among them.²⁷

3) *The Immigration of Mar Sabariso* (9th c.): There had been an immigration from Persia in the 9th century under the leadership of Mar Sabariso (Sapor) and Proth. Mar Sapor settled at Kollam, while Mar Proth at Udayamperur/Diamper (825). The Malankara Church venerated them as saints and dedicated some churches in their honor.²⁸

Copper Plates

The Malankara *Nazranikal* had a high social status. The Copper Plates were edicts and decrees written on Copper Plates, issued by the local rulers in favor of the Malankara Christians. Since they were written on Copper Plates they are known as *Cheppedukal*. There are mainly three *Cheppedukal*:²⁹

1) *Tharissappalli Cheppedukal*: There are two sets of copper plates given by the feudal Lord of Venad in 849 to the Church at Kollam. They contain the rights and privileges granted to the Christians. It was granted to Mar Sabariso and the other immigrants in the name of the Tharissappalli at Kollam. They are helpful to know the status of the Christians of the period. Tax exemption and 72 privileges were granted by these Copper plates.

2) *Knayithomman Cheppedukal*: There is a tradition of a Chepped granted to Knayithomman by the then native ruler. Mar Jacob (+1552) had it with him. But it was irrecoverably lost. There exists a Portuguese translation of it. This is a document granting privileges to the merchant Knayithomman. Some consider it as belonging to the 9th c.

3) *Iravikorthan Cheppedukal (Veeraraghavapattayam)*: It contains the privileges granted to Iravikorthan, the merchant. Iravikorthan is made a member of the business group of *Manigramam*. It is an

²⁷ Jacob Vellian, *Symposium on Knanites*, Kottayam, 1986.

²⁸ M.Mundadan, *History, I*, p.103-105.

²⁹ For the translation of these Copper Plates, See X.Koodapuzha, *Bhâratha Sabhâcharitram*, p.152-155.157.162-165.

important document regarding the business activity of the Christians. Its language is, according to some, of the 13th/14th century.

The Villarvattom feudal Lords

There was a Christian Prince who ruled from Udayamperur. It was known as Villarvattom. This princely family ceased to exist by the 15th century. Pope John 22 (1316-34) from Avignon (France) wrote a letter to the Christian king in Kerala. Pope Eugene IV also wrote a letter in 1439. They prove that the Malankara Christians were religiously and politically a force to reckon with.

Liturgy

It is difficult to say authentically about the ancient liturgy in use here in India. There are two possibilities: (1) In all the Churches established by the Apostles, they appointed Elders and instituted the Liturgy. On important matters these various liturgical traditions maintain the essential unity. St. Thomas might have instituted such a liturgy here in India too. All the Apostles established the liturgy in accordance with their Judaeo-Christian background. That might have been the case here also. That might have been in the business language Aramaic (Syriac). Or it could have been also in the native Tamil language. There are a lot of similarities between Tamil and Aramaic. When a developed form of the Semitic liturgy in the Aramaic language was brought here from West Asia, it was not difficult for the people to accept it. (2) The second possibility is to think that St. Thomas introduced a Tamil native liturgy and later, together with the Syrian immigration, the Syriac liturgy was introduced in the place of the ancient Tamil native liturgy. As there was no difference on the basic structure, the native Christians accepted the Syriac liturgy. This could be considered like the change of Greek in the West into Latin. But we have yet to get a definite answer as to which of these happened in the Malankara Church.

When the Western missionaries came here during the 16th c., East Syrian liturgy in the East Syrian language was in use. Nevertheless, it is impossible to say as to when the developed form of this liturgy was introduced here. The East Syrian liturgy had a Judaeo-Christian background. Since the Malankara Church had maintained its contacts

with the East Syrian Church in Persia, it received the East Syrian liturgy that had developed from time to time.

The Various names of the Malankara Christians

The Christians in India from the ancient times were called *Nazranikal*, meaning the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. As a respectful group, they were called *Nazrani Mappila*. They were also called *Mar Thoma Christianikal* (Thomas Christians) and *Mar Thoma Nazranikal*. After the arrival of the Western missionaries, the name Syrian Christians (*Suriani Christianikal*) became widespread.

4

The Western Missionaries and the Malankara Church

The Portuguese merchants came here from 1498 in order to have direct trade with India. Vasco da Gama was the first Captain to arrive here. The Malankara Christians gladly welcomed and received them and promised that they would render every necessary help for their business. Likewise the Portuguese also expressed their willingness to help the Christians here in every possible way. They entered into *communicatio in Sacris* with the Thomas Christians. With these merchants there arrived subsequently a lot of missionaries to preach the Good News among the various communities here in India. Among them the name of St. Francis Xavier, a true apostle of Jesus Christ, is quite unforgettable.

St. Francis Xavier (+1552)

Francis Xavier belonged to the Jesuit Order. At the end of a tedious and long journey, Xavier arrived at Goa in 1542. Goa in those days was a key Portuguese centre in India. Francis travelled far and wide preaching the Gospel. Subsequently he could convert thousands of non-Christians to the Gospel of the Lord. In 1544 he reached Travancore, a part of today's Kerala State. He selected the coastal region as his mission field and spent about four years there. Afterwards he went to the other parts of India and eventually to China and Japan. He died in 1552 and his mortal remains are preserved in Goa today.³⁰

³⁰ C. J. Varkey, ed. *St. Francis Xavier*, Ernakulam, 1952.

The Portuguese Programmes

Primarily the Portuguese were interested in trade with India. So they tried to make use of the influence of the Thomas Christians to promote their business. In the beginning the relations were cordial and beneficial to both. But slowly the Portuguese made every effort to keep the Malankara Church under their sway by enticing the Kings and enhancing the military might. Their plan was to make this Church part of their Western (Latin) Church, and merge it with it. They began to introduce the pious practices and sacramentals, and the theological thought patterns, developed in the West during the middle ages. In the place of the East Syrian liturgical traditions used here for sixteen centuries, the Portuguese missionaries wanted to introduce the Latin liturgy. According to some missionaries, the root cause of all heresies and schisms was the Syriac language and the Syriac liturgy. They thought that the only tradition which was correct and therefore should thrive must be the Roman Catholic and all the other ways, customs, liturgies and practices were wrong and therefore to be rectified. They wanted to correct the liturgical texts and introduce uniformity in liturgy and doctrine. They believed that unity consisted in uniformity and diversity was division. They were uniformists and thoroughly ignorant of the Indian mentality and Eastern ecclesiastical traditions. They knew only the Western (Latin) tradition and its liturgy. So they made a programme of action to correct, change and remove the centuries old East Syrian liturgical traditions, existing in the Malankara Church. They wanted to introduce in its place the Latin liturgy or at least a mutilated Eastern liturgy.

The Imposition of Padroado

It was the Portuguese King who had sent the merchants and the missionaries to India. He enforced his *Padroado* in the Malankara Church also. *Padroado* is a Portuguese word meaning *patronage*. It was a mission mandate given by the various Popes to the Kings of Portugal over the missions. The basis of *Padroado* is a document known as *Romanus Pontifex* of Pope Nicolas V on January 8, 1455. The Pope decreed: "All the lands and seas discovered and yet to be discovered would be for the Portuguese king for ever". In 1493 Pope Alexander VI gave a similar Decree to the King of Spain. On 7th June 1494 Spain and Portugal entered into an agreement on sharing among them their rights

of possession. On 26th March 1500 Pope Alexander VI granted the Portuguese King the right to nominate an Apostolic commissioner for the entire region ranging from the Cape of Good Hope in Africa to India. Popes Julius II (1503-13) and Leo X (1513-21) confirmed the Decrees of the previous Popes. All the new places in India, with their present and future churches were placed under the jurisdiction of the Vicar of Tomar in Portugal. All the churches and their possessions were brought under the patronage of the Portuguese King. It was on 4th August 1600 that the *Padroado* was imposed on the Malankara Church.

Mar Jacob and the Portuguese

The Portuguese policy was to get rid of the Persian Syrian bishops completely and appoint Latin bishops in their place. The Portuguese maintained good relation with Metropolitan Mar Jacob (1504-52) whom they met at their arrival in India. They realized that he was having the Catholic and Apostolic faith. The Malankara Christians also did not think that they were members either of a Church different from the one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church or of any heretical Church. The Portuguese allowed Mar Jacob to celebrate the holy Eucharist on their altars. The Malankara Christians did so with the conviction that the Portuguese were the brethren in faith. The Portuguese also had the same attitude towards the natives and their bishops. Despite the liturgical and ritual diversities, both believed that they were members of the one Church of Christ. When Vasco da Gama arrived in Kerala for the second time in 1502, the Christian community at Kodungalloor presented him their sceptre (*chenkol*). When Albuquerque, the Portuguese sailor arrived at Kollam in 1503, the Christians there presented him one of their three crosses. As a token of gratitude, he helped the Christians to get back their previous privileges they enjoyed. He gave the church a bell and the portrait of St. James. When he went back from there, he left a Dominican religious, Rodrigo by name to teach and train them in religious matters.

Albuquerque donated in 1510 a good amount of money (1000 *Panam*) to Mar Jacob for renovating the church at Kodungalloor. As per the agreement between the Portuguese Governor Lopo Suarez and the Queen of *Kollam* in 1516, she agreed to renovate the church there. We see in 1517 Malankara *Nazranikal* and the Portuguese jointly making their pilgrimage to Mylapore. Mar Jacob had been receiving a certain

amount of money from the Portuguese Kings Manuel and John III as a subsidy for his Episcopal activities. Mar Jacob himself personally introduced his faithful to the Portuguese. In a letter addressed to the King of Portugal, Mar Jacob related that he did not know the Latin customs, that the Christians disliked the missionary *Penteado* who tried to introduce the Latin customs and that he must be called back immediately. We find St. Francis Xavier in his letters to Europe, speaking very highly of Mar Jacob.³¹

Mar Yausep and the Portuguese

The Portuguese were not in good terms with the East Syrian Catholic Bishop Mar Yausep (1556-69), who ruled the Church after Mar Jacob. On his way to India from West Asia, they detained him at Goa. The Portuguese did not pay heed his declarations that he was a Catholic bishop, that he was ordained by the Catholic Patriarch Abdiso and that he had visited the Pope in Rome together with his brother Sulaqa. They did not allow him to come to Kerala. They detained him there for eighteen months, persecuted him and finally sent him to Europe in their ship. After one year he was tried by the inquisitors at Lisbon and was found not guilty and was therefore acquitted. Instead of sending him back to India, they sent him aboard to Rome, where Mar Yausep obtained recommendation letters from the Pope and set out for India. When he arrived in Kerala, the Portuguese arrested him again, but released him soon on the basis of the inquisition court orders and the Papal letters. For the next ten years he served the community as its bishop. In 1568 he was once again arrested by the Portuguese and deported to Lisbon first and then to Rome, where he died in 1569. His books are still found in the Vatican library.

Mar Abraham and the Portuguese

When Mar Yausep was arrested and deported to Europe, another bishop, Mar Abraham by name, came to Malankara from West Asia in 1558. As he came disguised, they could not arrest him. He served the Malankara Church from Angamaly. However, the Portuguese arrested

³¹ A.M. Mundadan, *The Arrival of the Portuguese in India and the Thomas Christians under Mar Jacob, 1498 -1550*, Bangalore, 1967.

him and sent also to Europe before long. They wanted to hand him over to the Inquisition at Lisbon and examine whether he was having the true faith or was a heretic. On his way to Europe, he escaped from the Portuguese custody and went to his own Catholic Patriarch in West Asia where he narrated to him all that was happening in India among the Malankara faithful. Then he went to Rome in 1565 with the recommendation letters from his Patriarch Mar Abdiso. He informed Pope Pius IV (1559-65) the developments in India and the ill treatment he received from the hands of the Portuguese. The Pope sent him back to India with letters to the Latin bishops of Goa and Kochi. In 1568 Mar Abraham reached Goa. Although he had the Papal letters, he was detained there. But he escaped from their custody and fled to Malankara. He kept himself away from the area of the Portuguese influence and served the Church. Subsequently some missionaries intervened and mediated between the Portuguese and Mar Abraham and brought about a temporary reconciliation.³²

Nestorian Allegation

During the time of Mar Abraham, the Portuguese began to tighten the noose round the Malankara Church. They began to propagate that the liturgical books contained the Nestorian heresy and they must be corrected. In 1585/6 Fr. Francis Roz s.j., wrote a pamphlet, entitled "About the Errors of the Nestorians who live in this Oriental India" (*De Erroribus Nestorianorum qui in hac India Orientali versantur*)³³. Fr. Roz alleged Nestorianism in the Syriac Bible, liturgical books and theological books used in this Church. But in fact what he alleged as Nestorianism was not genuine heresy. The variations found in the Bible were only specialities related to the Syriac (*Pšitha*) Bible. The *errors*, he mentioned, in the liturgical and theological books were merely *errors* invented by the Westerners in the light of their Western Scholastic theology. They were errors in their eyes because they gave a different

³² C Thevarmannil, *Mar Abraham, the Archbishop of St. Thomas Christians in Malabar*, Rome 1966 (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis); G.Chediath, *Indiyude Metrapolita Mar Abraham*, Kottayam, 1990.

³³ I. Hausher, ed. In *OC* XI.40 (1928) 5-35; *CO* 10/4(1989) 143-162 (English tr. by C.M.George); G. Chediath, *Mar Thoma Sleehayude Indian Sabha*, p. 97-117(Malayalam translation).

meaning to the Syriac words, which the Eastern Churches, did not give. They were in fact neither objective mistakes nor errors. In those days everything that was different from the Latin language and Scholastic formulation was heresy for some missionaries. And for them Syriac was the source of all heresies. The allegation of Nestorian heresy of the Thomas Christians was the fanciful creation of the Western missionaries.

The Third Goan Synod (1585)

Many matters relating to the Malankara Church were discussed in the Third Goan Provincial Synod held in 1585. Since the Pope guaranteed his safety, Mar Abraham also took part in it, although unwillingly. Recommendations were made there to rectify the so-called “*Nestorian errors*” in the liturgical books of the Malankara Church. However, Mar Abraham, on his return, did not venture to mutilate the liturgical texts on the basis of the unfounded assumptions of the missionaries. He did not feel the need of it. On account of it, the missionaries were very much dissatisfied with him, especially towards the end of his life. They resolved to take control of the Church after his death. In 1597 Mar Abraham, the last East Syrian bishop of the Malankara Church, died and was buried at Angamaly.

5

The Synod of Diamper (1599)

The Synod of Diamper (*Udayamperur*) convened by the Goan Latin Bishop Dom Menezes in 1599 was meant to give a legal colour to the Portuguese plan to merge this Malankara Apostolic Eastern Church with the Latin Church and make it a part of it. They did it in order to legitimize permanently the Portuguese hegemony over this Church and westernize it. Since they neither understood the unity in legitimate diversity, nor had the necessary knowledge of the Syriac and Indian traditions, they grossly abused an Apostolic Church for their vested colonial interest causing immense damage to the Church in India and to the cause of Christ in the Indian sub continent. The Portuguese intents were multifarious: They wanted to westernize this Eastern Church by bringing it under the Portuguese King, enforce the hegemony of Portugal over the Malankara Church for ever, establish the Portuguese colonialism in India religiously and politically, promote their business here and finally contribute to the economic prosperity of Portugal. They knew that they could not achieve this end as long as the East Syrian bishops were present here. That was why they persecuted those who were here and prevented the arrival of any other East Syrian Bishop.

Archdeacon Geevarghese

Mar Abraham before his death wanted to bring an East Syrian Catholic bishop from Persia to India as his successor. He was corresponding with the Chaldean Patriarch for this purpose. But the Portuguese prevented the coming of any bishop other than those sent by the Portuguese King. Mar Abraham, before his death, entrusted the affairs of the Church to his Archdeacon Geevarghese of the *Pakalomattam* family. When the Goan Archbishop Dom Menezes knew

about the death of Mar Abraham, he appointed Fr. Roz, s. j. as the Vicar Apostolic of the Malankara Church. However, when he knew about the appointment of the Archdeacon by Mar Abraham, he cancelled the appointment of Fr. Roz. Menezes asked the Archdeacon to make the profession of faith before the missionaries. But the Archdeacon did not pay any attention to it. Instead he convened a meeting of all the priests and lay representatives of the Malankara Church at Angamaly. The meeting extended full support to the Archdeacon and decided that the ancient liturgical traditions and customs of the Malankara Church would be kept intact and agreed not to accept any bishop other than the East Syrian Catholic bishops. Subsequently in another meeting at Vaipin under the supervision of the Franciscan missionaries, the profession of faith was read in Portuguese. The Archdeacon, approving it said *yes* at the end. But no Jesuit missionary was present at the meeting there.

Menezes to Malankara

The Portuguese missionary Archbishop of Goa, Dom Menezes, came from Goa to Kochi on the 1st February 1599, to take control of this Church at a time when the See was vacant. We have a letter of Menezes sent from India to Rome on the 19th December 1597, where he describes his intentions and plans regarding the Malankara Church. In that letter he made it clear, that he intended to rectify the *disorders* in the Malankara Church, to make the visitation of the parishes, to convene a Synod of priests and bring this Church under the influence of the Roman (Latin) Church, to compel them to accept the Latin bishops, to destroy all the books containing the “*errors*”, to appoint a Jesuit as their bishop, to remove slowly and without their knowledge the Syriac language which was the source through which all the heretical teachings crept into the Church, to ask them to learn Latin and thus to replace Syriac with Latin and finally to subjugate the Malankara Metropolitan as a suffragan of the missionary diocese of Goa.

On his arrival in Malankara, he had an encounter with the Archdeacon. It did not take place in an atmosphere of love nor did it end in concord. Nevertheless, this foreign bishop cunningly made neat plans to realize his objective. He set out to visit the parishes one by one. From the Jesuit Seminary at Vaipin, he visited the parishes at Paravur, Alangatt, and Chowara. As he could not elicit the cooperation of the

Archdeacon, the receptions were rather cold and unenthusiastic. So as a shrewd politician, Menezes decided to get reconciled with the Archdeacon, who strongly protested against the intervention of a foreign bishop in the internal affairs of the Malankara Church. As a result of the consequent discussions, the Archdeacon permitted him to preach and bless the faithful in the capacity of a foreign Catholic bishop. Menezes gave a written assurance that he would not conduct any Episcopal function in the Church. Afterwards he visited the parishes at Kanjoor, Purakkad, Kayamkulam, Kundara, Karunagappally, and Venmany. Returning to Kochi, he visited the parishes at Mulanthuruthy, Udayamperur, Kaduthuruthy, and Thrippunithura. Contrary to the written assurance to the Archdeacon, he conducted priestly ordination and consecrated the holy Myron for confirmation in these parishes. It led to disorder and riot in the parishes. At Udayamperur he ordained 38 persons. At Kaduthuruthy he conducted the Holy Week services and the ordination Service. At Mulanthuruthy he administered the sacrament of confirmation. As he secured the support of a good number of priests and faithful through ordinations, he became emboldened. Kaduthuruthy and Udayamperur were the strongholds of the Suddists. It was in these parishes that he ordained many to priesthood. Most of those who disregarded the directives of the Archdeacon and sided with Menezes were from these two parishes. As he got some support from some of the parishes, Dom Menezes put forward certain unacceptable proposals to the Archdeacon. By this time Menezes had influenced the local Kings and feudal Lords. As there was no other way, unwillingly, the Archdeacon agreed. These actions were aimed at surrendering the Malankara Church to the Portuguese and at destroying its time honored venerable traditions and destroying its autonomy, individuality and freedom.

Preparation for the Synod

Menezes sent a circular from Chennamangalam on 14th May 1599 to all the parishes, informing them that he intended to convene a Synod, that the Archdeacon, all the parish priests, deacons and four elected lay representatives each from every parish should participate in it and that if any one absented himself without sufficient reason, he would be *ipso*

facto excommunicated.³⁴ Residing at Kodungalloor, by that time a stronghold of the Portuguese traders, he prepared some decrees in the light of the decrees of the Council of Trent. Just a few days before the Synod, he ordained another batch of 50 men at Paravur parish.

Proceedings of the Synod

The Synod, which introduced drastic changes in the life of this ancient apostolic Church, was inaugurated on 20th June 1599 at *Udayamperur (Diamper)*. 153 Priests and 660 lay representatives participated in it. However, none among the 18 priests from Angamaly, the center of the Malankara Church, participated in it. Similarly, some other churches also did not send their representatives. Many of the 153 Priests were new ones who had been ordained by Menezes.

On the first day there was the solemn celebration of the Eucharist. Everybody made the confession of sins and received Holy Communion for the success of the Synod. Menezes asked the participants not to leave the place till the end of the Synod and threatened with excommunication *ipso facto* those who would violate it. He prohibited also any private discussion under the threat of the same punishment. Portuguese soldiers were posted to ensure that nobody left Udayamperur till the end of the meeting. The participants were asked to recite the litany of our Lady everyday. The Jesuit priests Francis Roz, Stephen Britto, Antony Toscano and John Campori from the Vaipin Seminary helped Menezes in the Synod. A certain native priest Chacko from Palluruthy acted as the translator. On the second day, there was the profession of Faith. The people were not prepared to do so on the basis that they had professed the true faith and were authentic Christians. Menezes himself made first the profession of faith, followed by the Archdeacon, the priests and the faithful. Thus Dom Menezes could handle the situation, pacify the protestors and bring order in the assembly. So the meeting proceeded as Menezes had planned and arranged. On the following days the canons and decrees on faith and sacraments, already prepared in advance by Menezes, were read. They were not discussed,

³⁴ For the letters connected with the Synod and prior to the Synod, see G. Chediath, *Indiayude Metrapolita Mar Abraham, Kottayam, 1990*.

corrected or approved by the assembly. Most of the participants didn't even know what was going on. Protests had no effect before Menezes.

On the seventh day he divided the Malankara Metropolitan See into 75 parishes and read out the names of the Vicars in those parishes. Here is the beginning of the system of appointing Vicars in the parishes in Malankara. In the appointment of the Vicars, preference was given to the priests ordained by Menezes himself. At the end of the meeting, all the participants signed the document. The Synod came to a close on the 26th June 1599 with a solemn procession. Menezes distributed to the participant priests an altar stone blessed by him, containers for holy oils, copies of the Order of the Sacramentary translated from Latin to Syriac, the surplices according to the Latin rite, sacred vestments for the Mass, altar clothes and chalice and paten for the Eucharistic celebration. He made a move to get the Latin Breviary translated into Syriac and to introduce it here, but because of the strong protest he had to give it up. It was finally decided that it was enough to correct the so-called errors in the Syriac books.

Attempts for the Roman Approval

Menezes tried his best to get the decrees approved by Rome. But he did not succeed. Fr. Roz himself wrote to Rome, telling not to approve it. Scholars are of opinion that it had no canonical value, nothing more than a mere set of suggestions and guidelines. It had no form or order of a synod in the strict sense. Even after the Synod, Menezes added many more canons. There was a wide difference between the Malayalam version and the Portuguese version of the canons and decrees. In the Portuguese version there were several clauses and terms humiliating the Malankara Christians. The Synod of Udayamperur was convened by a foreign intruder, a Roman Catholic bishop, who had no authority whatsoever over this Church. He acted as he liked on the military strength and under the threat of excommunication. From the point of view of the Malankara Christians, the actions of Menezes could in no way be justified.

After the Synod

During his parish visits prior to and at the time of the Synod he talked about the Nestorian heresy and the errors found in the Syriac liturgical books used here. He spoke also of the need to terminate the

East Syrian line of episcopacy here. During the Synod, he burned several of the Syriac books. After the Synod he continued the visitation of the parishes and burned a lot of Syriac books. In certain cases he made only corrections. Seeing that none of the priests from Angamaly attended the Synod, he went there and burned all the books, found there. In the same way he went to Chengannoor and burned the Syriac books there too. Then he visited the parishes at Kottayam, Kudamalur, Kadampanad, Cheppad, Kayamkulam and Thevalakkara. Alleging Nestorianism, he burned a lot of ancient Syriac books. In November 1599 Menezes reached Goa. In 1599 December 20, Fr. Roz s. j. became the first Latin bishop of the Malankara Church. The See of Angamaly was reduced to a Padroado See of Portugal and again to a suffragan diocese of Goa. We see here how the ancient Apostolic Malankara Church was captured and subjugated by the Portuguese missionaries in the 16th century under the might of an iron fist.³⁵

6

The Synod of Diamper and the Changes effected in the Malankara Church

With the arrival of the Portuguese, a new chapter was opened in the history of the Malankara Church. Though the general aim of the Portuguese was trade and business, some of the missionaries who accompanied the traders rendered commendable services to the Church. The most important among them was definitely St. Francis Xavier. As a result of his dedicated missionary work, many thousands along the Western coast of Kerala became Christians. The missionaries lent a helping hand to the hundreds of the downtrodden in the society. The Westerners did a lot of good things in the land. However, several of their other activities cast a shadow over their many good and dedicated services.

Many of the missionaries firmly believed that the Latin and Western customs and rites were the only core of the true Catholic faith. They could not think of anything different from the Latin rites, customs, Latin way of life and thinking. They insisted that a good Christian must be a Latin. They took steps to merge the Malankara Church in the Latin Church. They forced this Church to adopt a lot of meaningless changes. They destroyed the early purity and individuality of this ancient apostolic Church. They made it a disfigured hybrid Church. Malankara Church bore witness to a lot of events, incongruous to the very spirit of the Church of Christ. The Canons of the Synod of Udayamperur make it

³⁵ Jonas Thaliath, *The Synod of Diamper*, Rome, 1958; Scariah Zacharia, ed. *The Acts and decrees of the Synod of Diamper*, Edamattom, 1994; X. Koodapuzha, *Bharatha Sabhacharitam*, p.282-329.

clear that in general the Portuguese were ignorant of Eastern ecclesiastical matters. We shall have a brief discussion on the changes introduced by the Portuguese in the Malankara Church.

1. Changes relating to the Bishops

The bishops of the Malankara Church came from the East Syrian Church in Persia. They knew the liturgy well and were the heads of the liturgical community. They were spiritual leaders and men of prayer. The Portuguese alienated them from this community and in their place, Western Latin bishops, devoid of any knowledge of this Church and its liturgy and traditions, were appointed. Thus people who were totally ignorant of the Malankara Church and its ancient noble traditions became its leaders.

2. Changes concerning the Archdeacon

The Archdeacon carried out the temporal administration of the Malankara Church and in reality he was the real leader of the Church. Each church had its parish assembly known as the *Pallyogam* and the entire Church had the general Assembly (*Pothuyogam*). The laity had decisive role in the administration of the Church. The mentality that the bishops are to rule the Church and the laity are to obey was absent in the Malankara Church. Both the clergy and the laity had their role in the life of the Church. But this situation changed drastically with the advent of the Portuguese. In the beginning, at least nominally, the Archdeacon was appointed. But slowly the Latin Vicar General was appointed in his place. The entire administrative system was changed.

3. Changes concerning the Priests

The local priests, known as *Desathu pattakaar* carried out the spiritual services in each parish. This was changed at the Synod of Udayamperur and the missionaries introduced the system of Vicars. The optional celibacy was replaced by the prevalent system of celibacy in the Latin Church. What had been in vogue in all the Eastern Churches was the system of optional celibacy. That was the tradition of the Malankara Church also.

4. Changes concerning the Seminarians

In the Malankara Church, the Malpans gave training to the candidates to priesthood. There was no seminary system, as it exists today. Every parish had its decisive voice in the selection of the candidates. The bishop ordained only those who received the certificate from the parish (*Desakkuri*). With the interference of the Portuguese, all these customs and traditions were changed.

5. Changes concerning liturgical Matters

The Portuguese made a lot of changes in the East Syrian liturgical tradition that had existed in the Malankara Church for centuries. They bluntly corrected or changed all those things, which, according to their mentality, were incompatible with the Latin customs and traditions. Two of the three Anaphoras in use were suppressed. Even in the one retained for use, they introduced a lot of unnecessary changes.

The words of Institution were translated from Latin into Syriac and added to the Syriac Missal. They introduced the expression *Mother of God* instead of the expression *Mother of Christ*, which was in use here always. In the Nicene Creed, *filioque* was added, making it similar to the Latin usage. The Latin *Order of Sacramentary* was translated into Syriac and was introduced in the Malankara Church. The Latin liturgical vestments were introduced in the place of the Oriental vestments. The way that the sign of the cross was made was changed. The practice here was to make it from the right shoulder to the left. The Portuguese reversed it from left to right. They introduced the feast of *Corpus Christi*. According to the Eastern tradition, this feast was on Maundy Thursday. The tradition of giving the Eucharist in two species was suppressed and the medieval Latin system of giving it in one form alone was introduced. In the place of the usual Oriental leavened bread for the Eucharist, the Latin unleavened bread was introduced.

The Rite of Ordination was taken from the Latin Church. The Rites for the other sacraments were also translated from Latin into Syriac and introduced into practice. The Liturgical calendar was mutilated and the names of a lot of Latin saints were pressed in. The consecration words used in the various sacraments were in the passive voice in the

Eastern Churches. They changed them all into active voice as in the Latin Church. The names of the East Syrian saints were removed from the Calendar and the churches dedicated in their names were rededicated in the names of Latin saints. They introduced the crucifix and statues in the churches, which were not in use in Malankara. The simple cross (*Sliba*) without the figure of the crucified Christ was in use here. Confirmation was separated from baptism and reserved for a later date as in the Latin Church, and the custom of giving communion at the time of baptism was stopped.

6. Changes relating to Fast and Abstinence

In the Malankara Church, as in all the other Eastern Churches, the beginning of the Great Lent was on Monday. It was known as 50 days fast (*Anpathu Nomb*). During the great Lent the Christians abstained from meat and fish. On fast days they ate only in the evening. The counting of the liturgical day was from evening to evening. The Portuguese changed these and other similar traditions and made them like those in Latin. They did not include the other fast days, prevalent in the Malankara Church and eventually they came into disuse. All these created popular displeasure.

Many things that the missionaries regarded as unchristian and heretical were in fact genuine Oriental and Indian traditions. Since they had decided to subjugate this Church to their Church at any cost, they undertook all the measures to realize this goal. They propagated widely throughout the West, that they saved the Malankara Church from Nestorianism and brought it to Catholicism at the *Synod of Diamper (Udayamperur)* and many believed them. And even today there are some who continue to believe so.³⁶

³⁶ See the references in: T. Mannooramparambil, *Syro- Malabar Sabhayude Charitra Paschaathalam*, Kottayam, 1986; idem, *Syro- Malabar Sabhayude Qurbana-Oru Padhanam*, Vol.1, Kottayam, 1999 (2nd ed). Vol.2, 1998; X. Koodapuzha, *Bharatha Sabhâcharitram*, p.325-329; Scariah Zacharia, *Randu Praachina Gedyakrithikal*, Changanassery, 1976; H. Perumalil- E. R. Hambye, *Christianity in India*; J. Vellian, *The Romanization Tendency, Kottayam, 1975*.

7

From the Synod of Diamper to the Coonan Cross Oath (1599-1653)

What happened at the Synod of Udayamperur was the systematic implementation of a well-planned scheme of making this ancient apostolic Church part of a missionary Church in India. The Malankara Church was Catholic, but it was not part of the Roman Catholic (Latin) Church. The Churches, which are not part of the Roman Church, need not necessarily be non-Catholic. However, these two Churches, Roman and Malankara remained for a long period of time without sufficient communication and contact. At the arrival of the Portuguese, the Malankara *Nazranikal* renewed the contacts and communication. The Western Portuguese missionaries committed unpardonable mistakes in deciding, that only by making the Catholic Apostolic ancient Malankara Church, part of the Roman Church, namely by making it a province or diocese of the Roman Church, it would be devoid of heresy and schism. Almost for a period of half a century from 1599, the Malankara Christians were suffocated under the Western domination.

Bishop Francisco Roz,s.j.(1599-1624)

Bishop Roz was appointed the suffragan of the Latin diocese of Goa. The Malankara Christians strongly protested against it and it took eight years for the partial reestablishment of the old status of the Malankara Apostolic See. In 1608 Angamaly was once again made an Archdiocese. But the *Padroado* status imposed in 1600 was not removed. That is to say, this Apostolic Church continued to be under the Patronage of the Portuguese King, though he had no authority over this Church.

The bishops of this Church, according to the *Padroado*, should be appointed with the permission and consent of the Portuguese King. The right to preach the Gospel in India would be the monopoly of the Portuguese King. The head quarters of the Church were transferred from Angamaly to Kodungalloor. Thus through the iron fist of colonialism, the Portuguese controlled this Church and became its Lords, the authority of which neither the Western Church, nor the Westerners had here for 16 centuries. They did it, by simply ignoring and disregarding the strong protests of this Apostolic Church. But it is to be noted, that some native Christians sided with the missionaries and supported them in their endeavors. Thus it was as a result of the diverse mentalities in the local Church, that the Portuguese were able to gain control of this Church and subjugate it in accordance with their colonial mentality.³⁷

In 1603 Bishop Roz convened a Synod at Angamaly. Roz knew well that if the decrees of the Synod of Udayamperur were implemented as they were, the Malankara Christians would take it as humiliating and insulting. So, basing on the decrees and canons of the Synod, he prepared some Statutes and published them in 1606. It is known as the *Rozian Statutes*.³⁸ Subsequently all the powers were vested on the bishop as in the Latin Church and those of the Archdeacon were totally done away with. This was the chief reason for the subsequent conflict between the Latin bishop and the Archdeacon. Roz latinised the Holy Qurbana, the Sacramentary, and parts of the Divine Office. The Latin Order for Ordination was translated into Syriac and mixed with the Syriac texts. In certain cases, he changed the Syriac text, or corrected it or translated. In some cases he mixed both the Syriac and the Latin texts. Although Roz was the suffragan of Goa, he signed in accordance with the ancient tradition of the Malankara Church, as the “*Metropolitan of India*”. Although his Archdeacon had only less authority and power than the Latin Vicar General, he signed as usual the “*Archdeacon of India*.”³⁹

On 20th December 1610, the whole of India was divided into four dioceses under the Portuguese *Padroado*: They were Goa, Kochi,

Mylapore and Kodungalloor. Those Malankara Christians, outside the territory of the new Kodungalloor diocese, came under the Latin dioceses, without changing their liturgical customs, rites and practices. Thus the *All India Jurisdiction* of the Metropolitan of the Malankara Church was reduced to a very tiny place in the new *Padroado* Kodungalloor diocese and thus the Christians were divided between the dioceses of Kochi and Kodungalloor. The Latins considered Kodungalloor as a Latin diocese. The Malankara Christians used for centuries the latinised liturgical texts of Bishop Roz. Roz died in 1624 and was buried at Paravur.

Bishop Estevao (Stefano) de Britto, s.j.(1624-41)

After Bishop Roz, Britto, the Jesuit priest became the bishop of the Malankara Church. His authority was confined to a very small area. But on the basis of the ancient tradition of the Malankara Church, he too signed as “*Archbishop of India*.” He too curtailed the powers of the Archdeacon. Geevarghese Archdeacon died in 1640 and was buried at Angamaly. And Thomas, the Archdeacon, became the leader of the Church. Roz knew some Syriac, while Britto was ignorant of it. So he tried to remove all the rites, which were not in line with the Latin rites. And there was strong protest from the part of the local church. Hence Britto decided to make reconciliation with the Archdeacon. There was also another reason for this tactic change of attitude on the part of Britto. The Dutch, after having established the trade monopoly in Malabar, were turning their attention to central Travancore. To resist the Dutch merchants, the Portuguese wanted the help and support of the Archdeacon and the local Christians. And that was the political agenda behind the mild treatment of the Archdeacon by Britto. He adopted a policy of appeasing the Archdeacon. He gave a written assurance to the Archdeacon that no vicar would be appointed, transferred, interdicted, or absolved without the consent of the Archdeacon. But these eyewashes did not help to improve the strained relationship between the Portuguese and the Malankara Christians. Britto died in 1641.

Bishop Francisco Garcia Mendez, s.j.(1641-59)

After Britto, Garcia, a Jesuit Priest became the bishop of the Thomas Christians. Even his co-workers reported about him that he had been stubborn, callous and revengeful by nature. He knew rather well both Malayalam and Syriac. He was quite learned in Philosophy and

³⁷ G.Beltrami, *La Chiesa Caldea nel secolo dell'Unione*, Rome, 1933(OCA 29).

³⁸ Scaria Zacharia, *Randu Prachina Gedyakrithikal*, Changanassery, 1976 p.109-177.

³⁹ J. Kollaparampil, *The Archdeacon of All India*, Kottayam, 1972.

Theology. Nevertheless, he did not adopt the path of reconciliation and cooperation. He refused even to recognize the written assurances of Britto. Moreover, he too engaged very zealously in his relentless attempt for latinization.

It was, in fact, during the reign of Bishop Garcia that the protests and hostility of the Malankara Christians reached the culmination. The then Archdeacon gave leadership for this protest. The opposition against Portuguese missionaries turned concretely against Bishop Francis Garcia Mendez and the Jesuit missionaries. The Malankara Christians saw them as their enemies. What one could see here, since 1599, was the direct confrontation between the traditional administrative system of an ancient Apostolic Church and the Portuguese vested colonial interests, to establish their supremacy over it. The Portuguese had definite political ends to achieve. For that purpose they utilized religion. The Archdeacons, who had very clear vision of the Malankara Church and who dedicated their lives for the Church and were the true pastors of the faithful could not stoop down before the inhuman might of colonialism. There are several things the leaders of the community should do and should not do. The Archdeacons knew them very well. As a result, they had to confront the colonial might. That is what we see in the Coonan cross Oath of 1653.⁴⁰

8 The Coonan Cross Oath (1653)

The Coonan Cross Oath was a common pledge of the Malankara Church taken at Mattanchery in 1653 against the ecclesiastical domination of the Portuguese missionaries. It was made not by a few individuals, nor by a few isolated parishes, but by the entire community. They took an oath represented by about 25,000 representatives of priests and laity, against the Western domination and Portuguese ecclesiastical colonialism. The Oath was: “we will never remain under the *Sampalur Pathiris* as long as our generations continue to exist.” The Oath was made in a novel way. The priests holding lighted candles in their hands were inside the church, while the faithful held on to the ropes, tied from the stone cross in front of the church to the four parts. And they all in one voice pronounced the above mentioned Oath. The Cross at Mattanchery was known as the Coonan Cross. The Jesuit Study House near Ampazhakkat was known as Sampalur. It simply meant St. Paul’s, a study house in the name of St. Paul. Bishops like Roz, Britto and Garcia were members of this house. It was at the time of Garcia that the Oath took place. The sum and substance of the Oath was that they would no more obey the Jesuits of Sampalur, and that they would no more remain under their rule.

The Immediate Cause

There had been an immediate cause for the new development. The Malankara Christians had really liked the East Syrian Bishops from West Asia. They were sending frequent Memoranda to West Asia, asking for Syrian bishops. Eventually a Syrian bishop named Ahathalla arrived at Surat in 1652. From there he proceeded to Mylapore. He then sent a letter to the Archdeacon Thomas through the Malankara faithful who

⁴⁰ J. Thekkedath, *The Troubled Days of Francis Garcia*, Rome 1972.

had gone on a pilgrimage to Mylapore. When the people knew of the exact date of his arrival at Kochi in a Portuguese ship, they made arrangements for a fitting reception to be accorded to him. They assembled on the precise day at Kochi. But the Portuguese Captain did not permit him to land at *Kochi (Cochin)*; instead they set sail for Goa. The Portuguese knew for certain that if Ahathalla were permitted to land, the people would accept him and they would lose their hold in the Church. At any cost they wanted to continue here, strengthen their position and maintain hegemony over this Church. Not only did Garcia, the ruling bishop, deny Ahathalla to land, but he did not also permit anybody to go to the ship to meet Ahathalla and communicate with him. In the meantime someone spread a rumor that the Portuguese had drowned the bishop in the Sea. At once the people rose in revolt. The Coonan Cross Oath was its result.

The Portuguese did not drown Ahathalla in the *Kochi* backwaters. Though some Jacobite writers still continue to spread this false rumor, it is contrary to truth. There had been authentic studies about Ahathalla in modern times. In the light of their studies, scholars have reached the following conclusions about Ahathalla. He was first a Jacobite bishop at Aleppo in Syria. After some time he became a Catholic bishop. He went to Rome and stayed there for some time. When he was at Cairo, he received a memorandum from the Malankara Christians. From *Kochi*, the Portuguese took him in their ship first to Goa and then to Europe. He died at Paris and his tomb still exists in Paris.⁴¹

Follow-up Action

The Coonan Cross Oath took place on Friday, the 3rd January 1653 at Mattanchery near *Kochi*. After that event the parish representatives met at Edappally, and discussed the future course of action. They passed resolutions to the effect that they did not want any more Jesuit bishops, that they wanted bishops only from their own community, and if it was not possible they would prefer Carmelite bishops or bishops from any other religious order other than the Jesuit. They also decided that these resolutions should be sent to Rome and that they

⁴¹ J. Kollapampil, *Ahathalla Geveshanangalude Velichathil*, Kottayam, s.d.

would meet at Alangatt on 22nd May 1653 and the future course of action would be decided there.

The Imposition of Hands by Twelve Priests

When the Malankara Church was passing through a period of crisis and uncertainty, Ittithomman Cathanar fabricated a document in Syriac and presented it to the leaders of the community as an authentic document from Ahathalla, permitting to ordain a bishop by the imposition of hands by twelve priests. In the light of this fake document, believing that it was genuine, on the 22nd May 1653, on the Pentecost day, at Alangatt, twelve priests imposed their hands on the Archdeacon Thomas and called him Bishop. In order to assist him, four councillors were also elected. They were Palliveetil Parambil Chandy *Cathanar*, Kadavil Chandy *Cathanar*, Vengattoor Geevarghese *Cathanar*, and Anjilimoottil Ittithomman *Cathanar*.

The Malankara Christians, who had already snapped their ties with the Latin missionaries through the Coonan Cross Oath, were very much in need of an able leader. In the absence of the bishop, traditionally the Archdeacon was looking after the affairs of the Church. The imposition of hands conferred on him by twelve priests seemed to be an act of reinvesting in him those powers that were vested in him by tradition, but were removed by the Latin prelates. Even according to the fake document presented by Ittithomman Cathanar, he was to be appointed on condition that he would not confer priestly ordination nor bless the holy *Myron*. But before long the truth got disclosed. Those who heard it were shocked and confused. The Archdeacon also knew that he had no Episcopal ordination.

Joseph Maria Sebastiani

They woke up from the initial shock and straightway plunged into action to tide over the difficult situation. Many representations were sent to Rome, informing that a serious crisis had cropped up in the Malankara Church and asking the authorities to find an amicable solution through immediate intervention. Rome sent two Carmelite delegations to Kerala in 1653, authorizing them to probe into all the issues connected with the *Coonan Cross Oath*. One delegation was led by Joseph Sebastiani and the other by Hyacinth. Sebastiani reached here in 1657,

four years after the Oath! He convened several meetings at Muttam, Mattanchery, Edappally and Alangatt and interviewed a lot of people and took note of their replies. He tried to convince the people that the imposition of hands on the Archdeacon Thomas by twelve priests was invalid, that the document produced by Ittithomman Cathanar was fake and that he himself was delegated by the Pope to ascertain the exact situation in the Malankara Church. Thanks to Sebastiani, a lot of Malankara Christians realizing the truth, left the Archdeacon and began to accept the missionaries. Sebastiani returned to Rome in 1658. On 10th March 1658, five years after the Oath, the other delegation of Hyacinth arrived in Kerala. He too discussed the matter with the Archdeacon. The Archdeacon was prepared to relinquish the Episcopal *insignia*. Bishop Garcia, in the meantime, appointed another priest as his Archdeacon. The Christians in general adopted the stand that they would return but would not accept Garcia under any condition. On the other hand, Garcia stubbornly persisted that all should return to his authority and accept him. The newly appointed Archdeacon refused to give up his position. Hyacinth succeeded in bringing back a lot of parishes including Angamaly. However with an unexpected move from his part, Hyacinth on 26th July 1659 excommunicated the Archdeacon. Thus this Carmelite priest slammed the doors against any possible communion of the two groups.

Bishop Garcia died on 3rd September 1659 and Hyacinth also died on 10th February 1661 at Kochi. In the meantime Sebastiani was secretly ordained as a bishop in Rome and he reached Kerala on 14th May 1661. Rome instituted a separate establishment, “*The Apostolic Vicariate of Malabar*” for the Malankara Christians, who had refused to accept the Jesuit bishops and did not want to continue under the *Padroado* Jesuit rule of Kodungalloor. Sebastiani returned to Kerala as the Vicar Apostolic of this Vicariate. Some of the Malankara Christians who refused to be under the Jesuit rule gladly welcomed Sebastiani. Immediately he initiated discussion with the Archdeacon about the prospect of reunion. The Archdeacon put forward the condition that his ordination should be rectified. But Sebastiani resorted to the stance that the issue of rectifying the ordination could be considered only after giving up the self-assumed Episcopal *insignia*.

Meanwhile the Dutch captured *Kochi* and *Kodungalloor* and ordered Sebastiani to quit the place immediately. He could have easily made use of the chance to rectify the ordination of the Archdeacon and reestablish the unity in the Church. But Sebastiani was not ready for ordaining the Archdeacon. He too excommunicated the Archdeacon. Before he left Kerala, he ordained at Kaduthuruthy as bishop, Parampil Chandy Cathanar who was from the family of the Archdeacon and was one of his councilors. On 14th February 1663 Sebastiani left the country.

The Archdeacon was trying his best to get his Episcopal ordination rectified. As a result, a certain Jacobite bishop Mar Gregorios from Jerusalem came here in 1665. With his arrival and activities the Malankara community turned into two directions:

(1) Those who were with Parampil Chandy *Metran* continued to practise their ancient East Syrian Liturgy, of course in the latinised version of Bishop Roz and continued as Catholics. Since they continued the ancient ways and customs, they were known as the *Pazhayakuttukar*.

(2) Those who recognized the Archdeacon Thomas as their head, welcomed the Jacobite bishop Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem and who later on abandoned the ancient East Syrian liturgical traditions, accepting the Antiochene rites, rituals and liturgical traditions, came to be known as the *Puthenkuttukar*.

According to some, the division into Puthenkur and Pazhayakur already existed even before the arrival of Mar Gregorios. According to them those who sent *Memoranda* to Rome and accepted the directives from Rome were *Pazhayakuttukar* and those who rejected the directives of Rome were called *Puthenkuttukar*.⁴²

⁴² J. Kollaparampil, *The St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, Kottayam, 1981: idem, *Ahathalla Geveshanangalude Velichathil*, Kottayam, s.d.

9

The Apostolic Malankara Church: the Catholic Church

The Church founded by St. Thomas, the Apostle, in Malankara was the one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ. The Apostles were the ministers of this universal Church. They were sent all over the world to build up this Church. Just because the Malankara Church had its later ties with the East Syrian Church of Persia and their liturgical texts were in use here, the Westerners mistook the Church as *Nestorian* and thus they spread the idea in the Western circles.

One can say for certain that originally all the Malankara Christians belonged to one Church. But down through the centuries there were several tragic divisions in this one community. All had the same apostolic origin and it continued till 1653. Therefore all can claim the St. Thomas tradition. But some have deviated from the original Church and adopted various types of ecclesial life. And the unity of the one Church was shattered. Till 1653 all the Malankara Christians, belonging to the St. Thomas tradition, had a common history. Till 1772 the *Thozhiyur Church* had a common history with the *Puthenkur* community. Till 1836, the Syrians, who joined the Anglicans, had a history in common with the *Puthenkur* community. Till 1889, the *Mar Thoma Church* had the same history as the other Jacobites. Till 1912 the *Malankara Orthodox* had a common history with the Jacobites. And afterwards their history is intermingled with that of the *Bawa Kakshy*. Till 1930 the *Malankara Catholic* history is the same as that of the Malankara Jacobites. The *Church of the East (Surais of Trichur)* has a history in common with the Syro-Malabar Church till 1908.

What remains to be investigated is whether the Malankara Church was *Nestorian*, as the Portuguese missionaries propagated in the West and as some people disseminate the idea even today in Kerala. Let us analyze the Nestorian heresy.

The heretical doctrine of *Nestorianism* teaches:

“Corresponding to the two natures, there are two persons in Jesus Christ. And the relation between these two is moral, as between two friends or as between husband and wife. The Blessed Virgin Mary is the mother of Jesus, the man, only. Hence she cannot be called the Mother of God (*Theotokos*)”.

Although the Nestorian heresy was not taught by the Church of the East (the Persian Church), the Jacobites ridiculed them by calling them Nestorians. Because of its immediate and close contact with the Persian Church, the Westerners considered the Malankara Church as Nestorian. No sensible Christian could hold on to Nestorian heresy. Jesus Christ, as depicted by the Apostles in their sacred writings and in the sacred tradition, which they handed down to us, is truly the Son of God. He is the Word of God who became man. It is the Only Begotten Son of God who became the firstborn of the Virgin. It is this divine mystery that the Church has handed over from generation to generation. No true believer can deny this fact.

The Malankara Church has never taught the Nestorian heresy. However, for the Western missionaries, anything different from Latin was heresy and the Syriac language its medium. The alleged Nestorian heresy of the Malankara Church, as judged and accused by the Westerners was only the product of their imagination and fantasy. This Church has never taught the Nestorian heresy. The Malankara Church was the one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ. The missionaries themselves have written that the Malankara Church from the apostolic times maintained the Catholic faith. The accusation of Nestorianism was part of a cunning scheme, devised by the missionaries to destroy the Syriac books, to prevent the further arrival of the East Syrian bishops and to enforce the Latin hegemony over this Apostolic Church and merge it with the Latin Church.

Evidences

Now a few evidences are presented from the history of the Malankara Church to show that the ancient Malankara Church was the “one holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church” as one recites in the Nicene Creed:

1. The Church founded by St. Thomas in India must be the same true Church of Jesus Christ, preached and established throughout the whole world by all the Apostles. The Apostles knew no Church other than the one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ. Everywhere they laid the foundation of this one, holy Church by shedding their blood for its growth.

2. It is reported by the church historian Eusebius of Caesarea (+339) and repeated by St. Jerome (+420), that the Alexandrian scholar Pantaenus visited India. At the time of Pantaenus (190) all the Churches in the various parts of the world maintained the same apostolic faith.

3. In 1498 and thereafter the Malankara Christians cordially welcomed Vasco da Gama and the other Portuguese. It was because they considered them as Christian brothers of the same faith. They considered that their faith and the faith of the Portuguese were one and the same. They wholeheartedly allowed the Portuguese priests to enter their churches and to offer the holy Eucharist. It was because of their conviction that theirs was the Church of Christ and that the Portuguese were also members of the same Church.⁴³

4. Good missionaries like St. Francis Xavier bore witness to the fact that the Malankara Church was the Catholic Church of Christ. He never suspected the true nature of this Church. On the contrary, he sent letters to Europe praising profusely the true faith of Mar Jacob, the then bishop of the Malankara Church. He also wrote a letter to Rome requesting to grant indulgence to the Malankara parish church at Kodungalloor. It is very clear that a man like St. Francis Xavier would not write like this for a non-Catholic Church. In another letter St. Francis Xavier reported that about a hundred Malankara families sent their young

⁴³ G. Schurhammer, *The Malabar Church and Rome*, Trichinopoly, 1933, p.7 (the letter of the four Persian bishops sent to their Patriarch).

men to the Seminary at Kodungalloor established by the Portuguese for priestly training. All these happened, among many other things, almost half a century before the Udayamperur Synod.⁴⁴

5. In the Goan Synods of the Latin Church, the Portuguese enacted laws for the Malankara Church. Their plan was to enforce them in the Church through Mar Abraham, the bishop of the Malankara Church. Realizing that he would not get justice at the hands of the Portuguese, Mar Abraham refused to participate in the Goan Synods. In this backdrop, Pope Pius IV (1559-65) wrote four letters in favor of Mar Abraham. One was addressed to Mar Abdiso (1555-71), the Chaldean Catholic Patriarch in Persia, who was also the Patriarch of Mar Abraham. The others were sent to the Latin bishops of Goa and Kochi. The Pope urged in these letters that the Latin missionaries should treat with respect and dignity the true head of the Catholic diocese of Angamaly.⁴⁵

6. Missionaries like Ludovico Vartema (1505), Nunes Baretto (1561), and Dionysio (1570) also bore witness to the true faith of the Malankara Christians.⁴⁶

7. It was Roz, the first Jesuit missionary bishop of the Malankara Christians, who wrote a pamphlet in 1585/6 accusing them of Nestorianism. In that paper he presented a few matters he regarded as Nestorianism. At the end of it he concluded that, “*despite all these they openly call the blessed Virgin Mary mother of God*”. The Nestorian heresy refused to call Mary, *Mother of God*. But the Malankara Christians, according to Roz himself, did call her the Mother of God. The *errors* he mentioned in his pamphlet were born of his prejudices of the Eastern and Indian Christianity.

Roz continued, “*These Christians practised the Roman Catholic faith*”. In his letter of 1601 to the Jesuit General in Rome, after becoming

⁴⁴ X.Koodapuzha, *Faith and Communion of the Indian Church of St. Thomas Christians*, Kottayam, 1982, p. 84-6.

⁴⁵ S.Giamil, *Genuinae Relationes inter Sedem Apostolicam.....* Rome, 1902, p.71-73; G.Chediath, *Indiyude Metrapolita Mar Abraham* gives the Malayalam translation of these documents.

⁴⁶ X.Koodapuzha, *Bharatha Sabhacharitam*, p.180-181; J.Wicki, *Documenta Indica*, V, Rome, 1958, p. 416ff.; P.J.Podipara, *The Thomas Christians*, p.110-111.

the bishop of the Malankara Christians, he wrote like this, “*There is no doubt that they are the most ancient Christian community in the Orient. It was St. Thomas, the Apostle, who had converted them from idolatry to our faith. Though they lived among the heathens, the Jews and the Moslems, they remained firm and constant in their true faith till today.*”⁴⁷

8. If we analyse the documents connected with the Synod of Diamper/Udayamperur, we could see that the Malankara Church was the one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

A) *Before the Synod*, Menezes, the Goan Latin Catholic missionary Archbishop, visited several of the Malankara parishes. He celebrated the holy Eucharist in those churches. He ordained priests at Kodungalloor (5), Udayamperur (38), Kaduthuruthy, and Paravur (50). During his visits, he spoke against the Syriac practices and against the Fathers and bishops of the Syriac Church. The laity became enraged and strongly protested. But he threatened them with excommunication. The ensuing argument is simple and plausible. If the Malankara parishes had not been Catholic, and if the faithful had been non-Catholic, Menezes could not have been able to enter in the churches and perform Episcopal functions. The faithful would not have sent their young men to him for priestly ordination. Why should the non-Catholics fear the threat of excommunication of a Catholic bishop?

B) *In order to convene the Synod*, Menezes sent a circular on 14th May 1599 from Chennamangalam to all the Malankara parishes. It reads thus, “*We order by the due divine obedience and enforcing excommunication on violation....*” It is quite clear that in this circular Menezes was addressing Catholics and not the non-Catholics. Could a Catholic bishop ever demand divine obedience from the non-Catholics? Why should the non-Catholics fear the excommunication of a Catholic bishop? The faithful paid attention to the Catholic bishop because they were Catholics.

⁴⁷ Roz, *art. cit* : “*Romanam fidem catholicam fuerint professi*”. See above footnote, no.28.

C) *In response to the circular of Menezes*, 824 persons (153 priests, 660 lay representatives, and 11 special invitees) came from various parts of Kerala to Udayamperur. The Synod lasted for a week. If the Malankara Christians were not Catholics, would the priests and the lay representatives set out for Udayamperur in response to the circular of a Catholic Archbishop?

D) *Menezes stipulated* that for the success of the Synod holy Eucharist must be offered, Litany must be recited and all should make the confession of sins. And the participants obeyed the order. During the sessions Menezes prohibited secret discussions. He ordered them not to leave Udayamperur until the end of the Synod. Both these orders were issued under the threat of excommunication. Does it not prove that the faithful and the priests assembled there were Catholics like Menezes himself?⁴⁸

9. If one examines the documents connected with the *Coonan Cross Oath*, one could realize that the Malankara Christians were Catholics.

A) Against whom was the Coonan Cross Oath made? Was it against the Pope of Rome, the visible head of the Catholic Church and against the Catholic Church? Or was it against the Western missionaries, who came after Menezes? The historical fact is that it was against the missionaries. But some distort the facts and the events and try to create new history by attempting to make it appear to be against the Pope of the Catholic Church.

B) Since the Synod of Diamper, Latin bishops were governing the Malankara Church. Archdeacon Geevarghese was continuously writing to Rome demanding the removal of this missionary bishop from the Malankara Church and the reinstating of the rule of the Syrian bishops⁴⁹.

⁴⁸ M. Geddes, *The History of the Church of Malabar*, London, 1694, p.45-94; J. Hough, *The History of Christianity in India*, Vol.2, London, 1845, p.1-24; Raulin, *Historia Ecclesiae Malabaricae, Rome 1745*, p.62.

⁴⁹ He wrote in 1608, 1624, 1628/9 and 1632 to Rome and Portugal : J. Kollaparampil, *The Archdeacon of All India*, p. 125. 131; idem, *The St. Thomas Christians' Revolution in 1653*, p. 46.51-52.

C) The Malankara faithful wholeheartedly welcomed Mar Athallah⁵⁰ on the assumption that he had been sent by the Pope. They did not show any restraint in informing the authorities concerned that they would drown him, if need be, of course, once it was proved that he had not been sent in accordance with the Papal orders. Rev. Dominus, the *Kochi* Cathedral Chaplain, communicated it to Sebastiani in 1657. When the rumor was spread that Athallah had been drowned, the Archdeacon Thomas wrote to the Portuguese Captain, “If it is not possible to bring back Athallah, make arrangements for the coming of anybody, except the Jesuits, with the order of the Pope.... But not the Paulists...for they are our enemies as well as the enemies of the Roman Church.” This letter makes it clear that the Malankara Christians were not against the Pope, but against the Jesuit missionaries.

D) In the resolution passed at Alangatt immediately after the fake ordination on the basis of the false document of Itthomman Cathanar we read, “As we have appointed a Metropolitan in accordance with the decision and decree of the Pope and the Roman Church...let us resolve to stand by this Metropolitan. Since they (the Jesuits) are the enemies of the Pope and the Roman Church, we shall not remain with them until we have seen the Patriarch (Athallah) with our own eyes. We shall not obey the orders of the Metropolitan of that religious community.”⁵¹ How could one say that those who issued such a resolution were against the Pope?

E) In the letter to the Viceroy of Goa written by the Portuguese Captain, we read, “They have resolved that they would not accept Archbishop Garcia or any one else from among the Jesuits as their bishop.”⁵²

All these documents point to one fact: The Malankara Church founded by St. Thomas, the Apostle, was the one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. Neither St. Francis Xavier nor any early document gave any hint of doubt about the true faith of the Malankara Christians. What the missionaries encountered here was a Church that maintained a very high noble standard in faith, worship, piety and ecclesiastical life.

⁵⁰ Cyril Mar Attallah ibn Issa, a Catholic Metropolitan of the Syrian Church then living in Cairo: J. Kollapampil, *ibid.* p.100.159.164; in 1632 he became Catholic. *APF. Lettere* (1632), vol.12. f.53.v.54: Cyril Mar Baselios, *Syro-Malankara Sabha*, Kottayam, 1982, p.32.36-37. 42.

⁵¹ J. Thekkedath, *The Troubled Days of Francis Garcia*, p.61.n.32.

⁵² Bernard, *Marthoma Christianikal*, vol. II, p.75-76.

10

The Puthenkur History (1653-1815)

After the Coonan Cross Oath the Malankara Church got divided into several factions. There were mainly four groups:

1. Those Thomas Christian parishes, which were included in the *Kochi Padroado* Latin diocese and in other Latin dioceses in 1610. Without changing the liturgical traditions, they had to remain under the Latin *Padroado* bishops.

2. Those parishes, nine in number, which went back to the jurisdiction of Garcia in the *Padroado* diocese of Kodungalloor after the Coonan Cross Oath of 1653.

3. The vast majority of the Thomas Christians who came under the leadership of Chandy *Metran*. They had the new ecclesiastical unit known as the “Apostolic Vicariate of Malabar”⁵³ under the Propaganda Fide, starting with Sebastiani in 1661. Among the 110 parishes of the Malankara Church, 64 parishes totally and 20 partially recognized Chandy *Metran* as their leader.

4. Those parishes which continued to remain under the Archdeacon Thomas. Among the 110 parishes only 26 parishes totally and 20 partially supported him.

⁵³ Later it was known as the *Apostolic Vicariate of Verapoly*. In 1886 when the Latin hierarchy was reestablished in India, Kodungalloor was suppressed and its title of Archdiocese was transferred to the new diocese of Daman in 1886. (Daman was suppressed in 1928). The Goan Archbishop was given the honorary title “Patriarch” (1886)!

As a result of the activities of the Western Latin missionaries in Kerala, the one united Church had to suffer these tragedies. These Christians came under diverse leaderships with diverse mentality. Each group followed the traditions of the leadership and began to think diversely with diverse ecclesiastical perspectives. We propose to discuss further in this chapter the history of the fourth group, namely the group under the Archdeacon Thomas, which was eventually known as the *Puthenkuttukar*.

Mar Thoma I– Mar Thoma V (1665-1765)

Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem, the Syrian Jacobite Bishop, was brought here in 1665 in order to rectify the Episcopal ordination of the Archdeacon Thomas. But we have no contemporary evidence to show that Mar Gregorios rectified the ordination. Moreover it is said that in the Antiochene Syrian Jacobite Church, there was the custom of taking a new name at the time of the Episcopal ordination. But such a change of name did not take place in the case of the Archdeacon. Some point this out as an argument against the rectification of the Episcopal ordination of the Archdeacon by the Jacobite bishop Mar Gregorios. The newcomer did not introduce the Antiochene liturgical traditions or the Jacobite form of faith among the *Puthenkuttukar*. He appeared as one who restored the Oriental customs, suppressed by the Synod of Udayamperur. Archdeacon Thomas was known in history as **Mar Thoma I**. He died in 1670 and was buried at Angamaly. **Mar Thoma II** received the imposition of hands from Mar Thoma I. He died in 1686 and was buried at Niranam. **Mar Thoma III** (1686-8) did not get the imposition from Mar Thoma II. It is said that at the deathbed of Mar Thoma II, the assembled clergy elected and appointed him as their leader with the name Mar Thoma III. Some say that a certain Mar Ivanios who came from West Asia conferred the Episcopal ordination on Mar Thoma III. But some others say that as Mar Gregorios of Jerusalem evaded from conferring ordination upon Mar Thoma I, this one also evaded from ordaining Mar Thoma III. He was buried at Kadampanad. **Mar Thoma IV** (1688-1728) received his ordination from Mar Thoma III. When he died he was buried at Kandanad. His successor **Mar Thoma V** (1728-65) received imposition of hands from Mar Thoma IV and when he died, he was buried at Niranam. Until Mar Thoma V, both the *Puthenkur*

and *Pazhayakur* factions were using the same East Syrian liturgical texts corrected and latinised by Bishop Roz. Nobody was against the East Syrian liturgy. It had been in use in Malankara for centuries and handed over from generation to generation. However, when the community got divided and moved away from each other, the *Puthenkuttukar* began to use the Antiochene liturgical traditions brought by the Jacobites in more parishes. At the time of Mar Thoma V, there came from West Asia three Jacobite bishops, Mar Baselios, Mar Gregorios and Mar Ivanios. It was these three bishops who tried to introduce the West Syrian Antiochene liturgy in the place of the centuries old East Syrian liturgy. There were also attempts to reunite both the factions. We have letters from the leaders of the *Puthenkur* community to Rome for the reestablishment of communion. But the missionary bishops here were totally against the reunion of the communities and recognition of Mar Thomas.

Mar Thoma VI (1761-1808)

He was known in history as Mar Dionysius (I) or Dionysius the Great. He had his doubts regarding the ordination he received from his predecessor in 1761. So in 1770 he received all the orders once again from the West Asian Jacobite bishop, Mar Gregorios, who was here since 1751. When he was ordained by that bishop, he changed his name to Dionysius, in accordance with the custom of the Antiochene Jacobites. Some consider that since the time of Mar Thoma I, he was the only one who had received the proper imposition of hands. About the ordination of others, several historians raise their doubts. They say that since the Coonan Cross Oath in 1653, it was only in 1770 that the *Puthenkuttukar* succeeded in getting the proper imposition of hands and in rectifying their ordination. Mar Thoma VI was the first one to get the imposition of hands from the Antiochene Syrian Jacobites. But there are also others who do not agree with it. Many historical events occurred during this period in Kerala: the beginning of the Thozhiyur Church (1772), depositing of the *Vattippanam*, ecumenical discussion for a possible reunion of the *Puthenkur* and the *Pazhayakur* communities, the attack of the Muslim ruler *Tippu* from Mysore and the burning of the temples and churches and the forced conversion to Islam, attack on the Christians by *Veluthampi* in Travancore State and *Paliathachan* in Kochi State. Many were the

miseries and losses that the Christians suffered during this period. Mar Thoma VI died in 1808 and was buried at the Puthenkavu church.⁵⁴

Mar Thoma VII-Mar Thoma IX (1808-15)

In 1796 Mar Thoma VI ordained his successor as Mar Thoma VII, who died in 1809 before appointing a successor. It is said that when Mar Thoma VII died, his hands were placed over the head of Mar Thoma VIII (1809-16). As his ordination was not genuine and valid, there was opposition to his rule in the Church. In 1815 Mar Thoma VIII himself imposed his hands on Mar Thoma IX. But he could not rule the Church at all. Mar Thoma VIII died at Niranam and was buried at Puthenkavu church. Mar Thoma IX led a monastic life at Kadamattam church till his death. When he died he was buried there. During the period under our investigation (1665-1815), the Antiochene traditions and rituals were not widely spread among the *Puthenkur* community. Although the two factions of the Malankara Church were under two leaderships, they had not gone far off from each other. There were several churches used in common by turn. Both factions used the Rozian texts for liturgy. The Antiochene Jacobite Patriarchs did not put forward any claim of authority over the Church here. Many efforts were made for reuniting the community once again under one leadership.

⁵⁴ Paremmakel Thoma Cathanar, *Varthamanapusthakam*, tr. by P.J.Podipara, Rome, 1971 (OCA 190).

11

The Malankara Church and the CMS Missionaries (1815-1840)

The period ranging between the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 20th century was a period of changes in Kerala. 1792 marked the beginning of the British influence here. The Anglican missionary, Dr. Kerr conducted a study in 1805 about the *Puthenkur* Malankara Syrian Community as instructed by Lord William Bentinck, the British Governor in Madras. In 1806 Claudius Buchanan visited this community. The purpose of his visit was to know more about the Syrian community and to collect the ancient Syriac manuscripts. His travelogues enabled the people in England to know about the Malankara *Puthenkur* Syrian community. In 1799 the Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) had been formed in England. In 1815 CMS missionaries arrived in Travancore-Cochin and began their work in 1816, centered on Alapuzha. It was Colonel Munro, the Resident ruler in Travancore, who invited the CMS missionaries to this land.

Erection of the Seminary (1813)

In 1813 Pulikkottil Ittup Remban started the *Puthenkur Seminary* at Kottayam, known as the *Pazhaya Seminary (Old Seminary)* for the formation of the candidates for priesthood. Colonel Munro persuaded the Travancore government to donate some land free of tax for the Seminary. Ittup Remban got Rupees 3360 as the interest of *Vattippanam*. He also got an additional sum of Rupees 20,000, the land property called *Munrothuruth* at Kallada for the construction and

functioning of the Seminary. Besides, he also got an amount of Rupees 8,000 from the Paliekkara church litigation. In 1815 the construction of the Seminary was completed.

Co-operation with the CMS

Colonel Munro was greatly interested in helping the *Puthenkur* faction of the Malankara community in various ways. He started an English School at Kottayam for giving English education to them. Food, clothes and tuition fees were free for the students. Munro was also able to remove some tribulations of Christians in some parts of the land. It was during this period that the Christians in Kerala were employed in the government departments. A Christian Judge was appointed in each court. He granted the ownership of certain churches jointly owned by the *Puthenkuttukar* and the *Pazhayakuttukar* to the former. He also promised them that he would help them to possess some more churches which were under the ownership of the *Pazhayakuttukar*.

Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius (1815-6)

Since Ittup Remban was not a bishop, there was accusation from certain quarters regarding his receipt of interest accrued from the *Vattippanam*. In that context, he received Episcopal ordination from Thozhiyur Mar Philoxenos in 1815 and assumed the name Dionysius II. Mar Thoma VIII and Mar Thoma IX were still alive. Mar Dionysius II died in 1816 and was buried at the *Pazhaya Seminary*. He was buried like the Latin bishops, i.e., not in the sitting position as among the Syrian Jacobites, but in the lying position.

Punnathra Mar Dionysius (1817-25)

Subsequently Mar Philoxenos of Thozhiyur ordained in 1817 Punnathra Mar Dionysius as bishop. It was during his time that the Anglican missionaries began to exert their sway and influence over the Malankara *Puthenkur* Church. After the establishment of the Seminary, the CMS missionary Norton used to visit the Kottayam *Pazhaya Seminary* and teach the candidates for priesthood. There came also the CMS missionaries Benjamin Bailey (1816), Joseph Fenn (1818) and Henry Baker (1819). The *Puthenkur* community began to receive aid from the missionaries. As a token of their gratitude, they permitted the

missionaries to preach in their churches. Benjamin Bailey concentrated on Bible translation, Joseph Fenn on priestly training, and Baker on educational activities. Eventually Fenn became the Principal of the Seminary. Punnathra Mar Dionysius accorded them all kinds of encouragement. The missionaries made the best use of the freedom they enjoyed to work in the Church. As a result, a good number of *Puthenkur* laity and clergy were inclined towards Protestantism. It was the Anglican *Low Church* traditions that these missionaries spread among the *Puthenkuttukar*. The missionaries went around the parishes and preached the Protestant reformation ideals and many came under their influence.

There was a joint meeting of the missionaries and the *Puthenkur* leaders in 1818 at Mavelikkara under Punnathra Mar Dionysius. The missionaries decided there to bring about a drastic change in the entire life of the *Puthenkur* Malankara Church. About 700 lay representatives and 40 priests participated in the meeting. Fenn, who was circulating the idea that several of the *Puthenkur* Church traditions and customs are superstitious, heretical and meaningless, pointed out the need for the missionaries and the *Puthenkuttukar* to work together. Fenn emphasized the following points: The Missal and the other Order for the Sacraments should be revised; remove the intercessory prayers to the Virgin Mary and Saints; allow the priests to marry; translate the liturgy into vernacular; bring about the reformation in the line of Protestantism. There were diverse reactions to the proposals of Fenn. After resolving to constitute a joint committee to discuss the liturgical rites and customs, the meeting was dissolved.

This meeting opened the eyes of many and they saw the danger involved in the close collaboration with the Protestant missionaries. The appeal of the missionary Fenn to remove the heretical teachings of the Syrian Church had mixed reaction in the audience and in the Church. The missionaries were acting in the Church as if they were the masters. Some of the newly acquired properties were common for the Church and for the missionaries. After the Mavelikkara Meeting of 1818, a committee of six priests was constituted for reevaluating the need for further cooperation with the missionaries. Punnathra Mar Dionysius was a pro-reformation bishop, extending all possible help to the missionaries

for implementing their schemes. As a result of this attitude of the bishop, the missionaries and *Puthenkur* community went on hand in hand. The missionaries continued to spread the reform ideals in the churches. However, in 1819, Col. Munro, who had been giving support to these activities, had to resign his office as Resident. Punnathra Mar Dionysius III died in 1825. He was buried in Kottayam Cheriapally. Both these unexpected developments affected seriously their mutual cooperation. There arose the inevitable situation of parting company and drifting apart. It was Dionysius IV, the next bishop, who took up the leadership of this separation.

Cheppatt Mar Dionysius (1825-55)

It was once again Thozhiyur Mar Philoxenus who ordained Mar Dionysius IV. By this time the Anglican missionaries had made deep inroads into the *Puthenkur* community. A lot of people had already embraced the reform ideals of Protestantism. The missionaries could also influence several of the teachers in the *Pazhaya Seminary*. Under the circumstances, Mar Dionysius was convinced of the need for controlling the missionaries. The Anglican missionaries, Peet (1833) and Woodcock (1834) indulged freely in public criticism of the Syriac traditions and customs. They tried their level best to direct this Church along Protestant line and eventually merge it in the Anglican Communion. At the instigation of the missionaries and after receiving a sum of Rupees 400, about 40 *Puthenkur* unmarried priests got married. In 1835 John Tucker, an English man came here and made an exhaustive survey of this Church and gave his report to the Church authorities in England. In the same year Daniel Wilson, the Anglican bishop of Calcutta, came here and held discussions with Mar Dionysius IV for mutual cooperation. Mar Dionysius informed Wilson that the matter would be discussed in a future Synod and decisions would be taken. As per the discussion with Wilson, there was a meeting of the representatives of the Malankara Church at Mavelikkara. This was known as the *Mavelikkara Synod* of 1836. The Anglican cooperation with the *Puthenkur* community was discussed. Most of the participants were of the opinion that the cooperation would be harmful for the Malankara *Puthenkur* community. So it was resolved there to break all the ties with the Anglican missionaries.

The Synod approved the liturgical and doctrinal tenets of the Antiochene Jacobite Syrian Church as the fundamental tenets of the *Puthenkur* community. It was the excessive influence and reformatory attempts on the part of the missionaries that drew the *Puthenkur* community closer to the Jacobites. It was by chance that a Jacobite bishop, Gregorios by name came here in 1665. Except the fact that occasionally one or more Jacobite bishops came since 1653, the Antiochene Jacobite Patriarch had no spiritual or temporal authority over the *Puthenkur* community. The Malankara Church had never been part of the Syrian Jacobite non-Chalcedonian Church of Antioch. On being convinced of the danger of Protestantism and of the need of averting it, the *Puthenkur* Church leaders moved closer to the Antiochene Jacobite side. Thus they thought they could preserve the faith and tradition of the Malankara *Puthenkur* community. In the *Mavelikkara Synod (1836)* they resolved that they would accept no other faith, teachings and traditions than those of the Antiochene Jacobite Syrian Church. It was a majority decision, because there were those who also stood for the cause of the missionaries. This resolution is known as the *Mavelikkara Padiyola*.

Cochin Award (1840)

The missionaries were convinced that it was impossible to work together. Both were compelled to fall out after dividing the properties held in common. It resulted in disputes about the properties. Hence a committee, consisting of three Europeans, was constituted to amicably settle the dispute. It is known in history as the *Kochi Panchayath Kodathy*. In 1840 this Court (*Kodathy*) pronounced its verdict, which was known as the *Cochin Award*. Accordingly the *Puthenkur* Syrians got the *Pazhaya Seminary*, *Vattippanam*, the landed property at Kadamattam, and some other properties too. The missionaries got Munrothuruth, the sum of Rupees 20,000 and the Kottayam English School. It was decreed in the verdict that a trust consisting of the Syrian Bishop, a priest representative and layman, should jointly administer the temporalities of the Syrian community. That was how the temporalities of the *Puthenkur* community came under a Trust. The beginning of the *Trustee System* in the Jacobite Church was here. It was neither ancient

nor part of the ancient tradition of this church. The CMS missionaries started a new Seminary in the place where the CMS College is situated today. It became the New Seminary (*Puthen Seminary*), and the first one, Old (*Pazhaya*) Seminary. It is said that at that time about 6000 *Puthenkur* Malankara people joined the CMS and became Anglicans. Today they are mostly in the *Madhya Kerala* CSI diocese, centered in Kottayam⁵⁵.

12

The Malankara Jacobite Syrian Church (1840-1876)

Though the *Puthenkur* leadership broke away from the contact with the CMS missionaries, several priests and many faithful in the community who imbibed the Protestant ideas and ways of thinking continued to remain in the community. They did not immediately leave the Church, like the 6000 people. Palakkunnath Abraham *Malpan* (+1845) was the leader of this group. He was one of the priests who married at the instigation of the missionaries, with the remuneration of 400 Rupees. His priestly ordination was from Mar Thoma VIII. Since he had doubts about the validity of the Episcopal ordination of Mar Thoma VIII, he received in 1825 all the sacred orders once again from a foreign Jacobite bishop Mar Athanasius. He came into contact with Protestantism at the *Pazhaya Seminary*, where he was a teacher. Along with eleven other priests, he submitted a Memorandum in 1836 to Colonel Fraser, the Resident at Madras, against the ruling bishop Cheppatt Mar Dionysius IV, with the intention of reforming the Church in Protestant lines. He was intent on continuing the cooperation with the Anglican missionaries. He was the chief person in the committee, appointed by the missionaries to reform the Jacobite Missal. He corrected it in the Protestant line. Making use of that Missal, he celebrated the Eucharist at the *Pazhaya Seminary*, Pallam, Kollad and Maramon. At once Mar Dionysius excommunicated the *Malpan* and the parishioners at Maramon. The bishop refused to ordain 18 deacons, trained by the *Malpan*. One among them was the cleric Palakkunnath Mathan, the nephew of the *Malpan*.

⁵⁵ M. E. Gibbs, *The Anglican Church in India 1600-1970*, Delhi, 1972; W. S. Hunt, *The Anglican Church in Travancore and Cochin 1816-1916*, Kottayam, 1933.

Mathews Mar Athanasios (1843-77)

Abraham Malpan and the like-minded people wanted to have a bishop who would lead the *Puthenkur* Church along the Protestant reformation ideal. They sent Mathan in 1841 to Mar Elias II, the Jacobite Patriarch in West Asia. The Patriarch ordained him as a bishop and sent him back to Kerala in 1842 with the credential letters. This was the first instant of an Antiochene Jacobite Patriarch, conferring Episcopal ordination directly upon a person in the Malankara Church. The new bishop assumed the name Mathews Mar Athanasios and in 1843 he reached Kerala. He arrived here when Mar Dionysius IV was ruling the *Puthenkur* community as its rightful bishop. Subsequently there arose contention of power between them. The plan of Abraham *Malpan* was to form a new faction and appoint Mathews Mar Athanasios as its undisputed head. But Mathews wanted to be the bishop of the entire *Puthenkur* community. Cheppatt Mar Dionysius complained to the Patriarch against Mar Athanasios. The Patriarch sent a bishop named Joachim Mar Kurillos and he reached here in 1846. After studying the situation, he reported to the Patriarch against Mathews Mar Athanasios. Fearing that he might be defeated in the tug of war for power, Mar Dionysius transferred the Episcopal powers to the foreign bishop Mar Kurillos. Some say that the Patriarch had sent the necessary letters to this effect. This led naturally to a litigation between Mar Athanasios and Mar Kurillos.

Kollam Panchayath (1848)

In order to settle the dispute between the two, the King of Travancore appointed a committee consisting of two Indians and two Europeans. This Committee was known as *Kollam Panchayath*. The Committee pronounced its verdict in 1848 in favor of Mar Athanasios. The King of Travancore in 1852 and the King of Kochi in 1853 approved the verdict and promulgated decrees accordingly. Mathews Mar Athanasios began his rule in 1853 as the Metropolitan over the *Puthenkur* community. Cheppatt Mar Dionysius retired to the Cheppatt church and Mar Kurillos to a church at Kochi. But those who were opposed to Mathews Mar Athanasios sent a priest named Pulikkottil *Yausep Cathanar* to the Patriarch in West Asia to be ordained bishop. The Patriarch ordained him also. He returned in 1865 with the necessary

credentials, but he could not wrest power from Mar Athanasios.⁵⁶ Mathews Mar Athanasios wanted to reform the Malankara Church without doing away with the ancient and venerable traditions. He did not want to lead the Church to Protestantism. He firmly believed that, “when the Church as a whole concentrates more on the divine Scriptures, all the superstitions would quit by themselves and it would be wrong to shatter the community into shreds and pieces in the name of reformation.” He concentrated particularly to set right the issues relating to the parishes and to uplift the Christians from the miseries and tribulations they underwent in certain parts of the country. In 1868 Mathews Mar Athanasios ordained Thomas, the Son of Abraham *Malpan* as bishop and made him his co-adjutor.

⁵⁶ *The Royal Court of Final Appeal*, Kottayam, 1975, nr.174.p.59.

13

The Synod of Mulanthuruthy (1876) Formation of the Marthoma Church (1889)

When Mathews Mar Athanasios was ruling the Church as the Malankara Metropolitan, Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius repeatedly sent letters to the Jacobite Patriarch in West Asia. As a result, in 1875 the Patriarch Peter III himself came here and convened a meeting in 1876 of the representatives of all the parishes of the *Puthenkur* community at *Mulanthuruthy*. He divided the Malankara See of the *Puthenkur* community into seven dioceses and appointed bishops directly under his supervision. And thus he confirmed his authority. He succeeded in influencing the local Kings to withdraw the recognition granted to Mar Athanasios. Then he excommunicated Mathews Mar Athanasios, Thomas Mar Athanasios and their followers and appointed Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius as the Malankara Metropolitan.

The Community becomes Jacobite

It was with this Synod that the *Puthenkur* faction of the Malankara Church came under the jurisdiction of the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch and the Church became part of the Jacobite Church. The community adopted Jacobite (*Yakobaya*) as its name. The group under Mar Dionysius argued in all the subsequent civil litigations that they were the real Antiochene Jacobites. They called the other group *Reformed Jacobites*. Through this Synod, the Jacobite Patriarch became the head of this Church, although before this Synod he had no authority what-so-ever over this Church. It was neither founded by them nor

nurtured by them. The Malankara people did not at all want this development. But by interfering in the internal disputes in the Church, the Patriarch made the maximum profit out of it and succeeded in making it part of the Jacobite Syrian Church of Antioch. It was Patriarch Peter III who implemented the Jacobite liturgy, teachings and church law in all the parishes of the *Puthenkuttukar*. This Patriarch and the *Synod of Mulanthuruthy* played a vital role in segregating the *Puthenkur* community from the *Pazhayakur* community. He injected an anti-Roman mentality and hatred towards the Roman Catholic Church among the *Puthenkur* community. Mathews Mar Athanasios died in 1877.

Litigation (1879-1889)

After the Synod of Mulanthuruthy, Patriarch Peter III returned to West Asia. The local Metropolitan, whom he appointed, began to take possession of the churches under the custody of the other group. In 1879 he filed a lawsuit against Thomas Mar Athanasios in the district court of Alapuzha, asserting that he was the rightful Malankara Metropolitan of the Jacobites. The case was directly meant for the possession of the *Pazhaya Seminary*. The Seminary was still under the possession of the followers of Mar Athanasios. Mar Dionysius in 1872 had already started another Seminary for his faction at Parumala. In 1889, the Royal Court of Travancore gave its verdict in favor of Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius VI. The majority judgment pronounced the following verdicts:

- 1) The Syrian Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch is the head of the Malankara Church.
- 2) Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius is its recognized local Metropolitan.
- 3) Hence he is the rightful custodian of its temporalities.
- 4) Since the Patriarch excommunicated Mathews Mar Athanasios, his followers have no right over the temporalities of this Church.

Since the *Reformed Jacobites* lost the civil litigation, they had to give up all the temporalities of the Jacobite Church, including the *Pazhaya Seminary*. Thomas Mar Athanasios came to Maramon and stayed there. Before long, he organized his followers under the banner Reformed

Faction (*Naveekarana Kakshy*). Later they adopted the name *Marthoma Church*⁵⁷

Evaluation

The activities of the Jacobite Patriarch Peter III made a new division here in the Malankara Church. He did not try to lead the community together in the love of Jesus Christ, by amicably settling the existing disputes and contentions here. His aim was to mould a group in the Malankara Church that would stand in support of him. This was precisely what Menezes and the Portuguese did at the Synod of Udayamperur in 1599. All the foreigners and Westerners were bent upon safeguarding their own vested interests. During the subsequent years the Jacobite Patriarchs also made use of the same tool of excommunication and thus divided the community. They made use of this same weapon in 1911 and 1975 and created division in the Malankara community in Kerala.

⁵⁷ *Mar Thoma Church Directory*, 48; *The Royal Court of Final Appeal*, Kottayam, 1975; *Royal Kodathy Vidhi*, Trivandrum, 1980.

14

The Establishment of the Catholicate (1912)

Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius spent his time and energy between 1879 and 1889 in civil litigation against the Reformed Jacobites. Even after winning the civil litigation, he had to continue the struggle for a few more years for the possession of the churches and the properties from the Reformed Jacobites. It was during his lifetime that the first application to the Patriarch was made for the establishment of the Catholicate in the Malankara *Puthenkur* Jacobite Church. However, it met with a totally negative stance on the part of the Patriarch. Mar Dionysius sent in 1908 two of his priests, Vattasseril Geevarghese *Malpan*, and Paulose *Malpan* to the Jacobite Patriarch in West Asia to be ordained bishops. Patriarch Abdalla ordained both of them bishops with the names, Geevarghese Mar Dionysius and Paulose Mar Kurillos respectively. When Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius died in 1909, Vattasseril Mar Dionysius became the Malankara Metropolitan. In the same year Patriarch Mar Abdalla came to Kerala and excommunicated Mar Dionysius because of the ensuing disputes. Mar Abdalla, the Patriarch became the instrument for another division in the Jacobite Church in Kerala.

Patriarch Mar Abdalla

He had been in Kerala for the Synod of Mulanthuruthy of 1876 with Mar Peter III, the Patriarch as his finance officer. At that time he was known as Mar Gregorios. When the Patriarch Peter III died in 1895, Mar Gregorios was elected as the Patriarch. But the Turkish Sultan did not recognize him and he did not get the *Firman* or the official document of recognition from the Port. Then the bishops elected Mar

Abd al Msiha and he got the *Firman* from the Turkish Sultan. Mar Abdalla in his turn left the Jacobite Church, joined the Catholic Church and became the Catholic bishop of Homs till 1906. Meanwhile some bishops made the move at the instigation of the Sultan to install Mar Abdalla in the place of Mar Abd al Msiha. They succeeded in their attempt. Mar Abdalla resigned his office as the bishop of the Catholic diocese of Homs and became the Jacobite Patriarch at Mardin. Mar Abd al Msiha went to Tur-Abdin, and lived there as Patriarch. The local people there and in some other places continued to accept him as their Patriarch.

Excommunication of Vattasseril Mar Dionysius (1911)

Patriarch Mar Abdalla came to India in 1909 and insisted that he must have both the spiritual and temporal authority in the Malankara Jacobite Church and that the bishops and parishes should submit to him a written agreement to the same effect. Accordingly many submitted to him, as he had demanded. But a section of the Jacobites here was not willing to submit the temporalities to the Patriarch or to become part of the Antiochene Jacobite Church, by losing its individuality, autonomy and the freedom for self rule. Vattasseril Mar Dionysius, the Malankara Metropolitan, gave the lead for this resistance. These developments led to a split in the Jacobite Church. One faction recognized the Patriarch in all the spiritual and temporal matters and submitted everything to him. The other faction recognized him only as their spiritual head. Mar Abdalla, the Syrian Patriarch was not satisfied merely with the spiritual supremacy, but demanded also the submission of the temporal matters. He thought of suppressing the opposition using the weapon of excommunication. It erupted into many ill-nurtured practices. An atmosphere of violence prevailed even in the *Pazhaya Seminary*. Both the factions appointed armed personnel to guard them. In 1911 the Patriarch proclaimed the excommunication order against Mar Dionysius and his supporters. The Patriarch and Mar Dionysius were living in adjacent rooms of the Seminary. However, the order was issued by post as a registered article. Many consider that the Patriarch did not follow the canonical procedure in this excommunication. He appointed Paulose Mar Kurillos as the Malankara Metropolitan. Thus the Malankara Jacobite Church was divided into two factions. One under Mar Kurillos supported fully the

Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch in all matters including the submission of the temporalities of the Church. The other faction, under Mar Dionysius rejected any temporal authority of the Patriarch over the Malankara Church. The Patriarch's faction was known as *Bawa Kakshy* or *Kurillos Kakshy*, and Mar Dionysius' faction was known as *Metran Kakshy*. Eventually they were known as *Jacobite Church* and the *Orthodox Church* respectively.

The Antiochene Jacobite Patriarch was mainly responsible for this split in the Jacobite Church in Kerala. The factionalism among the people was also an added cause. There was only just one reason for the excommunication of Mar Dionysius, namely that he did not submit the temporalities to the Patriarch, who had no authority what so ever over this Church. And simply for that reason he made a split in the Church, with the support of a few of his sympathizers.

Establishment of the Catholicate (1912)

When the Patriarch Mar Abdalla stood against Vattasseril Mar Dionysius, Rev. Fr. P.T.Geevarghese (later Mar Ivanios), his faithful disciple and loyal friend, contacted Mar Abd-al- Msiha, the senior Patriarch in Tur Abdin in Turkey. He informed Mar Abd al Msiha that Mar Dionysius was excommunicated by Mar Abdalla. He earnestly requested him to come to Kerala at the earliest. In his reply Mar Abd al Msiha made it clear that the excommunication of Mar Abdalla was invalid. In the meantime Mar Abdalla had returned to West Asia. In 1912 Mar Abd al Msiha arrived in Kerala with two *Rembans*. At this time Murimattam Mar Ivanios of the *Bawa Kakshy*, joined Vattasseril Mar Dionysius. The Patriarch installed Murimattam Mar Ivanios Catholicos under the name Mar Baselios Paulose at the Niranam church. Later he ordained Kallasseril Punnus *Remban*, the Manager of the Parumala Seminary as bishop, under the name Mar Gregorios. In 1913 (29th *Makaram*) he ordained two more bishops, Mar Philoxenus and Mar Ivanios at Chengannoor. In the same year (8th *Kumbham*) he issued a notification regarding the establishment of the Catholicate. He then returned to West Asia where he died in 1915 at Dayar as Safaran.

History of the Catholicate

The ecclesiastical heads in the principal cities of the Roman Empire, Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch were in later periods known as *Patriarchs*. But the Chief bishop in the Capital city of the Persian Empire, Seleucia-Ctesiphon, was known from the fifth century as *Catholicos*. Later on they added the title of Patriarch also to this. Catholicos means the head of the Church. The status of the Catholicos was below that of the Patriarch. In later years, however, both the terms acquired almost the same sense. The Catholicos exercised in his domain all the powers, which the Patriarch had in his Patriarchal Church. The title Catholicos originated in the Catholic Church in Persia, because at that time only the Catholic Church existed.

The Jacobite Maphrian

When the number of the Jacobites increased in the Persian Empire, the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch appointed a certain Marutha in 629 as the *Great Metropolitan* in Persia or the *Maphrian*, in order to look after the spiritual needs of the Jacobites there. The Syriac word *Maphrian* means the one who bears fruit, or the one who begets. It was used to designate the head of the Jacobites in Persia in the sense, that he was empowered to ordain Archbishops and bishops, and that he was capable of producing several spiritual fruits. The Jacobite *Maphrian* resided at Tagrit, on the bank of the river Tigris in today's Iraq. In those days it was a small Jacobite center. Since the Catholicos of the East Syrian Church resided at Seleucia and there were very few Jacobites there, the *Maphrian* chose to reside at Tagrit.

Catholicos and Maphrian

Catholicos and Maphrian were not one and the same title. Catholicos was a title employed by the head of the Persian East Syrian Church. Currently there are three *Catholicoi* in its succession in the Persian East Syrian tradition: one Catholic and two Assyrian or the Church of the East. The Antiochene Jacobite Syrian Patriarch never made any claim over the Seleucian Catholicos. The East Syrian Church in Persia was an autonomous one and was never part of the Jacobite Church of Antioch. With regard to the ecclesiastical authority, its Catholicos did not depend on the Jacobite Patriarch or on any other

Patriarch. The domain of his jurisdiction was very vast. The Maphrianate however, originated among the Jacobites in Persia in 629 and it largely depended on the Jacobite Syrian Patriarch of Antioch, who suppressed it in 1860/63 in a local Synod. Maphrian represented the Patriarch among the Jacobites in Persia and had jurisdiction only among them. The title *Catholicos of the East* is a later designation in the Jacobite Church. The Catholicos of the Persian East Syrian Church and the Catholicos of the East of the Jacobites are not one and the same. Many mistook them as one due to the similarity in names.

The Decree of Mar Abd al Msiha

In the Decree of Abd al Msiha, which he published after installing the Catholicos in Kerala in 1912, we read, "In response to your appeal we installed a Maphrian, that is, Catholicos, with the name Baselios and we ordained three new bishops". It means that the terms Maphrian and Catholicos were used in the same sense. The Patriarch did not refer in his Decree either to the Catholicate of the Church of the East or to the Maphrianate of Tagrit of the Jacobites, nor did he speak of it as a reestablishment.

Though the Catholicate and the Maphrianate had been different entities in ancient times, those in the Malankara Church took them to be the same. The Malankara Jacobites, in fact, wanted the Catholicate with full autonomy. But it is not historically correct to say that in 1912 the ancient Catholicate of the Persian Church was re-instituted here. Some of the Orthodox writers propagate such a false idea.

But Rev. Prof. Dr. V.C. Samuel, the late Professor in the Orthodox Theological Seminary, speaks correctly:

"The Catholicate of the East is neither the Catholicate in the ancient Persian Church, nor a designation equal to it. It is only the Maphrianate of Tagrit. Because of the similarity of terms, the leaders of our Church regarded the designation as having all the rights and powers of the ancient Persian Catholicate".⁵⁸

⁵⁸ V. C. Samuel, *I toru Indian Sabhayo? (Is this an Indian Church?)* Tiruvalla, 1975, p. 114-5.

Some people allege without any basis, of course, that in 629 the ancient Catholicate in Persia was transferred to Tagrit. It is not at all historically true. In the same way some others say that the Catholicos – Patriarch of the Persian Church in 629 adopted also the name Maphrian. This assertion also betrays the ignorance of the historical documents. The Jacobite Syrian Patriarch never mentioned in any document, that he was shifting the Catholicate of Seleucia to Tagrit. The Catholicate of Seleucia continued in 629 and afterwards. The Jacobites in Persia were a tiny minority. The East Syrian Church was the principal Christian community in Persia. Neither the Jacobites nor the East Syrians considered the installation of the Maphrian in 629 as the succession of the Catholicate in Seleucia. There is absolutely no historical basis for the contrary assertions of some writers in Kerala. It is distortion and falsification of history.⁵⁹

In short, Patriarch Mar Abd al Msiha installed here in 1912 the Maphrianate, which had been existent among the Persian Jacobites since 629 and which was eventually suppressed by the Patriarch. But the Malankara leadership aimed at a dignitary, having more authority than the Maphrian, so that he could maintain the autonomy of the Church against all kinds of external intrusion. Though Mar Abd al Msiha had instituted only the Maphrianate, the Malankara Church later on gave it the sense of Catholicate.

Fr. P.T. Geevarghese played a decisive role in asserting the autonomy of the Malankara Church through the establishment of the Catholicate in 1912.

⁵⁹ See the references in: G. Chediath, *Paurastya Catholicos*, Kottayam, 1985, p. 77-78.

15

The Malankara Jacobite Syrian Church (1912-30)

With the establishment of the Catholicate, the Malankara Jacobite Church was split into two factions. The beginning of the split could be traced back to 1912. Sad to say, it still continues in that Church. One can point out several causes for this tragic split. However, according to many, the Antiochene Jacobite Patriarch was chiefly responsible for it. In this chapter we try to trace briefly the history of the period from 1912 to 1930.

Vattippanacase (1913-28)

Baselios Paulose, the first Catholicos, died in 1913. In the same year there arose a civil litigation between the two factions, namely *Metran Kakshy* and *Bawa Kakshy (Kurillos Kakshy)* of the Malankara Jacobite Syrian Church in Kerala. The squabble based on a certain endowment is known as *Vattippanakkes*. *Vattippanam* means money deposited in the bank. For the welfare of the Syrian Christian community a certain amount of money was deposited in the East India Company for interest. The amount for the *Pazhayakuttukar* was deposited by the lay leader Thachil Mathu Tharakan and for the *Puthenkuttukar* by Mar Thoma VI (Mar Dionysius I). This amount is known as *Vattippanam*. The dispute since 1913 was regarding the inheritor of the interest for the *Puthenkuttukar*. Whether it should be given to the *Metran Kakshy* or to the *Bawa Kakshy* of the Jacobite Syrian Church, was the question to be decided. Along with that, the court had to decide regarding all the temporalities of the Jacobite Church in Kerala.

Both the factions had their own Metropolitan, *Malankara Association* and *Managing Committee* constituted (according to the *Mulanthuruthy Synod*) and a priest Trustee and a lay Trustee (according to the *Cochin Award*). Nobody could draw the interest since 1908, because the co-Trustees Konatt Malpan (priest Trustee) and C. J. Kurian (lay Trustee) did not cooperate with Mar Dionysius. In the beginning, the District Court pronounced its verdict in favor of Mar Dionysius. However, the verdict in 1923 was against him.

In the same year Mar Dionysius went to Mardin, where the Patriarch resided, in order to reestablish peace with him. Mar Dionysius took with him a Memorandum, signed by the three bishops of his faction, namely Geevarghese Mar Philoxenus (Second Catholicos), Geevarghese Mar Gregorios (Third Catholicos) and Joachim Mar Ivanios. After several discussions with the Patriarch Mar Elias III, they reached some agreement. So Mar Dionysius returned to India together with a Jacobite bishop Mar Julios. But even after his return, the previous situation prevailed, setting at naught the possibility of finding an amicable settlement. The two factions give diverse interpretations for the incident.

The *Metran Kakshy* explains it thus:

“Mar Dionysius and the Patriarch had discussed the matter several times. At last the Patriarch revoked the excommunication and sent a letter to that effect through Mar Julios, who accompanied Mar Dionysius to India. But when Julios arrived in India, the *Bawa Kakshy* influenced him and he did not read the decree of the Patriarch. The doors to peace were thus permanently slammed.”

The *Bawa Kakshy* gives a different version:

“Vattasseril Mar Dionysius who lost the civil litigation went to Mardin to get his excommunication revoked. Only the Metropolitan, recognized by the Patriarch, could draw the interest of Vattippanam. So he wanted to make his position secure, before the Patriarch gave his approval to his rival Mar Athanasios. At Mardin Dionysius was prepared to accept all the conditions, put forward by the Patriarch. But once he returned to India, instead of acting according to the conditions, he filed a review petition. Bishop Julios did not have the decree, revoking the excommunication. But the Patriarch was willing to revoke it, once he was convinced that all the conditions were fulfilled. That was why he

sent Julios with him to Kerala. If there were any such Decree, the Patriarch might have given it directly to Mar Dionysius.”

Discussion on Communion with the Catholic Church

On his way to Mardin, Mar Dionysius met a Syrian Catholic bishop at Baghdad and discussed ecclesiastical matters. It has been said that he had agreed to discuss with him on his return, matters related to the possibility of full communion with the Catholic Church, if his mission failed at Mardin. Since Mar Julios accompanied him on his return, he did not venture to discuss ecumenical matters with the Catholic bishop at Baghdad.

When Mar Dionysius returned from Mardin he filed a review petition and he had a temporary success in 1925. Then the Second Catholicos was installed at Niranam. On the following day, on May 1, Fr.P.T. Geevarghese was ordained as bishop of Bethany, under the name Mar Ivanios. But Mar Dionysius did not participate in the installation and ordination directly. The second Catholicos died in 1928 and in the same year Mar Dionysius won the civil litigation for the *Vattippanam*. Then he, together with Mar Ivanios, installed the Third Catholicos at Mar Elijah Chapel in Kottayam. After that they ordained two more bishops. Thus there were at that time five bishops for the *Metran Kakshy*. In accordance with the verdict, Mar Dionysius was able to draw the entire interest of *Vattippanam*. Thus after prolonged litigation and various court verdicts, the case regarding *Vattippanam* came to an end.

The delay in installing the Second Catholicos was because of the following reasons:

1) The conviction of Mar Dionysius and others that the Catholicate in Malankara should exist as an institution in cooperation with the Antiochene Jacobite Patriarchate.

2) The installation without the cooperation of the Patriarch could be interpreted as forming a new Church by the *Metran Kakshy*.

So they were very careful not to give the impression that they were forming a new Church through the establishment of the Catholicate. They did not want to give a wrong impression so that it might affect the civil litigation. Under the leadership of Mar Dionysius, Fr.P.T.Geevarghese started the Bethany Religious Movement for men at Perunad in 1919 and for women in 1925 at Tirumulpuram.

16

The Malankara Church and the full Catholic Communion

When Vattasseril Mar Dionysius returned from Mardin to India, he received a letter from the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch, Ignatius Ephrem II Rahmani at the Parumala Seminary. This letter gave an opportunity to think about an eventual full communion with the Catholic Church. When Mar Dionysius received the letter, he asked Mar Ivanios to send a reply. During his conversation with Mar Ivanios, he told him:

“I am in agreement for communion. The final decision could be taken only after consulting the brother bishops, the chiefs of the priests and lay people.”

When Vattasseril Mar Dionysius, the Metropolitan, said, ‘I am in agreement for communion,’ Mar Ivanios asked him, whether he could write it down, he replied, ‘You can write like that.’⁶⁰ Accordingly Mar Ivanios drafted a reply and gave it to Mar Dionysius at Parumala Seminary. Mar Dionysius took it with him to Kottayam, made some corrections and sent it through Mr. V. A Varghese, the son of his elder brother, as a registered article to Patriarch Rahmani. After some time, Mar Dionysius called the Catholicos, Mar Gregorios and Mar Ivanios to Parumala and showed the letter of Rahmani separately. Mar Dionysius asked the bishops to discuss the future course of action and assured them that he would accept their decision, whatever it might be. The three bishops met in Synod in 1926. Mar Ivanios acted as the Secretary. The topic of the discussion was the communion with the Roman Catholic

Church. The Synod was for an eventual communion, preserving the autonomy and individuality of the Malankara Church. The Synod entrusted Geevarghese Mar Ivanios of Bethany with the task of entering into ecumenical negotiations for an eventual communion with the Catholic Church. Mar Ivanios communicated the decision to Mar Dionysius, who was in full agreement with the Synod. Thus the first ecumenical negotiation, having in view the full communion with the Catholic Church, was with the Syrian Catholic Patriarch of Antioch, Mar Ignatius Rahmani.

Testimony of Mar Ivanios

Let us listen to the words of Mar Ivanios in his *Autobiography*:

“When the High Court verdict of Veera Raghava Ayyankar was in vogue, Mar Dionysius invited the Catholicos, Mar Gregorios and myself to the Parumala Seminary and asked us to discuss the ways and means for future action and assured us that he would agree with our decision, whatever it might be. He showed each one of us separately the letter of Rahmani and discussed the matter. We sat in Synod. The Catholicos was the President and I was the Secretary. The topic discussed was the full communion with the Catholic Church. That Synod entrusted us with the task of writing to Rome for a possible communion with the Roman Catholic Church, maintaining the Antiochene canonical and liturgical traditions and customs, and getting the assurance to have bishops of our own for ever for the Malankara Church. Accordingly we wrote to Rahmani and also got a reply. Mar Gregorios (later the Third Catholicos) read the letter and asked me to write the reply in consultation with the Catholicos. Afterwards I went to Vakathanam and met the Catholicos. I showed him the letter of Patriarch Ephrem Rahmani. I discussed secretly the mode of reply to be sent for that letter. The reply was written in Syriac by the Catholicos himself. Afterwards it was written in a better handwriting and sent to Patriarch Rahmani”⁶¹

Correspondence with Rome

There were several correspondences with Patriarch Rahmani. Later, however, Mar Ivanios decided to have direct contact with Rome in the name of the Bishops of the *Metran Kakshy*. Then the

⁶⁰ T. Inchackalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, I, p.263-4.

⁶¹ T. Inchackalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, I, p.264-6.

correspondence with Patriarch Rahmani was interrupted. In 1926 and 1927 two Memoranda were sent to Rome. In the Memorandum sent to Rome on 1st November 1926 Mar Ivanios requested:

1. That the position of the Catholicos and the Synod should be recognized; i. e., the autonomy of the Malankara Apostolic Church should be maintained.

2. The bishops should have authority over their faithful wherever they are.

3. The liturgical and other ecclesiastical traditions should be respected and should not be changed; i.e., the integral Oriental tradition should be preserved without any change.

From their part the Metran kakshy pledged that they would enter into full visible canonical communion with the Pope, the successor of St. Peter, the Chief of the Apostles in the Ancient Apostolic See of Rome. In January 1927 Mar Ivanios sent another letter also. Both these letters were sent through Fr. Ribeiro, a retired Latin priest residing at Kunnam, Mavelikkara. On 1st July and 21st July 1928 Mar Ivanios sent two letters to the Apostolic Delegate in India.

In August 1928 the Court Verdict was favorable for Mar Dionysius. On 23rd October 1928, Mar Ivanios received a positive reply from the Apostolic Delegate. In December Mar Gregorios, the second Catholicos died. There upon in 1929 Mar Dionysius together with Mar Ivanios installed Mar Gregorios the Third Catholicos. Among the bishops who participated in the *Parumala Synod of 1926*, except Mar Ivanios, only the Third Catholicos was alive in 1929. In all his correspondences with Rome, Mar Ivanios insisted that the integral Oriental traditions should be preserved in an eventual communion with the Catholic Church. Since the Catholicos had to take the lead for the full visible communion, his position as Catholicos with the Synod had to be recognized. He wanted that the Catholicos himself should give the leadership for the communion. Rome readily accepted every condition, except the position of the Catholicos and the Synod. In his subsequent letters too Mar Ivanios asked Rome whether it was possible then to ask the Catholicos to enter into communion, if his position as Catholicos was not recognized. But the Roman officials refused any kind of recognition of the Catholicos.

There was a long delay in getting the reply from Rome. On 30th August 1930 Mar Ivanios received the Decree recognizing the Malankara Church. The liturgical traditions were recognized, but neither the position of the Catholicos nor the Synod was recognized. So the Catholicos could not enter into the Catholic communion. It was also very painful for Mar Ivanios to be separated from Mar Dionysius. In spite of the refusal from the part of the Curial officials to recognize the Catholicos and Synod, Mar Ivanios decided to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church. At that time only Mar Ivanios could think that a separation from the Antiochene Syrian Jacobite Church was necessary for the peaceful existence and growth of the Malankara Church. Mar Dionysius could not think in similar terms then. But Mar Ivanios wanted by all means to establish communion, maintaining the autonomy of the Malankara Church. He thought that communion and autonomy could go hand in hand. The establishment of the Catholicate and the Bethany Monastic Orders were means for realizing it. Mar Ivanios could convince his brother bishops of the need for entering into visible communion with the ancient Churches. But he was very much saddened at the refusal of Rome to recognize the position of the Catholicos.

Mar Ivanios and the Orthodox Bishops

Although Mar Dionysius had encouraged the bishops of his faction to enter into ecumenical negotiations with the Roman Catholic Church at the time when the Verdict of Veera Raghava Ayyankar was in vogue, he withdrew from his intentions when he won the litigation in 1928. The same was the case of Mar Gregorios, the third Catholicos, partly because his position was not recognized by Rome. Among the bishops ordained in 1929, Pampadi Kuriakose Mar Gregorios was not willing to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church. Only Mar Theophilos was prepared to follow Mar Ivanios.

Mar Ivanios narrates an encounter with Mar Dionysius at the Parumala Seminary:

“We spoke about ecclesiastical matters and the need for communion with the Catholic Church. I requested him that he should take the lead for such a movement: “It is necessary to lead the people into piety”. I promised him with tears, that if he gave the leadership, I

would most willingly follow him and do all that I could do. My opinion was to enter into Catholic communion together with all the bishops, priests and lay people of the *Metran Kakshy* of the Jacobite Church. But we realized soon that Mar Dionysius was of the following opinion: “Many people will not be ready for reunion; they will not leave their churches and properties; in case they leave them, the Jacobites will get all these churches and properties”. Since the Court Verdict was in favor of the *Metran Kakshy*, Mar Dionysius was not prepared to abandon the *Pazhaya Seminary* and the Parumala Seminary. I thought, “When we die, we do not take with us any of these things.”

“Subsequently Mar Dionysius went to Trivandrum and told to Elanjikal John *Vakeel* about our conversation and expressed his dissatisfaction. As directed by Mar Dionysius, Mr. John Vakeel sent me a letter. The letter categorically affirmed the unwillingness of Mar Dionysius to enter into the full communion with the Catholic Church and expressed his displeasure in starting new Bethany parishes, as they would follow me in my eventual communion with the Catholic Church... Then the Catholicos came to the Bethany Ashram at Tirumulapuram. I told him that for the future prosperity of the Church, the Communion with the Catholic Church was necessary”.

“When I received the positive letter from Rome, informing me of the readiness to receive us into the Catholic communion, I met the Third Catholicos and the other bishops of the *Metran Kakshy*. The Catholicos told me then that he was not prepared for communion. Mar Dionysius also gave his negative reply. Pampadi Kuriakose Mar Gregorios told me, that if he moved, he would join the Patriarch’s faction. Only Mar Theophilos of Bethany expressed his willingness to accompany me. Then I met Bishop Benziger at Kollam and he told me that he had the permission to receive us into the Catholic Church. And I told him that I would like to celebrate the first holy Eucharist in the Catholic Church on September 21(Kanni 8), the nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary according to the Julian calendar. So we would like to enter into Catholic communion on the previous day.” But the feast fell on Sept. 24 in 1930, corresponding to Kanni 8th of 1106 ME.

“When I returned from Kollam, Mar Dionysius came to Tiruvalla the same evening. He asked me: ‘*Have you decided to join the Roman Catholic Church?*’ I replied that I had decided and that he himself should give the leadership for such a movement. After our long conversation, he realized that my decision was in accordance with my conviction. However it was painful for both of us to separate... We started on 18th September from Tiruvalla to Kollam and had recollection for two days. And on 20th September we were received into the Catholic communion.”⁶²

Catholic Communion and Bishop Benziger of Kollam

Mar Ivanios entered into full communion with the Catholic Church in the Roman Catholic bishop’s chapel at Thankassery, Kollam. Rome entrusted the Latin bishop of Kollam, Bishop Aloysius Benziger of blessed memory the task of receiving Mar Ivanios and his followers to the Catholic Church. Mar James Kalassery, Bishop of Changanassery, Mar Alexander Choolaparambil, Bishop of Kottayam, and Msgr Lawrence Pereira, the Bishop elect of Kottar were also present. The reason for entrusting the bishop of Quilon was that the Bethany monastery of Mar Ivanios was in the territory of the bishop of Kollam. The Syro-Malabar Church did not have jurisdiction South of the river Pampa at that time. At Kollam on September 20, 1930, on Saturday, about 4 p.m., five people entered into the full, visible and canonical communion with the Catholic Church. They were Metropolitan Mar Ivanios, his suffragan Mar Theophilos, Fr. John oic., Br. Alexander (later Fr. Seraphion oic) and Kilileth Chacko, a layman. On the following day (Sunday) at 07.30 a.m, Mar Ivanios celebrated the first holy Eucharist as a Catholic bishop there at the bishop’s chapel at Kollam. Afterwards the parents and the other close relatives of Mar Ivanios were received into the Catholic communion. And then, Cheppatt Philipose Remban, Pulikkottil Yausep Remban, the Bethany Monks and all the Bethany Sisters were received by Mar Ivanios into the Catholic communion. During the subsequent years thousands of people, including bishops and priests, followed Mar Ivanios in this noble Movement.

Mar Ivanios in his *Autobiography* speaks about it in the following way:

⁶² *Ibid.*439- 443.

“Many who had supported the full communion with the Catholic Church when the verdict of *Vattippanakkes* was against the *Metran Kakshy*, went back when they verdict was in favor of them.”⁶³

Clarification at Perunad

Before he left Perunad, Mar Ivanios explained in a gathering, the reasons why he sought for the communion with the Catholic Church. He says:

“Our Lord Jesus Christ, the unique Savior of mankind, established just one Church, his living body. It grew in the world according to the divine plan. In 451 at Chalcedon a small group of bishops disagreed with the vast majority of bishops and separated themselves from this body. Eventually this anti-Chalcedonian group formed as a separate ecclesial body, but was further divided into several sub-groups, having differing doctrinal tenets. They were later organized by a certain Jacob Burdaya and were known after him, Jacobites. In Kerala, based on a false rumor, a group remained separated from the main body, the Catholic Church and got in touch with the above-mentioned Jacobite Church in West Asia. From the beginning till today, this community has become a field of constant rivalries and civil litigations because of the absence of a common leader as there is in the Catholic Church. There arose first the Thozhiyur Church (1772), a few joined the Anglicans (1836), the Marthomites originated in 1889 and in 1912 again divided into *Bawa Kakshy* (Jacobite) and *Metran Kakshy* (Orthodox). As a member of the *Metran Kakshy*, I worked hard for its growth and uplift. My close contact with the Church enabled me to see the depth of the fall of the Church and it forced me to leave for Serampore. I looked for the Church of Christ and I found that it subsisted in the Catholic Church and thus I started our ecumenical contact. If obeying Christ is the primary duty of a Christian, I tried to obey Him and I did not think of the difficulties for its realization. The Church is God’s Church and is not to be dealt with according to each one’s whims and fancies. The real body of Christ is the Catholic Church. Those branches separated from the main trunk are destined to wither away. It is this insight into the inner life of the Church that led me to the

⁶³ T. Inchackalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, I, p.439.

ecumenical relationship with the Catholic Church. The late Second Catholicos knew it very well and was intent on achieving the communion with the Catholic Church. He grew impatient when the reply from Rome was delayed. The present Catholicos also was convinced that this was the only solution to the problems, encountered by the Jacobite Church. Although I made all the contacts with Rome, I did it as the representative of all the others. We agreed that we would accept the Pope. We requested that we should have the authority over our faithful, the liturgical texts should not be changed and the position of the Catholicos with the Synod should be recognized.”⁶⁴

Inner Disposition

We have a letter from Mar Ivanios which demonstrates his inner disposition regarding the communion with the Catholic Church. It was written on 14th January 1929 from Tiruvalla to Mr. Mamman Mappila:

“I am fully confident that in each of my steps I am being guided by the good God. I desire earnestly to raise the community in which I was born and brought up, to God, in order to reform it and lead it to prosperity. May I share with you that I had no personal interest in this matter. I believe firmly that the reunion of the Christian communities must be based on the foundation of historical Christianity. I am fully aware that such a reunion is not possible without the Roman Catholic Church. Rome should be the principal partner for this purpose. During this period, the Spirit of God is moving me forcefully to offer me as a sacrifice for this cause. A reform Movement with a noble ideal alone can save this community. I believe fully that God is calling me for upholding such an ideal. . . . I feel that the Almighty God is calling me to jump into His Ocean of love. In my correspondence with Rome, I have not written a single sentence for my personal gain. I have aimed only at the glory of God’s name, the uplift of the Jacobite community and the reunion of the separated sons of St. Thomas the Apostle. I have sought for reunion, demanding the acceptance and preservation of our liturgy and traditions, accepting the ordination of our episcopacy and the authority over our faithful. In our correspondence with Rome, we aimed at the continuous existence of the Catholicate and the reunion of all the bishops of the

⁶⁴ Mar Ivanios, *Girideepam*, p.60-70 (not literal).

Metran Kakshy. Thus I aimed at opening a door for the reunion of *Puthenkuttukar* and the *Pazhayakuttukar*.⁶⁵

Mar Ivanios wanted that the entire Malankara Church should enter into visible canonical communion with Rome, retaining the Synodal structure and the Catholicos, and that the Catholicos should give the leadership for the visible communion. And he thought that the integral Oriental traditions would be preserved in Roman communion. He wanted to preserve the Malankara Church as an Oriental Church with its structure and ways of life and with its **real autonomy**. He had a vision and it was a far advanced one, even ahead of the visions of some of the Roman officials. It was the result of his long study, prayer and meditation. One need not be surprised at the conspicuous absence of this post-Vatican vision in the pre-Vatican officials. One need not equally be surprised, if one did not find this openness and vision in the other members of the Malankara Church also.

Mar Ivanios was the only person who in his conscience wanted to have a total break with the Jacobite Patriarch and to establish the communion with the Apostolic See of Peter in Rome. At that time he alone could think in that way. He was enlightened and he followed his conscience in rejecting the subjection to the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. The excommunication and the humiliation of Mar Dionysius VI and of his group including himself in 1911 was still vivid in his memory. He firmly believed that any further relationship would help only to repeat the events of 1911. He remembered vividly the events of 1876 and the excommunication of Mathews Mar Athanasios by the Patriarch Peter III and the separation of a section of the Malankara Church and the formation of the Marthoma Church. He never expected peace as long as the Malankara Church was subjected to the Jacobite Patriarch. He foresaw endless quarrels and litigations and factionalism down through the centuries.

Evaluation

The Catholic communion of 1930 was the realization of the conviction of those Malankara Christians that the full, visible and canonical

⁶⁵ T. Inchackalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, I. 407-9.

communion with the Pope of Rome and through him to the millions of Catholics throughout the whole world was necessary for the full ecclesiality of the Church of Christ. There are just about less than 1.6 million faithful in the Jacobite –Orthodox Churches together⁶⁶. But in the Catholic Church, where the Pope is presiding as the successor of Peter in Rome, there are more than one billion faithful. The communion established in 1930 was with the worldwide Church. The Malankara Jacobite-Orthodox Churches are chiefly concentrated in Kerala. There are also migrant scattered communities here and there in the various cities in India and in some parts of the world. But even geographically speaking the Catholic Church is worldwide. In the Malankara Jacobite-Orthodox Church, there is only just one liturgical tradition, which they received from the Antiochenes. But in the Catholic Church, there are several liturgical traditions. There are various monastic and theological traditions and ecclesial life in the Catholic Church. There is a blending of unity in diversity in the Catholic Church. Through the communion with the bishop of Rome, the Malankara Church also entered into communion with all these Churches and Traditions. It is indeed a great gain. The Malankara *Puthenkur* Community regained the full Catholicity through the visible and canonical communion of 1930 with the successor of St. Peter, the Chief of the Apostle, in the See Rome.

Characteristics of the Reunion Movement

The Reunion Movement had several special characteristics:

1. This is the unique ecumenical movement in the 20th century, which culminated in the full communion of a particular Church with the Roman Catholic Church. There were in the last century several ecumenical discussions both before and after the Vatican Council. But this is unique in establishing the canonical communion. Of course both the leaders of the Roman Church and of the Malankara Church were guided by the ecclesiology of those days. They could not be blamed for not having the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council or the post Vatican developments. In the light of today's vision of communion there may be imperfection. However, it was a praiseworthy attempt to bring two Churches into full communion.

⁶⁶ *There is no exact statistics. Some think that the number is much more than that.*

2. The initiative for communion came from within the Malankara Church. There was no external force or persuasion in this ecumenical endeavor. It was not the result of any *missionary activity* from the part of the Roman Catholic Church. From the time of the separation in 1653, the leaders of both the groups were earnestly trying to reunite the two factions of the ancient Thomas Christians. The reunion of 1930 was the culmination of these attempts.

3. Since this ecumenical activity was the fulfillment of God's will, God blessed it abundantly. It is very rich in vocations and missionary activity today.

4. The conviction of Mar Ivanios and his prophetic vision, that only the communion with the successor of Peter in Rome would bring about lasting peace and progress for the Malankara Church proved to be true. When Mar Ivanios began to reflect on the nature of the Church of Christ and its missionary dimension, he realized that isolated existence of separated groups was contrary to the will of Christ. United witnessing is far more fruitful than that of the tiny groups. History has proved that he was correct in his judgment.

5. The Reunion of 1930 was preceded by intense spiritual renewal in the Orthodox Church. Only prophetic people could plunge themselves into the mystery of Truth and achieve such great things as the Reunion of 1930. When Mar Ivanios entered into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church, he entered into communion with the whole Catholic Church throughout the world.

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The Crowning of the Reunion attempts

Our Lord Jesus Christ came to unite the whole mankind in him. He reconciled humankind in his cross. But down through the centuries there arose divisions; and groups of people separated themselves from the Church of Christ and lost the full and visible communion with the one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and formed separate bodies and communities. Thus we find Churches and ecclesial communities of both East and West. The division in Kerala was not due to any doctrinal matter. The *Coonan Cross Oath* was taken as a reaction to the highhanded activities of the Western Portuguese missionaries. It was done with a view to preserve the *identity* and *individuality* of this Apostolic Church. But it shattered the unity and inner life of the Church and for a section it amounted to the loss of visible communion with the Catholic Church. It led to further divisions and subdivisions. But the craving for reunion remained alive in the community; and several leaders of the various factions of the Malankara Church tried to get the community reunited, as it was before 1653. The reunion of 1930 was, in fact, the crowning of the reunion attempts of the Malankara community down through the centuries. There were many people who earnestly prayed for it and did sacrifice and penance. They realized that division was contrary to the will of the Lord and was counter witnessing to the Gospel value and to Christianity itself. Division is the denial of Christianity itself.

Reunion Attempts

Mar Thoma I was in favor of communion. He was not for dividing the community. He asked Joseph Maria Sebastiani, the Apostolic Visitor from Rome, to rectify his ordination. But Sebastiani was not prepared for that; instead, he ordained Chandy *Metran* and excommunicated Mar Thoma I. *Mar Thoma IV* and *Mar Thoma V* also tried to reunite the two communities. But the missionaries were totally opposed to such reconciliation, because they wanted to stick on here. They feared that the reunion would endanger their colonial interest in India. Mar Thoma VI was a great Christian leader who had relentlessly endeavored to bring about the reunion of the two factions of the Malankara Church. The lay leader Thachil Mathu Tharakan, the learned priest Cariatti *Malpan* and several other leaders of both the communities tried earnestly to realize the reunion. At the request of Mar Thoma VI for communion, Cariatti and Paremmakel, two *Pazhayakur* priests, after having suffered innumerable difficulties and miseries, went to Rome and Portugal with the full support and help of the whole Church to effect the reunion of Mar Thoma VI. Having got everything approved, Cariatti became an Archbishop in 1782 under *Padroado*. On his way back to Kerala, he stayed at Goa, and unexpectedly he died there in 1786 and was buried there.⁶⁷ Subsequently Paremmakel became the Administrator (*Governador*) of the *Pazhayakur* community and he too continued the ecumenical efforts. Thachil Mathu Tharakan gave able lay leadership. As a result of the negotiations, Mar Thoma VI got reunited with the Catholic Church on 22nd June 1799. He began to stay at Thathampally, Alapuzha. But the missionaries were not prepared to entrust him with the leadership of the Syrian Church. They thought that if he were granted authority, the entire Syrian community would move away from them and join him. In that case they feared that they would lose their hold in the community. Therefore they kept creating problems for him. And because of this negative attitude from the part of the missionaries, he returned to the Jacobite Church after six months.

The missionaries were not at all for recognizing the autonomy of this Apostolic Church. The West Asian Jacobites also from the beginning tried to inject anti-Roman sentiments in the minds of the Malankara

⁶⁷ In 1960 his mortal remains were transferred to Alangatt, his native parish.

faithful. From the side of the Western missionaries, there was pressure on those Malankara people who were with them, not to have any contact with the *Puthenkur* community. They depicted the *Puthenkuttukar* as schismatics and heretics. Thus, both from the part of the Antiochene Jacobites and from the part of the Western missionaries, there was pressure to keep the two factions of the Malankara Christians apart and sustain the division alive.

Even *Cheppatt Mar Dionysius* and *Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius* also wanted to reestablish the full communion with the Catholic Church. Who among the true followers of Christ does not want to have the reunion of all Christians? Who will not desire earnestly that the brothers of the same faith should come together and become united in the Lord and bear witness to him in one voice? They were all for the reunion. Only an anti-Christ could say, that the unity of the Churches is not needed. But our forefathers were not blessed with the unity, which the Lord very earnestly desired. The whole lifetime of *Cheppatt Mar Dionysius* was filled with various problems. The Antiochene Jacobites profited from the internal quarrels and factionalism in the Church and they established their dominion here, just as the Portuguese did in the 16th century. It was clear that the Malankara Church was neither part of the Church of the Portuguese nor of the Church of the Jacobites. It was the one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ. Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius also had a lot of problems to encounter. Still he started the ecumenical movement with Nidhirikkal Mani Cathanar, by establishing the *Jathyaika Sangham*, with a view to reunite both the factions of the community.

Kandanad Joachim Mar Ivanios (1913-25) of the *Metran Kakshy* had also earnestly desired the full communion with the Catholic Church. He had discussions with the Archbishop of Ernakulam in 1923. A date was fixed for the communion at the Ernakulam Catholic bishop's house. But his relative Deacon Karavatt Simon and Deacon Mukkancheril Patros hindered it cunningly. Instead of going to Ernakulam in the boat at night, they sailed to Parumala. Later Deacon Simon became a Corepiscopa and entered into full communion with the Catholic Church and lamented over his deed. The Corepiscopa wrote in a later article in 1948:

“I was staying with Kandanad Joachim Mar Ivanios, who was the brother of my father. He was a saintly bishop. I had often heard him saying about the faith of the Catholic Church. His main argument was the clause in the *Hudaya Canon* of Bar Ebraya where he mentioned the *Rish Patriarch*. He was convinced that the position of the *Rish Patriarch* as Chief and Head had to be recognized. In the same way he knew that the primacy of Peter could very well be proved from the liturgical books of the Jacobite Church. In 1923 he got in touch with Fr. Thottunkal of the Ernakulam Archdiocese. Deacon Patros and myself cheated him and hindered him. In those days I had such a hatred towards the Catholic Church. Later he became sick and could not enter into the full communion. Joachim Mar Ivanios was one of the bishops who ordained Mar Ivanios as Bishop of Bethany. He was the president of the Episcopal Synod and was insisting that Fr. P.T. Geevarghese should be raised to episcopacy. He insisted that the bishop of Bethany should take his name, namely Mar Ivanios.”⁶⁸

Mar Alexander Choolaparambil of the Kottayam diocese also tried to reunite the two factions of the *Knanaya community* into one. *Mar Severios* of the *Knanaya* community also desired earnestly for the communion, but he also did not have the fortune to see its realization. But several of the *Knanaya* Jacobite priests and faithful joined the Kottayam Catholic diocese.⁶⁹

These ecumenical attempts of the Malankara Christians were crowned with success only in God’s time, the time determined by God Himself. The unity of the Christians is also God’s work. The priests and faithful of good will in the Malankara Church, both the *Puthenkur* and the *Pazhayakur*, were praying with tears very earnestly to the Almighty God, down through the centuries for the reunion of the sons of St. Thomas. The loving God, pleased with their conversion of heart and way of life, showered upon them his blessing and gift of full and visible communion through the mediation of Mar Ivanios. God alone could do such wonders. It is beyond man’s capability. There are sufficient reasons to believe firmly, that it was God who did this wonder for his children.

⁶⁸ V. Kilichimala, *Ormayude Chitrasaala*, Tiruvalla, I, 1966, p. 122ff.

⁶⁹ S. Kanjiramukalil, *Punaraikya Rekhakal*, Kottayam, 1999.

In the matter of the visible communion with the Catholic Church, the activity of Mar Ivanios was a great event among the *Puthenkur* and *Pazhayakur* communities. He had a great position and reputation in his community. We cannot see the Reunion movement as an accidental event. Mar Ivanios studied the history of the Christian Church in Kerala, the history of the Jacobite Church in West Asia and the history of the Catholic Church. He studied thoroughly the circumstances of the *Coonan Cross Oath*, the installation of Mar Thoma I. Mar Ivanios was extraordinarily intelligent and a very learned person. He sought the true Church and he found it in the Catholic Church. He realized the separation of the other Churches and communities from the Catholic Church. He found no justification for the Malankara Church to be a part of the Antiochene Jacobite Church. Mar Ivanios saw the Malankara Church as a whole. He wanted that under the Catholicos, the whole Malankara community should enter into communion with the Catholic Church. He worked strenuously for that. But it was not realized. But he went forward. God helped him in his path or rather God worked through him. He made use of him as His instrument for the unity of the communities here. He opened a path for the visible communion with the Catholic Church for all who believe in the words of Christ and love Him. He was an extraordinary man and indeed a charismatic person. Only such a person could undertake these illustrious things. Only such people could become humble instruments in the hands of God. That is how the *Reunion Movement* came into existence and grew into a particular Church in the Catholic communion.

His own Words

At a great reception accorded to him at *Kothamangalam*, Mar Ivanios spoke thus about the background of his Reunion and the reaction of the Jacobites:

“After my full, canonical communion with the Catholic Church, the non Catholics, especially the Jacobites, are spreading various types of calumny about me. In their view I am a betrayer and liar. They tell the Catholics that ‘*as he cheated us, he will cheat you too*’. The Holy Spirit indeed has cheated me! In leaving behind the quarrel, factionalism, litigations, lack of obedience and pride, the Holy Spirit has cheated me! If the Jacobite brethren are totally offering themselves to the hands of

God and becoming humble instruments, I believe that the Holy Spirit will cheat them also! There is only one Truth and it cannot be many. It is true that I collected some money for Bethany. I worked very hard for 20 years for the Jacobite Church and stood in the forefront for its progress and uplift. I came to the conclusion that any establishment in connection with the Jacobite Patriarch would result in endless civil litigations. That is why I established Bethany as an independent establishment. If one becomes a Jacobite without accepting the Jacobite Patriarch, but simply by adopting the Jacobite liturgy, in that sense I was a Jacobite. But if one who does not recognize and accept the Jacobite Patriarch is not a Jacobite, I was not a Jacobite.”

“I entered into canonical communion on 20th September 1930. After the reunion I spent a few weeks solely in prayer and spiritual exercises. I did not venture to enter into any external activity immediately. Since I needed the Grace and blessings of God, I kept praying for it. Since last December, I set on to work. Our Movement is just four months old. It still needs the care and protection of a child. Since the Church is God’s Church I am not preoccupied and worried about its growth and future. I am convinced and I am content that I have done a historical duty, which was the will of God and the earnest desire of many fathers in the Malankara Church. God Himself will take care of His children. During the last four months, thousands of faithful in various places have embraced the Catholic Church. There are already 22 priests and 20 chapels.”⁷⁰

Archbishop Mar Ivanios used to say:

“We have entered into the Catholic communion with empty hand. We have only the sky above and the earth below.”

Again,

“We have never forced anybody, even our closest relatives and friends, to join the Catholic Church”.

Once he wrote to Elanjikal E.J. John Vakeel, a close friend:

“Whatever may be the calumny spread about my communion with the Catholic Church, I am fully confident that my initiatives are

⁷⁰ T. Inchackalody, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, vol. II, p. 35-38.

under the guidance of Divine Providence. Even though not purposefully and consciously, those who oppose me and calumniate me are speaking and acting not only against truth and progress, but against themselves also. May God pardon them and lead them to the truth”⁷¹.

Mar Ivanios was correct in bringing his Church to the canonical communion with the world wide Catholic Church. History proved that he was correct in following his conscience and his assessments were correct too, that he didn’t betray his Church, but brought its ecclesiality to perfection. He was right in the evaluation of the history of his Church. He was doing the right thing in leading thousands of the faithful, entangled in civil litigation, to the full Catholic communion, to the true sheepfold of Christ, to peace and prosperity. Those who accused Mar Ivanios since 1930 should calmly reflect over the terrible history of division of their community even after 1930. They should open their eyes to the fact that during the past 82 years, there was only a very limited period in their history, when there was no strife and civil litigation.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*47.

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Archbishop Geevarghese Mar Ivanios (1882-1953)

The Malankara Catholic Church celebrated the 50th anniversary of the death of Archbishop Mar Ivanios of blessed memory on 15th July 2003. He gave leadership to the world-famous and historic *Unity Movement* (commonly called *Reunion Movement*) in India in 1930 and thereby brought the Malankara Orthodox-Jacobite Churches to the full, visible and canonical communion with the Catholic Church. He appeared in the ecclesiastical horizon as the *prophet of unity and peace*. He had the leadership qualities of the great Moses who led the Israelites out of Egypt to the Promised Land. He inherited the courage of St. Thomas the Apostle, who had dared to come to this distant land. He had the universal missionary vision of St. Paul who dared to remove the human fences in order to receive the non-Jews into the Church. By his life and apostolate, Mar Ivanios opened a new chapter in the history of Christianity in India. God chose this prophet for the *reunion* of the separated Thomas Christians to the Catholic Church and the simultaneous *conversion* to Christ of thousands of non-Christians in India. He believed firmly that God called him for this purpose and that he had a God-given task to fulfil. He regained the trait of *Catholicity* for the Malankara Church, lost since 1653, and together with that, all the blessings that accompany the Catholic communion. In short, the earthly life of Mar Ivanios was the perfect expression of the merciful divine providence. He was a man of wisdom and holiness. He was filled with Christian piety. He had a very strong life of faith.

Early Life

Mar Ivanios was born in 1882 at Mavelikkara in the Panicker Veettil Family. His parents belonged to the Jacobite Church. They were very religious, and pious, having a very good prayer life and religious consciousness. They imparted ample religious instruction to the child. At baptism, he was called Geevarghese. He learned from the parents the value of prayer life and trust in God. He was very intelligent and earnest in his studies. Even from his boyhood, he wanted to be helpful to others. He had acquired a sense of purpose in life. The boy grew, filled with wisdom and knowledge and the grace of God was with him. In his boyhood, his mother imparted to him the devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the love towards the Catholic Church. These ideas went very deep into his mind and as he grew they developed in him. Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius saw the greatness of the boy and entrusted him to Vattasseril *Malpan*. He studied theology under the *Malpan* in the *Pazhaya Seminary*. Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius ordained him Deacon in 1899 at the Puthenkavu parish. As a Deacon, he used to go around the various parishes for preaching. His favorite topic was the Sacraments of the Church. At that time he was known as *the Deacon of the Sacraments*.

Then he studied for M.A. Degree at Madras Christian college. He was the first cleric to take M.A. Degree from among the Syrians in Kerala. He continued his preaching apostolate. As a Deacon, he became the Principal of the Kottiyam M.D. Seminary High School. In 1908, Vattasseril Mar Dionysius ordained him a priest at the Parumala Seminary. He was thereafter then known as Fr. P. T. Geevarghese or *M.A. Achan*, i.e., the priest who got M.A. Degree. After his ordination to priesthood, he greatly influenced the daily events of the Jacobite Church till his canonical communion with the Catholic Church in 1930. He was the right hand of Mar Dionysius, who also loved him very much. Mar Dionysius wrote in 1917 to Mar Ivanios:

“If we have a faithful and true friend, we are not unaware that it is you”.

On another occasion Mar Dionysius wrote to Mr. Philipose Judge:

“In this world, we have not loved and respected any one else more than our *Bethany Metrachan*. We have loved him and trusted him, more than our Catholicos and even ourselves.”

Mar Ivanios from his part also loved Mar Dionysius with filial devotion:

“His Grace is my Father and Teacher. I have loved him from my boyhood till today with pure and unblemished love.”

Mar Ivanios had great appreciation for Mar Dionysius:

“God has given him a strong mind, which can bear everything and the eyes and ears, which will not be closed or perturbed by whatever he sees and hears.”

M. A. Achan and the Catholicate

Fr.P.T.Geevarghese strove relentlessly for the establishment of the Catholicate in the Malankara Church. He tried harder than anybody else to bring Patriarch Mar Abd al Msiha to Kerala and to establish the Catholicate. When Mar Abdalla excommunicated Mar Dionysius, *M.A.Achan* informed Abd al Msiha about it. Immediately he got the reply: “*Blessed are Dionysius and the faithful with him. The excommunication of Abdalla is invalid.*”

When *M. A. Achan* showed Mar Dionysius the telegram, the later shed tears of unbounded joy. As requested by *M.A.Achan*, Abd al Msiha sent the reply to a certain preacher Eappen (*Upadesi*) at Mavelikkara that he would come to Kerala as soon as possible. *M. A. Achan* and N. I. Pothen went to Bombay to receive Abd al Msiha. And after the installation, he travelled to Bombay again to see him off.

Nobody in the *Metran Kakshy* doubted from 1912 to 1930 about the role of *M.A.Achan* in the establishment of the Catholicate in Malankara. No one ever dared to undermine his role. On the other hand, the representatives of the Malankara *Metran Kakshy* gladly and publicly announced in open forum that the Catholicate had been instituted as a result of the strenuous efforts of *M.A. Achan*. It was, indeed, with great delight that in 1925 too, immediately after his Episcopal ordination, they remembered it. During the felicitation address, the speaker asserted joyfully, “*the Catholicate had been established as a result of the efforts of Mar Ivanios*”. It must be borne in mind that the speech was made in 1925, years after the establishment of the Catholicate in 1912. That

means the events were still fresh in the memory of the people, even after a gap of thirteen years.

Mar Dionysius himself had reaffirmed it in connection with the *Kunnamkulam* litigation. The query was:

“Who invited Mar Abd al Msiha?”

The reply of Mar Dionysius:

“He agreed to come because of his own wish and because Fr. Geevarghese communicated to him the desire of many people in Malankara that he should come here”.

It can be said without any trace of doubt that Fr. P.T. Geevarghese played a decisive role in ascertaining the autonomy of the Malankara Church through the establishment of the Catholicate in 1912. However some show reluctance in connecting him with the establishment of the Catholicate, ever after his full communion with the Catholic Church in 1930.

Professor at Serampore University

With the excommunication of Mar Dionysius by Mar Abdalla and the establishment of the Catholicate by Abd al Msiha, the Jacobite Church was divided into two distinct factions under two leaderships. The first Catholicos died shortly after the installation. The *Metran Kakshy* did not dare to install another one immediately. As mentioned earlier, Mar Ivanios did not like the civil litigations between the brothers. As soon as he got a chance to be away from it, he got the permission of Mar Dionysius, and left for Serampore College in North India to teach Economics and Syriac. He taught there till 1919. He had ample opportunity there to get acquainted with the Anglican High Church leadership and with Indian monastic ways of living. He was also able to read and study intensively Church History books and reflect over the situation of his Church in Kerala. These opened his eyes. The period in Serampore was very decisive for him. While working as a Professor at Serampore University, he took with him a lot of young men and women and afforded them opportunity for higher education. He was convinced that for the uplift of the society it was very necessary to have educated people. He spent money from his own pocket to meet their academic

expenses. He also gave them training for a kind of monastic life there. One could say that the beginning of Bethany was at Serampore. He made use of the whole amount of money, which he got from Serampore for the education of the youth of his Church.

Bethany Monastic Movement (1919)

While the two factions in the Malankara Jacobite Church, the Metran Kakshy and the *Bawa Kakshy*, were waging a legal battle for Vattippanam, Fr.P.T. Geevarghese was prayerfully thinking of the ways and means for uplifting his community in the light of the Gospel values. He knew from history that the religious orders are essential for renewing any community. His conviction became very strong when he was at Serampore College. In 1919 he founded the Bethany religious order for men at Perunad. Fr.P.T. Geevarghese became *Abo Geevarghese*.

The first thing he did through the Bethany monastic movement was the internal renewal of the members of his Church. So he shared his ideal with his monks and started a reform movement through conventions and classes for the faithful. Vattasseril Mar Dionysius encouraged him to renew the Church. *Abo* Geevarghese, the renowned preacher, taught the essential doctrines of the Church and stressed the need of intense sacramental and liturgical life and the mission of the Church in the world, especially in the vast Indian subcontinent. There was enthusiastic response to his pleas and he formed a nucleus of devoted Christians, committed to the cause of Christ and his Church. He kept them away from civil litigations.

The Bethany religious gave prominence to prayer and asceticism. His intention was to renew the community and Church at large through Bethany. These religious gave spiritual retreats and conducted conventions. The people, who were only accustomed to civil litigations, were now instinctively drawn to a new way of Christian life, which was more authentic and in tune with the Gospel teaching. Thus they caused an internal revival in the parishes. Because of the influence of Bethany, there was a liturgical renewal in the Malankara Church. They also published liturgical books.

When Mar Ivanios became the bishop of Bethany in 1925, Mar Dionysius encouraged him to start Bethany parishes, which were

independent establishments. Mar Ivanios started the Bethany order for women in 1925 at Tirumalapuram. He made effective plans for motivating the people to undertake charitable activities and to carry out evangelical work among the non-Christians, especially among the *Dalits*, who were down trodden even in those days. He cared for them, treated them on equal terms and received them into the Church. In 1930 when Mar Ivanios entered into full communion with the Catholic Church, the people who had come under the influence of Bethany readily followed him.

The Bethany monastic movement was a new venture in the Jacobite Church. It was an independent establishment. The parishes, which Bethany established, were also free from the Patriarch and the Malankara Metropolitan. Thus they were free from the civil litigations and gave new life to the Church through the Bethany monasticism. He introduced order in the liturgical life. The custom in the churches in Kerala was that women stood behind men in the church. He changed it and arranged the women on the right side and men on the left. Thus he established equality of men and women in the churches. The Bethany monks followed the Indian way of monastic life. They wore saffron like the Hindu monks, and stuck to vegetarian diet.

Bishop of Bethany (1925)

In 1925 Mar Ivanios was ordained a bishop at Niranam. After the ordination he was given a grand reception. At that time he made a touching speech, inviting all for a wider ecumenism. His aim of the unity of all the Malankara Christians was very clearly expressed in that speech. He remained a bishop of the *Metran Kakshy* only for five years (1925-30). He started the establishment of independent Bethany parishes (1925) and also the Bethany Order for Women (1925) with the blessings of Mar Dionysius. It was as a bishop of the *Metran Kakshy* that he was deputed to have ecumenical contacts with Rome in 1926. When the autonomy had been regained through the establishment of the Catholicate, Mar Ivanios thought about the communion with the Catholic Church. He wanted to have an honorable existence for his Church in the one Church of Christ to fulfil its God-given mandate in the world. He believed that it couldn't be achieved in its present existence as a separated and isolated Church, confined to a tiny part of India and in continuous conflict

with the Syrian Jacobite Patriarch. So he wanted to regain the honorable position of the Apostolic Church in the one Catholic Church of Christ.

He prepared the way for it through internal renewal, initiated by the Bethany religious Movement. Later, with the consent of the other bishops of the *Metran Kakshy*, he started ecumenical negotiations with the Syrian Catholic Patriarch first and then with Rome directly. Finally he succeeded in establishing the visible communion. But at the time of the communion in 1930, all the other bishops withdrew, except Mar Theophilos.

People have yet to realize the greatness of what Mar Ivanios did and what he achieved. He succeeded where many before him failed and that too in very difficult situations, i. e., to reestablish the full and visible communion, which had been lost for about 400 years for a section of the Thomas Christians. The mentality in 1930 was not the same as that today in the post Vatican period. So one could evaluate the great achievement of Mar Ivanios, particularly in 1930, when the outlook was quite different and pre-Conciliar. The movement he initiated became a reality. The door is opened for all the Puthenkur Malankarites to enter into canonical communion with the Catholic Church and to be grafted into the trunk rather than continue in the isolated existence as a member of a sectarian Church. Definitely this happened in the Providence of God and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It was painful for Mar Ivanios to be separated from his brother bishops in the *Metran Kakshy*, especially from Mar Dionysius. But when Mar Ivanios found that God was calling him to be the pioneer of the ecumenical movement, in answer to the divine call and in response to his conscience and the truth he had discovered, he set out for the canonical communion with the Catholic Church.

Visit to Pope Pius XI (1932)

Mar Ivanios went to Rome in 1932 to visit the Pope and to get the order for the establishment of the Malankara Catholic Hierarchy. Pope Pius XI wholeheartedly received him with extended hands. As the guardian of unity and communion, he embraced Mar Ivanios with the words,

“My son, you are my good son. Welcome, a big welcome”.

In later life on several occasions Mar Ivanios remembered this memorable event with tears of joy. Even at his deathbed he recalled it. Pope Pius XI was embracing the whole Malankara community which cherished the full visible communion with the Catholic Church. Contrary to the traditional custom of kneeling before the Pope and kissing him, Mar Ivanios stood and they embraced each other, as is the custom of the Oriental prelates. Mar Ivanios thus got a very grand and cordial reception in Rome. After the preliminary conversations, the Pope asked him:

“My Son, what do you want now?”

Mar Ivanios looked into the paper he had prepared and enumerated the needs one by one. The most important item was the establishment of the Malankara Catholic hierarchy with the headquarters in Trivandrum and the suffragan See at Tiruvalla. The Pope listened to his requests attentively and at the end initialing the requests said:

“We gladly approve all the requests. You deserve it.”

Then he handed over the paper to Cardinal Pacelli, the Secretary, saying:

“We approve all these. Prepare all the necessary documents for our signature.”

Altogether Mar Ivanios had five meetings with the Pope. After the meeting when they came out, the Cardinal Secretary told Mar Ivanios very seriously:

“Your Grace, this is not the way things are being done in Rome. One is not supposed to make a request directly to the Pope. Whatever is needed must be submitted to the Congregation in written form. The members of the Congregation will consider the matter and they submit them to the Pope. Then he would take the decisions.”

Then Mar Ivanios said:

“Your Eminence, the customs and the traditions of the Roman Catholic Church are indeed venerable. I, as a prelate, having recently entered into the canonical communion with the Catholic Church, have yet to learn them well. Therefore let the matters come through the Congregation itself as usual. Any way the Holy Father has approved

them all to me directly. Not only that, I have not done it by my own initiative. When His Holiness asked me of my needs and requests, as a son am I not bound to tell him openly? In this, where have I gone wrong?" The Cardinal Secretary had nothing more to say. Subsequently all the necessary documents were issued, as the Pope had approved them before Mar Ivanios.

Establishment of the Malankara Catholic Hierarchy (1932)

The Pope sanctioned all the demands of Mar Ivanios, even without consulting the Curial officials. It was the great generosity and love of the Church of Pope Pius XI and the earnestness and love of Mar Ivanios that made the communion of 1930 a reality. Through the Apostolic Constitution "*Christo Pastorum Principi*" of 11th June 1932, the Malankara Catholic Hierarchy was established with Trivandrum as the Archdiocese and Tiruvalla as its suffragan diocese. In Trivandrum it was executed on 12th March 1933 and in Tiruvalla on 6th November 1933. Since then there has been a mass flow of priests and faithful into the Catholic Church from the various factions of the Malankara community such as the Jacobite Church, Orthodox Church, Mar Thoma Church, the Church of South India and Thozhiyur Church. It also received large numbers of converts from non-Christian communities.

Eucharistic Congress at Dublin

After the visit to the Pope, Mar Ivanios visited several European countries. He took part in the Eucharistic Congress in Ireland, met several international leaders and was very well received everywhere. On 30th October 1932 Mar Ivanios returned to India. His first foreign tour lasted for about six months. In Ireland he met G. K. Chesterton; in England he had the opportunity to take part in the garden party of King George V. There he got the chance to have direct meeting with the King to whom he handed over the letter from the Pope. Then he spent some time in Belgium, where he visited the King of Belgium. In all the places, he had occasion to speak about India and his Catholic communion and various other topics. He met a lot of distinguished leaders too. It was a great experience for him.

Archbishop of Trivandrum

After the establishment of the Hierarchy, a hall at Palayam was converted into a church and dedicated in the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary and on 12th March 1933, there *Abun Mar Ivanios* was installed as the Metropolitan of the Malankara Catholic Church and he offered the holy Eucharist. On November 6, of the same year *Abun Mar Theophilos* was installed as the Catholic bishop of Tiruvalla. The river *Pampa* was the dividing line between the two dioceses. The Northern border of Tiruvalla was the Ponnaniuzha. Later Mar Severios (1937) and Mar Dioscoros (1939) joined the Catholic Church. And together with them a host of priests and faithful followed the path trodden by Mar Ivanios.

Second Foreign Tour

In 1947 he made a second foreign tour. This time he visited USA, Canada and Australia and had opportunity to meet very eminent international leaders, both secular and religious. He spent one year abroad. He was then qualified as "*a great man from India*" and "*the greatest missionary of the 20th century.*" Some expressed their joy in seeing him:

" We read about the Reunion Movement of 1930, which made the whole Catholic world exuberant. We never thought that we would be able to see the great man who was the leader and guiding spirit of that Movement."

He met Mr. Truman, the President of the United States of America. In 1948 the University of San Francisco honored Mar Ivanios with a Doctorate in Law. This journey enabled him to make known the Malankara Church and the St. Thomas tradition wherever he went. In 1948 he came back to India and in 1950 he celebrated the Silver Jubilee of his Episcopal ordination.

A Gigantic Achievement

Mar Ivanios raised the status of the Christians in Trivandrum. He bought properties at various centers for the construction of the churches and educational institutions. It was not very easy especially at that time to get recognition from Rome for a Particular Church in the Universal

Church. It was a gigantic achievement and his name would be remembered forever. He made use of the talents given by God for the glory of God, for the Church and for gaining the brethren for the Lord. At the death of Mar Ivanios, the daily *Malayala Manorama* wrote an editorial, speaking very high of him. He respected others. He was a very good listener, even to those who opposed or disagreed with him. He prepared everything for his successors, so that the administration of the Church would be smooth for them. It was because of his extraordinary ability, vision and far sightedness that he could do such gigantic deeds.

Sickness and Death

After the second foreign tour, Archbishop Mar Ivanios fell sick and by 1952 his condition worsened. But by this time he started the construction of a Cathedral at Pattom and ordained his successor, Mar Gregorios, in January 1953 there on that ground. For about 13 months Mar Ivanios was bed ridden. So he got ample time to prepare himself to face the Lord. On 15th July 1953 at 11.30 p.m. Mar Ivanios entered into the glory of his Master.

In 1930 the Reunion Movement had its beginning with just five people. By 1932 there were already 43 priests, 67 mission centers and 5850 faithful. By 1934 there were 54 priests, 159 mission centers and 18,376 faithful. In 1952, just before the death of Mar Ivanios, there were 76,352 Catholics, 310 Churches, 137 priests, one University College and several schools. His last message in 1952, September 21 was very touching. He took care to send a *final message* to his beloved faithful and entrusted the ecumenical activities to his spiritual children. He exhorted them to uphold the ideal of the unity of all Christians and to preach the Gospel to those who had not heard it.⁷²

A Sacerdos Magnus

Mar Ivanios was a *Sacerdos Magnus*, a great High Priest. He was a pillar of the Church in India. He was a lover of Truth: religious truth and historical truth. He realized that monasticism had a vital role to play in the renewal of the Church. He realized also that communion with the See of Peter in Rome is the only way to lasting peace and prosperity

⁷² Prabheesh George (ed.), *Jagarookanaya Ajapalakan*, Trivandrum, 2012, 181-191.

for his Church. He sought truth neither through civil litigation nor in his Church entangled in petit quarrels and sectarian violence. He had in his heart, even 40 years before the Second Vatican Council, the two aims of the Council: *renewal* and *ecumenism*. Through renewal and communion, he aimed at the Church's wider missionary commitment in India. He had a great missionary vision and he urged every Christian community in India to proclaim the Gospel to those who never knew our Lord before.

His Holiness Pope John Paul II in his allocution to the Malankara Catholic Bishops during their *ad limina* Visit in 2003 (May 13) referred to Mar Ivanios and spoke very highly of the Apostolate of the Malankara Church:

“Indeed, it is fitting that as your community celebrates the Fiftieth Anniversary of the death of *Archbishop Mar Ivanios, a tireless apostle for unity*, you find yourselves at the tombs of the Apostles Peter and Paul praying with Christ *ut omnes unum sint*... We are also mindful of the multiple blessings that have been bestowed on your Church in a relatively short time. *You have become one of the fastest growing Catholic communities in the world*, boasting large numbers of vocations to the priesthood and religious life”⁷³.

When His Holiness the Pope came to India in 1986 he had spoken also in very high terms regarding the Malankara Catholic Church and of Mar Ivanios:

“It is a joy for me to visit Saint Mary's Cathedral in Trivandrum. Although my visit is briefer than my heart would wish, I am very happy to be able to come to this Mother Church of the Metropolitan See of the Syro-Malankara Church. In coming to this Cathedral, *I pay honor to the memory of Archbishop Mar Ivanios* who is buried here. Among the many apostolic endeavors of this zealous Pastor of souls, none was dearer to him than the promotion of unity among Christians. And this remains an important priority in the Church. Our Lord might himself, on the night before he died, prayed “that they may all be one” (Jn 17:20) and he gave his life “to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad” (Jn 11:52). We must never tire then in our efforts to work for unity among Christians and to further harmony and peace in

⁷³ *L'Osservatore Romano*, N.21: 21 May, 2003, p.5

the world. May Mary the Mother of God assist us by her prayers. And may the Lord bless you all with his abundant joy and peace.”⁷⁴

During another speech in Trivandrum the Holy Father spoke thus:

“At this stage of my pilgrimage through India, I wish to avail myself of this visit to Trivandrum to address a particular word of affection to the Syro-Malankara Church of which Trivandrum is the principal See, under the guidance of Archbishop Mar Gregorios. Your Church, beloved brothers and sisters, traces its origin to the Apostle Saint Thomas. You possess a very ancient liturgical tradition, which had its origin in Antioch, where the followers of Jesus were first called Christians (Acts 11:26). For more than sixteen centuries your community remained in unbroken communion with the See of Peter. Then there was a series of difficulties, which interrupted that communion.

But this century has been indelibly marked by the luminous figure of Archbishop Mar Ivanios, who found wisdom and sensitivity to the cause of Christian unity in my predecessor Pius XI, to whom he made an historic visit in 1932.

I am very pleased to know that the latest period of your Church’s history has been a time of growth and vigorous Christian life. The establishment of the Major Seminary dedicated to Mary, Mother of the Church, is a sign of your vitality. It offers great hope of further strength and consolidation in the future.

In 1980 I had the great pleasure of sending Cardinal Rubin as my personal representative to the Jubilee celebrations. And today I have been given the grace to visit you personally. Today I wish to encourage you in your faith, in your fidelity to your ancient traditions, in your sincere efforts to promote fraternal relations with your brothers and sisters of the Jacobite and Orthodox Churches and other ecclesial communions. May your constant aspiration be that the time will soon come when the prayer of our Lord for perfect unity among all his disciples will be realized (Jn 17:21), so that the Church in every place and in every age may shine forth as “a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit”.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* Feb.17, 1986, p.8; *The Pope Speaks to India*, (St. Paul Publications, Bombay), 1986, p.146.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* 149-150.

During the previous *ad limina* visits of the Malankara and Malabar bishops also, His Holiness Pope John Paul II referred to Archbishop Mar Ivanios with a joyful heart. During the 1980 *ad limina* visit, referring to the Golden Jubilee of the “Unity Movement” going to be celebrated in December in that year, Pope said:

“You are celebrating the Golden Jubilee of that spiritual movement of which the late and *esteemed Mar Ivanios* was a pioneer and which brought into full communion with Rome himself, other Prelates, and the communities which he founded: the Fathers of the Imitation of Christ and the Sisters of Bethany”.⁷⁶

During the 1996 *ad limina* Visit, the Pope said:

“Present in our thoughts at this happy moment are the figures of *two unforgettable Pastors, Mar Ivanios*, who led you on the path of rediscovered full communion with the See of Peter, *and Mar Gregorios*, who so wisely directed the development of your Church”.⁷⁷

In his last message to the Malankara Catholic community, in 1952 before his death Mar Ivanios said:

“I have great sorrow about the non-Catholics in Kerala, who are the bone of our bones and flesh of our flesh. We very earnestly desired their reunion. We tried our best for that purpose. But we are not blessed to see their full communion. We hope and pray that our earnest desire become a reality.”⁷⁸

Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios (+1994), the successor of Archbishop Mar Ivanios gives the reason why the reunion was not fully achieved:

“The effort for corporate reunion with the Catholic Church was thwarted by the desertion of most of the Orthodox leaders of their original proposal of entering into communion with the Catholic Church. The reasons that prevailed with these leaders, who went back, were merely human and personal considerations and not motives of faith or religion. . . . The realization of the dream of the Church unity required heroic efforts on the part of Archbishop Mar Ivanios and his few companions”⁷⁹.

⁷⁶ Paul Pallath (ed.), *Pope John Paul II and the Catholic Church in India*, Changanassery 1996, p. 61.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* p.74.

⁷⁸ *The Last Message*, Trivandrum, 1952, p.12-13.

⁷⁹ K. V. Koshy, *St. Thomas and the Syrian Churches of India*, Delhi, 1999, p.76-77.

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The Malankara Catholic Church (1930-1953)

Here we analyse briefly the history of the period under the leadership of Archbishop Mar Ivanios, the first Metropolitan of the Malankara Catholic Church. After the establishment of the Malankara Catholic Hierarchy in 1932, there was a flow of priests and faithful to the Catholic communion from the Jacobite, Orthodox, Marthoma, and London Missionary Society (L.M.S.) communities. Four bishops and two Rembans and more than 100 priests entered into the visible communion within a few years. That shows that a lot of people among the *Puthenkur* community in Kerala were eager to enter into the Catholic communion. The leadership of the Fathers who guided the Reunion Movement with full trust in God and confidence and definite purpose made it a great event in the 20th century.

The Reunited Bishops:

Archbishop Geevarghese Mar Ivanios	(1930-1953)
Bishop Jacob Mar Theophilos	(1930-1956)
Archbishop-Bishop Joseph Mar Severios	(1937-1955)
Bishop Thomas Mar Dioscoros	(1939-1943)

The Rembans:

Cheppatt Philipose Remban	(1930-1979)
Pulikkottil Yausep Remban	(1930-1941)

Reunited Priests (Cathanars)⁸⁰ (Archdiocese of Trivandrum):

Abraham Potha Cathanar, Kattur (+1935)	
Alunilkunnathil A.G. Abraham, Mylapra Achan ⁸¹	(1936-1979)
Ambasseril Thomas Cathanar, Puthenpeedika	(1950-1965)
Ampanatt Thomas Muthalaly, Parakkuttam, Adoor	(1933-1982)
Asarieth Abraham Cathanar, Prakkanam	(1934-1949)
Attuvarath Koshy Cathanar, Kummallur	(1948-1962)
Ayrookuzhy Thomas Cathanar, Puthenkavu	(1945-1969)
Charuvileth Geevarghese Pandalam, Anjilikunnu	(1930-1974)
Cheravallil Mani Yohannan Cathanar, Kurathikad	(1931-1934)
Cheravallil Mathews Cathanar, Kurathikad	(1931-1981)
Ezhiyath Zacharias Cathanar, Attarikam/Omallur	(1931-1980)
Geevarghese Padipurackal, Kannimel, Cheppad	(1935-1953)
Kaippadackal Joseph Cathanar ⁸² , Kottarakara	(1947-1949)
Kaippadackal Thomas Cathanar, Kottarakara	(1947-1959)
Kallada Mathai Cathanar, Kunnikkuzhy/Pandalam	(1933-1972)
Kannimel Padipurackal Geevarghese, Cheppad	(1935-1953)
Kaplasseril Eappen Cathanar, Ala (+1994)	
Karingattil Mathai Cathanar, Thumpamon	(1932-1937)
Keepallil Patros Cathanar, Kudassanad (+1944)	
Kilannamannil Geevarghese, Manthuka, Kulanada	(1930-1935)
Kilannamannil Jacob Cathanar, Manthuka	(1931-1968)
Kizhakkeveetil Patros Cathanar, Pathanamthitta	(1938-1964)
Kizhakkevilayil Mathai Cathanar, Kundara	(1934-1974)
Kochukallil Philipose Cathanar, Elanthur	(1936-1955)
Kunnatheth Joshua Cathanar, Kaipattur	(1939-1978)
Kuzhiammannil Koshy Cathanar, Vayalathala	(1936-1946)
Mankavil Geevarghese Cathanar, Kattanam	(1936-1943)

⁸⁰ Priests were called Cathanar.

⁸¹ Thengumtharayil

⁸² Palathumthalackal

Mankavil M.G. Samuel Cathanar, Kattanam	(1932-1948)
Mannikkarott Lukose Cathanar, Kaithaparamb	(1933-1991)
Mannil Abraham Cathanar, Kattur	(1934-1935)
Medayil (Melethil) Philipose, Kumbazha Achan	(1930-1974)
Mulapampallil Jacob Cathanar, Pazhakulam	(1948-1968)
Munjinatt Mathai Cathanar, Kalayapuram	(1931-1955)
Njappally Yaunan Cathanar, Paranthal, Pongalady	(1947-1966)
Palathumthalackal Joseph, Kottarakara (+1949)	
Pampureth Alexander Cathanar, Kulanada	(1931-1976)
Pampureth Chandapilla, Kulanada, Pandalam ⁸³	(1931-1949)
Parampil Thomas Panicker, Mavelikkara	(1931-1975)
Peedikayil Geevarghese Cathanar, Puthenpeedika	(1947-1960)
Perumala Thomas Cathanar, Chandanappally	(1931-1985)
Puthenpurackal Geevarghese, Kadammanitta Achan	(1931-1955)
Puthenpurackal P. T. Geevarghese Panicker,	(1931-1986)
Puthenpurayil P. K. Daniel Cathanar, Nariapuram	(1939-1986)
Puthenveettil ⁸⁴ P.T. Geevarghese Cathanar	(1946-1992)
Puthenveettil Jacob Cathanar, Thumpamon	(1931-1948)
Sankarathil Samuel Cathanar, Vadakkupuram	(1951-1994)
Thakidiyil Jacob Cathanar, Karichal	(1930-1931)
Thaliath Kuriakose Cathanar, Suranad	(1948-1969)
Thazhayil Abraham, Pulinthitta, Elanthur	(1935-1943)
Thekkedath Zacharias Cathanar, Kottarakara	(1948-1952)
Vadakkekara Thomas Cathanar, Elanthur	(1931-1937)
Valiyaveettil Alexander Cor-Episcopa ⁸⁵	(1935-1986)
Vazhappilleth Joseph Cathanar, Vadasserikkara	(1947-1967)
Veettinal Ninan Cathanar, Vazhuvady (+1954)	
Vilayil Mathai Cathanar, Puthur	(1932-1947)

⁸³ Thoppil Valiathan

⁸⁴ Thekkeveettil, Thazhava

⁸⁵ Kizhakkethruve: Kottarakara Achan

Reunited Priests (Tiruvalla Diocese):

Boniface Lewis	(+1976)
Cheriyā Madhathil Andrayos Cathanar	(+1943)
Cheriyā Madhathil Jacob Cathanar	(+1989)
Chundevalel Jacob Cathanar	(+1980)
Edassery Abraham Cathanar, Knanaya	(+1984)
Elavatta Philipose Cathanar	(+1967)
Kalekattil Thomas Cathanar	(+1947)
Karamel Koickal K.M. Patros Cathanar	(+1992)
Konatt Makil Abraham Cathanar, Knanaya	(+1943)
Kumbalakkunnel Zacharias Cathanar	(+1992)
Marett Abraham Cathanar	(+1954)
Moolamannil Thomas Cathanar	(+1959)
Mundaplackal Jacob Cathanar	(+1963)
N. G. Kuriakose, B. D. Achan	(+1953)
Naduviledath Geevarghese Cathanar	(+1964)
Nellatt Kuriakose Cathanar, Knanaya	(+1978)
Padinjarekutt Zacharias Cathanar	(+1965)
Palackal Joseph Cathanar	(+1940)
Payympally David Cathanar	(+1980)
Pulikkottil Mathews Cathanar	(+1987)
Purackal George Cathanar	(+1975)
Ramanatt Patros Cathanar	(+1977)
Simon D. Karott Cor-Episcopa	(+1950)
T. V. John	(+1970)
Thaliachira Kuriakose Cathanar	(+1982)
Tharepattackal Kuriakose, Knanaya	(+1960)
Thevarvelil Alexios Cathanar	(+1987)
Thompra Geevarghese Cathanar	(+1986)
Thykattil Jacob Cathanar	(+1978)
Thykattil Paulose Cathanar	(+1959)

Thykkadavil George Cathanar	(+1975)
Vakkanampadathil Philipose Cathanar	(+1947)
Vazhappally Mathew Cathanar	(+1975)

Syro-Malabar Church and the Reunion Movement

From the very beginning of the Reunion Movement the Syro-Malabar Church helped it in every way. Mar Augustine Kandathil of Ernakulam, Mar James Kalassery of Changanassery and Mar Alexander Choolaparambil of Kottayam were committed ecumenists and friends of Mar Ivanios. They were ready to help him in every need. They sent their Seminarians, Priests and religious men and women readily and joyfully to assist Mar Ivanios and his ecumenical activities. We will speak about the services of the religious separately. These men and women left their home and dear ones and worked among the people here. In the midst of utter poverty, negative reaction from the non-Catholics and hostility from the political authority, they worked with joy and gladness for the Lord. The Reunion Movement and the Malankara Catholic Church will definitely remember these bishops, priests and religious men and women and laity with gratitude.

Priests from the Syro-Malabar Church

a) Those who joined the Archdiocese of Trivandrum:

Aranchery John, Niranthanam, Palai®	(1935-1975) ⁸⁶
C. T. Kuruvilla, Msgr.	(1934-1997) ⁸⁷
Chalkadavil Jose Mathew	(1942-1985)
Changankary Zacharias, Changanachery	(1939-1999)
Chennatt Mathai®	(1936)
C. K. Mattom Prodoth, Palai®	(1932)
Elanjimattam Kurian, Kanjirappally	(1942-1982)
Ezhanikkatt Mathew, Nagapuzha	(1944-1987)
Ittaparambil Joseph®	(1935)

⁸⁶ ®=returned to the original diocese.

⁸⁷ He was from Thuruthy, Changanassery. He was Vicar General in Trivandrum.

Kariyil Thomas	(1940-1974)
Kaithanal Thomas, Kozhuvanal, Palai	(1946-2005)
Kelamparampil Antony, Thaikkattusery	(1942-1985)
Kodakkanady Francis, Marangattupally®	(1938-1969)
Kompanal Mathew, Thodupuzha	(1946-2002)
Kuzhinjalil Joseph, Pravithanam, Palai ⁸⁸	(1934-1983)
Makil Lukose, Knanaya	(+1980)
Manavalan Cyriac, Alangatt, Ernakulam	(1940-1979)
Maniamkott John®	(1934)
Mundappally Jacob, Kainakary	(1950-1985)
Myladiyil Joseph, Kozhuvanal, Palai	(1942-1994)
Nangachiveettil Thomas, Kainakary®	(1939-1956)
Nedumkallel Sebastian, Kalloorkad	(1946-1992)
Njayappally Xavier, Kothavara, Vaikom	(1941-1998)
Palatty George	(+1972)
Planthottam Kurian ®	(1933)
Pothanamuzhy Mathew	(1933-1939) ⁸⁹
Purackal Mathew, Changanassery®	(1949)
Puravady Mathew®	(1943-1960)
Puvathunkal Zacharias®	(1933)
Thachett Joseph, Kuruvinal	(1942-1991)
Thazhathuveettil Joseph, Nagapuzha	(1941-2001)
Thekkumkattil Mathew	(1944-1995)
Vadakkekutt Joseph, Kozhuvanal	(1944-1996)
Viruppel Augustine	(+1999)

b) Those who joined the Tiruvalla diocese:

Arackapadavil Alexander	(+2001)
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⁸⁸ Msgr. The co-founder of the Daughters of Mary (DM).

⁸⁹ He became the first bishop of Kothamangalam.

Dominic Thottassery, a pioneer worker	
Erattamakil Philip	(+1979)
Ettumanoorkaren Joseph	(+1972)
Kachiramattom John, Msgr.	(+1958)
Karatt Antony	(+1994)
Kunnamkerikalam Kurian	(+1996)
Kunnath John	(+1989)
L. John	(+1973)
Malayil Theophilos Paul	(+2000)
Nedungatt Mathew, Msgr.	(+1991)
Nelluvely, J., pioneer worker	
Neriamparampil Thomas	(+1981)
Nilappana Joseph	(+1976)
Pallipurathussery Abraham	(+1996)
Pandippally Bernard Thomas	(+1986)
Pattani Joseph	(+1994)
Pattassery Joseph	(+1988)
Perumpallil Mathew	(+2000)
Thannickal James	(+1992)
Vachaparampil Zacharias ⁹⁰	(1936-38)
Vadackemury Mathew	(+2001)
Vadakkethalackal Zacharias	(+1979)
Vadassery Thomas, Msgr.	(+1966)
Vazhuthalakatt Jacob	(+1990)
Vellaringatt Jacob	(1931-5)

c) *The Carmelite Fathers (TOCD- later CMI)*

Even before 1930, the CMI Fathers had started their reunion work in certain areas in Kerala. They worked in several places. Their first center of activity was Karackad/ *Pandalam* (1921); later they moved

⁹⁰ He was Administrator for some time in Tiruvalla.

to *Thumpamon and finally, Pulamon/ Kottarakara* (1924). This first mission did not bear much fruit.⁹¹ The second center was *Ayrur*. There the Carmelite Fathers succeeded in spreading the reunion ideals and a few people joined the Syro-Malabar Church and even now they continue as Syro-Malabarians.⁹² The third center was *Puthupally/Kottayam*. There they succeeded in converting a lot of non-Christians; and a few Syrian Christians also joined them. Eventually Puthupally became a center of the CMI Fathers and they developed it into a big parish of the Syro-Malabar Church. They have now a Provincial house there. Another center of activity of the CMI Fathers was around *Muvattupuzha and Kothamangalam*. They also worked in *Puthrka, Kunnakurudy, Vengola, Kunnackal, Vazhapally and Nellimattam*.⁹³ They also worked at *Nalanchira, Nellickakuzhy (1941-61), Balaramapuram, Venniyur, Nadackave (Methukummel: 1943-53), Puvar (1942-52), Kirathur, Panachamood, Kannamcode, Eruthavur, Kannarvila and the surrounding areas* in the south.

Chethipuzha Monastery/Changanassery was the center from where the CMI missionaries worked for the Reunion Movement. Fr. Bernard started a prayer campaign for Reunion in 1920. The Monastery had taken keen interest in the *Reunion Movement*. Fr. Geevarghese oic had stayed there for one year. Mar Ivanios used to send the reunited priests there for training in the Catholic doctrines. Frs. Bartholomew Perumalil, Marceline Alackapallil and Placid Podipara were the teachers there. Fr. Placid was helpful in various ways. He wrote a lot of books for the instruction of the clergy as well as the laity. After the Reunion of Mar Ivanios in 1930, the CMI Fathers engaged in parish work in both the dioceses. They guided the Bethany Fathers and Sisters during the

⁹¹ The following priests worked there: Callixtus Kannamkulam (Karackad) (1935); Gregory Neerackal (Karackad, Kulanada, Thumpamon, Pulamon) (1921-5); Henry Vadakkekara (Pulamon) (1924); Hyacinth Kunnunkal (Karackad, Kulanada) (1921); Ignatius Mithrakary (Pulamon) (1924-5); Norbert Chemmazham (Karackad) (1935); Pius Kalathil (Karackad) (1935); Stephen Thayil, (Karackad, Kulanada, Thumpamon) (1921-4).

⁹² The priests who worked there were: Cyril Mannanal, Eusebius Karikampally, Hilarion, Pius Kalathil (1926), Protase Menamparampil and Simon Pattassery.

⁹³ The following Priest worked there: Antonius (1946-8), Daniel Mylady, Edwin Panthiruvellil (1944-50), Ignatius Vallavanthara and Linus Kottaram.

early periods, giving Retreats and Conferences. They trained the catechists, spreading the Reunion ideals among the people, converting the non-Christians, especially in the southern part of the Archdiocese of Trivandrum, and extending a helping hand in every possible way to the poorest of the poor. They were a source of great strength to Mar Ivanios and to Mar Theophilos. There were about 70 CMI priests who worked for the Reunion Movement. We give the list of some of them. The following list is not exhaustive. The Malankara Catholic Church is very grateful to these generous missionaries:

Abdiso	Edwin Panthiruvellil
Achilles Kunnathupurayidam	Egbert Elakkad
Alexander Kattakkayam	Ephrem Kalapurackal
Ambrose Palakkunnel ⁹⁴	Eusebius Karikampally
Amos Mechery	Faustin Parel
Antonius Kaniamkunnel	Fidelis Vetticat
Asarias Chalangady	Francis Sales Njuzhumury
Audiso Kandathil Parampil	Francis Sales Puthiaparampil
Baptist	Frederic Alenchery
Bede Parankulangara	Gasper Kalacherry
Besarion	Gelasius Kodian
Callixtus Kannamkulam	Gregory Neerackal ⁹⁵
Camillus Brahmakulam	Henry Vadakkekara
Cassian Kannamkulam	Hilarion
Celestine Kodankandam	Honorius Vaniapura
Claudius Alappatt	Hormis
Cyprian	Hormisdas
Cyril Mannanal	Hyacinth Kunnunkal
Damian Chittuthara	Ignatius Mithrakary
Daniel Mylady	Ignatius Vallavanthara
Dominic	James Pallivathuckal

⁹⁴ Superior (*Ris*) of Bethany, Mission Superior of the Carmelites.

⁹⁵ Karackad, Kulanada, Thumpamon, Pulamon (1921-5)

Jose Paphnus Parackal	Protase Kelampampil
Joshua Chiramel	Raymond Thakidiyil
Julius Palathinkal	Roche Kottaram, Puthupally
Linus Kottaram ⁹⁶	Romeo Thomas Mannanal
Mark Pulparampil	Sabas Kuruvithadam
Michael Kannankulam	Sarghese Madathilkunnel
Norbert Chemmazham	Simon Pattassery
Philip Kalachery	Sixtus Kizhakkekara
Philotheus Putheth	Stephen Thayil
Pius Kalathil, Karackad	Sylverius Karimattom
Placid J. Podipara (1899-85)	Titus Chakkalackal
	Varkey Punchakunnel ⁹⁷

The Franciscan Brothers (CMSF)

They started working in the Archdiocese of Trivandrum from the very beginning. They began their apostolate in the Archdiocese in 1936 at Karackad with the arrival of Br. Clement Krieg, the Guardian of the CMSF from Germany. In 1937 they moved to Ambilikonam and Nellickakuzhy. Already in 1930 the Franciscan Brothers had opened a house at Thottappally and in 1937 it was placed under the Archbishop of Trivandrum. It was later closed in 1949. Then they started other centres such as Balaramapuram (1936-41), Kanjiramkulam (1937-51), Manalayam (1936), Kanjirampara (1938), Thamalam (1939), Mundela (1949-1978), Nalanchira (1952), Panavur (1964), Kilimannur (1967), Thonnackal (1968), Chozhiyacode (1971), Vattakarikam (1972), Manchavilakam (1978), Chembur (1982), Ala (1991) and Killiyur (2001) and the surrounding areas. Eventually they worked in various places and still continue their apostolate in the Malankara Church. Too many are the names of the Franciscan missionaries who worked in the Archdiocese and in the Diocese of Tiruvalla at Anchalpetty. In course of time, Nalanchira became the center of activities of the Franciscan

⁹⁶ Mi nor Seminary, Puthupally (1924-32) Tiruvalla (1935), Mannar (1932).

⁹⁷ Ralph, cmi, *The Apostolate of the C.M.I. Congregation among the Jacobites*, Mannanam, s.d.

Brothers in the Archdiocese of Trivandrum. Already in 1952 they had started their work at Nalanchira. Archbishop Mar Ivanios had given a portion of the Bethany Hills to the Franciscan Brothers for their use with certain conditions. The Jayamatha Boys' Home, an ITI Center, a school and several other institutions are housed in the Nalanchira complex.

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Congregation in India, Archbishop Cyril Mar Baselios sent a cordial letter to the congregation.

“It is very gratifying that in God’s loving providence and guidance the Congregation of the Franciscan Brothers is completing one hundred years of their very effective and dedicated services in India.”

Then the Archbishop refers to the invitation of Archbishop Mar Ivanios, the arrival of the missionaries and their activities at the various centers of the Archdiocese. He continues:

“I am delighted to express my own feelings of gratitude to the older members of the Congregation, who had been working in the mission parish at Karackad. The parish at Karackad was one of the oldest Mission Stations of the Brothers where I was baptized as a child. The Brothers used to visit our home at Ullannoor frequently, as there were very few Catholic families over there. I still remember how I was lovingly taken care of by the brothers as a small boy, enjoying their love and solicitude. In fact the many priestly and religious vocations we received in the family were certainly inspired and sponsored by those holy and zealous missionary brothers such as the late Bros. Ephrem, Aquinas, Elias, Clement etc. On this occasion I cherish their memory with love and gratitude. In the name of the Malankara Catholic Church and especially of this Archdiocese of Trivandrum and in my own name I express to all the members of the Congregation our sincere gratitude for the support and co-operation given to us.”⁹⁸

The Franciscan Brothers who worked in the Malankara Church in the early period:

⁹⁸ Melchior Tom et alii, *History of a Mission with a Vision*, Mumbai, 2002, p.700-701.

Andrews Stolz	John
Antoine Thonnath	Julian Alookaran
Aquinas Kadavil	Lazar Pillay
Cajetan Vaniapurackal	Louis Kanicheeril
Clement	Malchus Kakkanatt
Cletus	Maximin
Daniel	Pachomius Vettikkattil
Dionysius P.	Paschal Mattathil
Elias Kannath	Peter Kochuparambil
Ephrem Poopadi	Philemon Pullenthara
Fabian Maruthukunnel	Pius Kizhakkebhagam
Ferdinand Peedikaparambil	Primus Purathail
Fidelis Edatt	Raphael Nedumparampil
Gabriel Padinjarepeedika	Sabas Poovanthuruthil
Gerard Thannikot	Salvador Puthukatt
Gregory Thottupuram	Sergius Kottaram
Hilary Chamachery	Sixtus Pazhanilath
Jacob Thottam	Ulrich Chilampath
	Urban,K

The Latin Diocese of Kollam and the Reunion Movement

Even before the Reunion Movement initiated by Mar Ivanios, Dr. Aloysius Maria Benziger, Bishop of Kollam (1864-1942: bishop: 1906-1937) had started working for the full communion of the *Puthenkuttukar* in his diocese between the Pampa and Kanyakumari. The early activities were centered on Kattanam and Punalur. In 1914 Bishop Benziger inaugurated the *Kattanam Sacred Heart Mission*. Its activities spread to the neighboring places such as Nuranad, Vallikunnam, Charummood, Kudassanad, Kottampally, Chunakkara, Peringanad, and Thamarakkulam. The activities in *Punalur* spread to Anchal, and Ayur. Mar Ivanios approached the retired Latin priest, Fr. Ribeiro D.D. at Kunnam/ Mavelikkara. It was with his help that he sent the first

Memorandum to Rome. And through him Mar Ivanios contacted Bishop Benziger. It was Bishop Benziger who according to the direction of Rome received Mar Ivanios and others into the visible communion of the Catholic Church on 20th September 1930. On 29th April 1955, Rome asked the Latin Diocese of Kollam to hand over all the reunited priests and laity to the Malankara Catholic Church. The Bishop of Kollam readily handed over all of them without any grudge. Bishop Benziger was a generous person and a great ecclesiastic. He was highly interested in the ecumenical activities and his encouragement was a great support for Mar Ivanios.⁹⁹

List of Reunited Priests to the Kollam Diocese first and some of them later joined the Malankara Catholic Church:

Abraham Tharakan Cathanar	
Anniyil Ninan Cathanar	(1916-1967)
Changarampally C. K. Mathai Cathanar, Anchal	(1930-1952)
Mulapampallil Jacob Cathanar , Kudassanad	(1922)
Padipurackal Oomman Cathanar, Chunakkara	
Pthalil A. K. Thomas Cathanar, Elanthur	(1926-1969)
Peedikayil Geevarghese Cathanar, Puthenpeedika	(+1960)
Thekkedath Zacharias Cathanar, Kottarakara	(+1952)
V. T. Thomas Cathanar, Mavelikkara	(+1970)

The Bethany Religious Priests (OIC)

The early Bethany religious priests like the diocesan priests worked very hard in the missions day and night. And that too in the midst of want, need, opposition and utter poverty. These great missionaries had just one thought: *the Reunion*. Without them we could not think of the Reunion Movement. The early growth of the Malankara Catholic Church is thus inseparably connected with them.

⁹⁹ C.M.George, *Mar Ivanios Charitrathinte Edukalil*, Anchal, 2003, 33-37; Marieli Benziger, *Archbishop Benziger*, p. 303.417; Cyril Motta, *Archbishop Benziger*, Kollam, 1983, p.65; N.A.Thomas, *Asiayile Marthoma Sabhakal*, II, p.654-5.

*Some of the early members and the deceased members:*¹⁰⁰

Abraham Padinjaremannil Fm ¹⁰¹	(+1988)
Aloysius Mankavil, Br.	(+1985)
Andrew Melel	(+2012)
Antony Nayarkulangara, Br.	(+1962)
Aprem Kottarathil	(+1969)
Bar Sliba Kallumpurath Fm	(+1958)
Benedict Thangalathil ¹⁰²	(+1994)
Celestine Padinjaremannil	(+2000)
Chrysostom Kuttamperur	(+1997)
Cyprian Cherianjarapazhanjiyil	(+1987)
Cyril Malancharuvil ¹⁰³	(+2007)
Dominic Odalil	(+1997)
Ephraem Kottarathil	(+1969)
<i>Francis Sales Anchanatt</i>	
Francis Xavier Pillasseril	(+1990)
Gabriel Thaikadavil	(+2006)
Geevarghese Mampuzhakattil	(+1991)
<i>Jacob Perumpral</i>	
Jaya Paul Vlathivilayil	(+2003)
Job Thengumthara	(+1959)
John Kuzhimepurath	(+1995)
Joseph Thondakarott	
Joshua Thavalathil	(+1983)
Koshy Kakkanatt	(+1987)
Louis Moolaveettil	(+1991)

¹⁰⁰ Order of the Imitation of Christ (Bethany Ashram) *Directory-2003*, Kottayam, 2003. Sylvester Kanjiramukalil, *Manmaranja Bethany Ashramangal*, Kottayam, 2003; Idem, *Smarananjaly*, Kottayam, 2008.

¹⁰¹ Fm=one of the first members.

¹⁰² He became the Second Archbishop of Trivandrum.

¹⁰³ He became the Third Archbishop of Trivandrum.

Mathew Thuruthel	(+ 2004)
Michael Manjanamakuzhy	(+1964)
Norbert Peralummoottil	(+1985)
Pachomius Chempothinal	(+2005)
Paul Thekkekara	(+1980)
Peter Kozhimannil	(+1998)
Pius Cheriyl	(+1992)
Raphael Cherupuzhathottathil	(+2005)
Seraphion Attupurath	(+1975)
Stephanos Moolamannil	(+1931)
Theophilos Kalapurackal, Mar ¹⁰⁴	(+1956)
Varghese Elanjiyl	(+1996)
Vincent Xaviervilas	(+2008)
Yaunan Keepallil	(+1977)

The Nadar Community

The Nadar Community in the Trivandrum and Kanyakumari Districts is an ancient noble community. It was in their midst that one of the early Christian centers namely, the *Thiruvamcode Church* was established by St. Thomas. It shows that there were among them many who were descendants of those who had received baptism directly from St. Thomas the Apostle. However, because of the vicissitudes of time, they did not get sufficient pastoral care. The Synod of Diamper/ Udayamperur lamented the tragic situation of these Christians and exhorted that arrangements should be made for their pastoral care. The Church gradually disappeared because of the attack from *Pandyar* and the persecution of the Christians. *Paulinus*, the missionary speaks about the religious persecution in that region. *Devasahayam Pillai* was one of the early lay martyrs from the region. During the 19th century, the LMS were the first protestant missionaries who reentered there. From the Nadar community we had Lawrence Mar Ephraem (1997) as the first bishop of Marthandom and now Vincent Mar Paulose (2010-) as the third bishop.

¹⁰⁴ He became the First Bishop of Tiruvalla.

Missionary Dimension

Through the canonical communion with the Catholic Church, the Malankara Church got a great impetus for missionary activities. Mar Ivanios had the great goal of the evangelization of India. Malankara Catholic Church made a concerted effort to bring into the Catholic fold the Nadar community, the LMS and others, in the Trivandrum and Kanyakumari Districts. As a result, the Malankara Church grew very rapidly in the southern part of the Travancore State. The Malankara community, which remained for centuries without any missionary activity, became filled with missionary zeal, as a result of its communion with the Catholic Church. Together with the Syrian Christians, the Nadar community forms an integral part of the Malankara Catholic Church. It is the Reunion Movement, which enkindled the missionary spirit of the other Christian communities in Kerala.

Dalit Christians

In the Malankara Catholic Church there is a large group of Dalit Christians. Many came from the LMS, CMS and the non-Christian communities to the Malankara Catholic Church. The Governments are denying them the basic human justice and opportunities, solely because they have become Christians. They are discriminated against by the successive governments. Even now they are economically backward. Because they followed their conscience and became Christians, they are punished. In India those Dalits who became Buddhists, Moslems and Sikhs get the basic justice, while it is denied to those who became Christians. Malankara Catholic Church has a few Christians from the *Ezhava* community in one parish and *Vedas (Girijan)* in two parishes.

The Progress in the early Period

From the very beginning God's invisible hand was hovering over this Ecumenical Movement and the divine providence was guiding it, because the unity of all the Christians is God's will. That is why many followed Mar Ivanios to the Catholic Church. They were very earnest in studying the history of Christianity, the history of the divisions among Christians and the true nature of the Church of Christ. They realized that the Church, which is the body of Christ, could not be divided. It is a living body. Many who were the friends of Mar Ivanios followed him

and his personal influence encouraged many, who were fed up with the quarrels and civil litigations in the Jacobite Church. They realized that it was a great hindrance for genuine Christian life and became Catholics. Bethany was a powerful storehouse of renewal. It was precisely those who came under the influence of Bethany who were eager to leave the quarrels behind and to seek solace in the tranquility of the Catholic Church. The missionary zeal of the bishops, priests and religious of the Syro-Malabar and Latin Churches also helped very much the early growth of the Reunion Movement. We must remember that it was after the establishment of the Syro-Malabar Hierarchy in 1923 that the communion of the *Puthenkuttukar* became a reality. During the early period there was a rapid growth of this Movement.

Monasteries and Convents

In the beginning the religious who left Perunad lived in a rented house at Vennikkulam/Tiruvalla. In 1933 Archbishop Mar Ivanios bought 12 acres of land at Nalanchira and transferred the monastery to Trivandrum. Many young men entered the monastic life there. In 1936 he bought 8 acres of land and started the Bethany Convent at Nalanchira. He brought a few sisters there from Tirumulapuram, Tiruvalla and they were the first Nuns at Nalanchira. Both the religious orders progressed very rapidly, as they resettled in Trivandrum.

Minor Seminaries

In the beginning most of the priests who entered into full communion with the Catholic Church were married. Their missionary activities and influence brought many thousands to the Catholic Church. We can remember these dedicated priests only with heart filled gratitude. Mar Ivanios decided that in order to continue the ecumenical activities with undivided heart and without the interfering influence of secular preoccupations and worldly concerns, it was necessary to have unmarried priests who would be the lodestar of spiritual light for many. So he started the priestly training centres. The *Infant Jesus Minor Seminary* started functioning in Tiruvalla in 1931 and the *St. Aloysius Minor Seminary* in Trivandrum in 1934. In the early stage, many of the students in these Seminaries were from the Syro-Malabar Church. And those in charge of the Seminaries were also from that Church. After two years of Minor Seminary training, the students were sent to the Latin Seminaries in

Kandy, Aluva, Tiruchirappally, Mangalore and Rome. It was a great desire of Mar Ivanios to start a Major Seminary. In his request to Rome, he made it clear, but under the divine providence it was realized only during the life-time of Mar Gregorios. Now the Malankara Catholic Church has its own Major Seminary at Nalanchira.

Secular Opposition during the Early Period

The *Bawa Kakshy* brought a certain C.P. Ramaswamy Ayer by name, to Kerala from Madras as their advocate against the *Metran Kakshy* for the *Vattippanakkes*. Later in 1937 he became the *Divan* of Travancore. He was a committed Hindu fanatic. He said in an interview:

“I am a Hindu firmly entrenched in the Hindu faith. I believe in militant Hinduism. My mission in Travancore is to crush Christian influence and position in the state.”¹⁰⁵

Whether under the instigation of somebody or on his own initiative, this gentleman had decided to chase away Mar Ivanios from Trivandrum. Literally he was hunting after Mar Ivanios. He managed to expel Mar Ivanios from the *Saravanakkunnu* in Trivandrum. The place where the present Major Archbishop's House is situated was known as *Saravanakkunnu*. The State acquired also the land, which Mar Ivanios had bought at *Bakery Junction* for the Cathedral. Then Mar Ivanios bought 10 acres of land at *Kattachakonam* and the plot of land at Pattom where formerly the Archbishop's house was located. This fanatic Hindu tried to chase him from there also. He had the plan of banishing him from Trivandrum in ignominy, even without a house or land for shelter. His idea was to take over the place for public use. But Mar Ivanios chased those who came to acquire it, with a note to Ramaswamy:

“I have bought this landed property with the money given by His Holiness the Pope. If the Travancore government wants to acquire it, it has to get the special permission from His Holiness, the Pope. Without that, it is impossible to transfer it.”

¹⁰⁵ In 1938 during an interview with Mr. Sen, editor of the *Hindustan Times*, Calcutta, Mr. Ramaswamy said it. See M. Gibbons, *Archbishop Mar Ivanios*, Kottayam, 2002, p.106.

Mr. Ramaswamy had to withdraw. The *Clergy House* of the Major Archdiocese is now situated at this place at Kattachakonam. The St. Mary's Cathedral, St. Mary's School, The Teachers' Training School, The St. Aloysius Seminary, St. Mary's Press, Social Service Center, the Catholicate Centre and several other institutions of the Archdiocese are now situated at the plot at Pattom. When the Archbishop acquired the *Bethany Hills* at Nalanchira, Government tried to acquire it for "a hospital for Children". Then the Archbishop suddenly moved the Bishops' House to Nalanchira, to the old house near the Main Gate and secretly informed Ramaswamy that it could not be given and would not be given. The Archbishop showed the government another place, where today the Medical College is situated. At that time it was an uninhabited place. The government had to withdraw the order. Thus one could point out a lot of instances of harassment by the secular rulers against Mar Ivanios and his ecumenical efforts.

Mr. Ramaswamy extended his persecution of the Reunion Movement throughout Travancore. He stipulated that churches and chapels were to be constructed and burial places were to be determined only with the permission of the government. Often the applications were rejected for one reason or other. In those days it was customary for the government to register cases falsely against the priests and laity of the Malankara Catholic Church, charging:

"Such and such a person has conducted public worship without permission; he has buried the dead in places, not permitted by the State" etc.

Many had to suffer punishment for this noble Christian cause. The Archbishop also reacted strongly against these cruel persecutions. When it became no more bearable, Mar Ivanios appealed to the British parliament where there was discussion over the religious persecution in Travancore, a vassal State of Great Britain. They ordered an inquiry into the matter. By this time, for various reasons, all the Christians, Ezhavas and Moslems in Travancore together started an agitation known as "*Nivarthana Prasthanam*" against Mr. Ramaswamy. The leadership came from Mar Ivanios.

During the early period, the Malankara Catholic Church had to pass through very hard times and several persecutions. But the Divine

Providence led it forward. It had God's abundant graces in its daily life and activities. Mar Ivanios did not do anything for his personal gain or out of selfish motives. He did everything because of his strong conviction that he was doing a historical duty as an instrument in the divine hands. He was never anxious about its future or about its growth. He had full confidence that, if it is God's work, God will rear it, God will protect it and God will guide it. Finally Mr. Ramaswamy changed, at least externally. He decided to be at peace with Mar Ivanios. Once he said:

"If I am afraid of anybody, it is Archbishop Mar Ivanios, because he is such an able and influential religious leader."

Several friends and well wishers of both Mar Ivanios and Mr. C. P. Ramaswamy tried to reconcile them. Some of the bishops, priests and lay people also asked Mar Ivanios to get reconciled with C.P. for the good of the Malankara Catholic Church. In 1939 in connection with the 60th birthday of C.P. he was given a very grand reception at the Archbishop's house at Pattom to which Mar Ivanios invited all the ecclesiastical and civil leaders. After that reception, they remained friends. On this occasion a school was started at Pattom from the preparatory till the eighth standard, all at once. That is the present St. Mary's School.

Opposition from the part of the *Metran Kakshy*

There was very strong opposition and hatred against Mar Ivanios and the Malankara Catholic Church from the part of the *Metran Kakshy*. They made use of every means to make his Catholic communion a failure. They organized anti-Catholic conventions and propaganda. They also wrote books and pamphlets against the Reunion Movement and against Mar Ivanios. They spread a lot of false accusations against him. There were even attempts at his life. They were the ones, who stood in the forefront against the new burial places and worshipping centers. In certain cases they instigated anti-Christian forces against Mar Ivanios. Mar Ivanios had to bear patiently all the false accusations and calumny levelled against him by his former friends and co-workers, who had an almost adoring attitude towards him when he was in their Church. But once he entered into full communion, he was depicted as a betrayer and deserter. One cannot get words to describe the difficulties he encountered in those days. But survived and the Movement too survived. And in the Divine Providence it progresses, even this day.

But the calumny continues and the quarrel and litigation between the two factions (the *Metran Kakshy* and the *Bawa Kakshy*) also continues, worse than it was in 1930 in the Jacobite-Orthodox Church. The counter witnessing continues, but calumnists have very conveniently closed their eyes at this great divine action, originated among them. They are blind to it and their leaders are leading them in a very wrong direction. But if the Reunion Movement is from God, who can oppose Him and who can hinder the work for unity? St. Paul on the way to Damascus might ask the people to think about the same question the Lord asked him: “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It hurts you to kick against the goads”.¹⁰⁶

Nationalization of the Primary schools

Although externally C.P. Ramaswamy befriended himself with the Archbishop, he did not put an end to his anti-Christian activities. The nationalization of the primary schools was part of this scheme, in order to lessen the influence and progress of the Christians in the field of education. He wanted to bring all the private schools under state control. As the first stage of operation he started with the primary schools. Many schools under the private managements of the Hindus and Moslems were taken over by the state. But Christians were not prepared to hand over their schools. There were protests throughout Travancore. Mass Memoranda were sent to the King of Travancore and to the Emperor in Great Britain. The News papers began to write articles and editorials against C.P. Ramaswamy. At a joint meeting of the entire Christian bishops at Kottayam amammoth protest meeting was organized. All the Catholic bishops in India met at Bangalore and drafted a Memorandum. Mar Ivanios was entrusted with the task of submitting the Memorandum to the King of Travancore. When there was protest from every quarter, C.P. circulated an order that the permission for starting the schools might be given but without the grant from the government. But the Christians opposed this move also. In spite of all such protests, on 15th June 1945, he inaugurated his education programme. Then Mar James Kalassery, the Bishop of Changanassery issued his famous *Pastoral Letter* on education. In that letter he made it clear that the programme of the

¹⁰⁶ Acts.26,14.

Government to nationalize the primary education would lead the country to endless dangers. C. P. ordered the withdrawal of the letter. But Bishop Kalassery stood firm in his stand. C.P. became furious and decided to arrest the Bishop. In such a situation Mar Ivanios intervened and prevented C.P. from going forward with his plan of arresting Mar Kalassery and executing his orders of nationalization.

A Great Educationist

Mar Ivanios knew very well the importance of education. So he started the Mar Ivanios College and several educational institutions, with a view to give higher education to the public in general and the Malankara Catholics in particular. He believed that only through education we could raise the standard of our people. Immediately after his return from the second World Tour, on 27th July 1948 he inaugurated the Mar Ivanios College and appointed as the Principal Fr. Benedict oic, who later became the next Archbishop of Trivandrum and the Malankara Metropolitan. Fr. Benedict oic was Principal for about 18 months and there were about 200 students at that time. Then Fr. Thomas Nangachiveettil who returned in 1951 from Fordham University after taking his doctorate became the Principal. He was followed by Fr. Geevarghese Panicker in 1956. During the time of Mar Ivanios 78 Primary Schools, 18 Middle Schools, 15 High Schools, two Teachers' Training Schools, and one University College were established. He had to encounter many objections and oppositions. In many places he started the schools, ignoring the oppositions. How many are the educational institutions that have sprung up now on the Bethany Hills at Nalanchira! It was his foresight and vision that guided him to buy so much land for the future development of the Church. A great visionary to be remembered indeed!

Panampally Padhathy

Mr. Ramaswamy had to leave Travancore at night in ignominy because of the strong opposition from all the people and of the anti-C.P. agitation in the state. Later on Mr. Panampally Govinda Menon, the education minister in Travancore, came forward with his *Secondary School Development Program (Parishkarana Padhathy)*. It was a project aimed at the nationalization of the private schools of the Christian

Managements. Christians reacted vehemently. Mar Ivanios called a press conference against it. He said:

“The order has ignored the basic rights of the Managers to carry out educational activities. It denies the remaining freedom in conducting schools. We have spent a lot of money in running schools. We are not doing it for profit. We have not received any grant from the government, or any donation from the public. The Catholics in foreign countries have donated the whole amount. The Managers should have full freedom to appoint the Head Masters and the other teachers. This freedom is absolutely necessary to maintain the objective ideal of our schools.”

He also sent a circular to the parishes. As a result of further discussions, Mr. Panampally had to modify his plan. Mar Ivanios succeeded in defending the basic right in conducting the educational institutions.

20

The Malankara Catholic Church (1953-94)

Archbishop Mar Ivanios ordained Benedict Mar Gregorios as his successor on 29th January 1953 at the floor of the Cathedral at Pattom. Thus Mar Ivanios, after entrusting the leadership of the Malankara Church in the hands of the chosen High Priest of the Lord, entered into the glory of the Lord with satisfaction. From that time onwards, this glorious High Priest gave excellent leadership day and night to the people of God in accordance with God's will, in the Malankara Church till his death in 1994 . We should thank God for having given us His great gift as our Archbishop and Father during our time. He was the head of the Malankara Catholic Church and Archbishop of Trivandrum for more than 40 years. He could lead the Church through spiritual path; on this spiritual base, he turned his attention on secular matters for the uplift of the poorest of the poor. It was still a period of want and need. But during this difficult period, he led the Church in the most extraordinary way. He could do it because of his deep trust in God and His providence. Like his predecessor, he too walked with God and God guided him in His own way.

During this period several important events took place in the world at large and in the Catholic Church in particular. Mar Gregorios prepared the Malankara Church for fulfilling its mission in the Catholic Church in accordance with the global changes. Bishops, Zacharias Mar Athanasios, Isaac Mar Yuhanon, Geevarghese Mar Timotheos, Cyril Mar Baselios, Lawrence Mar Ephraem and Thozhiyur Paulose Mar Philoxenos wholeheartedly cooperated with him. It was their far sighted programmes, their concerted activity and Eastern ecclesial visions, that prepared the

Malankara Catholic community to live in accordance with the changes. They could smoothly combine tradition and progress without sticking on to traditionalism. They did not stand for any non-organic change in the life of the Church. On the contrary, they stood for organic changes in accordance with the changing situations and for the modern man. They firmly believed that the Church is for the human being, for the betterment of mankind and for the unity of mankind. One could affirm with confidence that they succeeded in their attempt in guiding the community to the twenty first century.

The following were some of the important events that took place during the leadership of Archbishop Mar Gregorios of blessed memory.

1. The Silver Jubilee of the Reunion Movement (1955)
2. The Preservation of the purity of the Malankara Traditions (1957)
3. Communists and their Education Policy (1957)
4. The Silver Jubilee of the Establishment of the Malankara Catholic Hierarchy (1958)
5. Second Vatican Council (1962-1965)
6. Ecumenism
7. The Eucharistic Congress at Mumbai and the Visit of Pope Paul VI (1964)
8. The Reunion of Mar Philoxenos of Thozhiyur (1977)
9. The Erection of the Diocese of Bathery (1978)
10. The Golden Jubilee of the Reunion Movement (1980)
11. The Birth Centenary of Mar Ivanios (1983)
12. The Papal Visit to India (1986)
13. Malankara Major Seminary (1989)
14. The *Sapthathi* of Bethany (1989)
15. Catholic Bishops' Conference of India
16. The Sixtieth Anniversary of the Reunion Movement (1990)
17. The Kollam Jubilee (1992)
18. One Rite Movement
19. National Seminar-Church in India Today (1969)
20. The Oriental Canon Law (1990)

1) The Silver Jubilee of the Reunion Movement (1955)

When Archbishop Mar Ivanios died in 1953, Mar Gregorios was appointed the Apostolic Administrator. His Eminence Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, Secretary to the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, visited the Malankara Church in the same year. He was accompanied by Fr. Placid CMI, a very close friend of Archbishop Mar Ivanios and the Malankara Church. The Cardinal visited several of our parishes and was very pleased with our apostolic activities. In 1954 Zacharias Mar Athanasios was ordained the auxiliary bishop of Tiruvalla. When *Abun* Mar Severios died on 18th January 1955, Mar Athanasios became the Bishop of Tiruvalla. On 27th January 1955, Mar Gregorios was appointed the Archbishop-Metropolitan of Trivandrum and Head of the Malankara Catholic Church. On 20th September 1955, the Silver Jubilee of the Reunion Movement was celebrated at Tirumulapuram, Tiruvalla. The Jubilee celebration gave new impetus to the community and provided an occasion to evaluate the meaning and importance of canonical communion with the Roman Catholic Church. As a result of this celebration, many Orthodox and Jacobites entered into visible communion. From 1955 onwards the Malankara Catholic Church started celebrating the *Reunion Day* on September 20/21 every year. On 22nd June 1956, Mar Theophilos, who had been ill for a very long time, slept in the Lord.

2) The Preservation of the purity of the Malankara Traditions (1957)

Since the Malankara Catholic priests were trained in Latin Seminaries, a few latinizations had crept into the Malankara liturgical traditions. The original intention of Mar Ivanios was to preserve the integral Oriental tradition without any alteration. But because of the circumstances and because of some co-workers of the early period, a few latinizations in the liturgical traditions and changes in the cultic practices were introduced. Such were the introduction of statues in the churches, introduction of the Latin pious practices in the parishes, like kneeling during the holy Eucharistic celebration and while receiving the Holy Communion.

The Malankara Catholics must be prepared to accept anything from any source, which goes in accordance with the identity of the Malankara tradition. That should not be hybridization. The good of all the Christian Churches is common to all. They are the property and inheritance of all men. But if something is borrowed from another liturgy and added to the liturgy of a particular Church, in the place of an already existing one or merging with a similar one, it is not an organic growth of the liturgy. For some time there was heated discussion in the Malankara Church over such pious and cultic practices. It was known as the “*Kneeling Movement*” (*Muttukuthal Prasthanam*). All elements of latinization were known under this name. Rome came to know about it and sent an enquiry commission which visited the various parishes. The commission was convinced that there were certain elements, not in accordance with the identity of the liturgical tradition of the Malankara Church. In the light of the report of the commission, Rome issued a few directives for discouraging latinization and reestablishing the identity of the liturgical traditions. It was *Abun* Archbishop Mar Gregorios, who communicated them to the parishes. And gradually the *Kneeling Movement* phased out.¹⁰⁷

The training of the reunited Jacobite priests in those days was given by some eminent priests of the *Pazhayakur* community. These *Pazhayakur* priests had their priestly training in Latin Seminaries. The Syro-Malabar Church itself was in those days partially latinised. Even the students from the *Puthenkur* community had their training in Latin Seminaries. They imbibed a lot of Latin ritualism, manners and practices. Since they had long years of formation under Western Latin missionaries in Roman Catholic Seminaries, it was natural that they followed such practices. They acquired a mentality, by which they considered everything Latin better than Oriental traditions. Such Seminary formation was the basic reason for the *Kneeling Movement*.

The Malankara Catholic Church should be a bridge between the Roman Catholic Church and the Malankara Orthodox Churches. Therefore this bridge Church should not abandon useful elements, which they share in common with the Orthodox Churches. They should not also borrow elements from the other Churches, which would not be

¹⁰⁷ S. Kanjiramukalil, *Punaraikeya Rekhakal*, p.178-184.

helpful for the organic growth of the Church, nor should they welcome innovations, which are alien to the spirit of their liturgy. It was indeed very helpful that the Malankara Church received such a directive from Rome at the beginning of the episcopate of *Abun* Mar Gregorios. It helped its growth in the right direction.¹⁰⁸ But one still notices some Latinization here and there.

3) Communists and their Education policy (1957)

It was in 1957 that Mr. Joseph Mundassery, the education Minister of the first Communist Government in Kerala, came with his scheme for the nationalization of the education institutions. Archbishop Mar Gregorios stood in the forefront to oppose this Communist programme, and it resulted in the mass protest known as the Liberation struggle (*Vimochana Samaram*). The State Government, unable to hold on to power, fell before stiff mass resistance. Kerala was the first State in the world, where the communists had come to power through the ballot box (1957). It is also in Kerala, that the communist government for the first time fell in the wake of the mass protest (1959). The atheistic Communism, which had started in Russia in 1917, died there in 1989. Mar Gregorios tried to enter into dialogue with the Communists also. He had several communist leaders as his friends. They, in fact, respected him and asked his advice on several matters. They were also frequent visitors at his house. As a result of such dialogues, one could notice some changes in the attitude of some Communists in Kerala.

4) The Silver Jubilee of the Establishment of the Malankara Catholic Hierarchy (1958)

The Silver Jubilee of the Establishment of the Hierarchy was celebrated at Vakayar when Rev. Fr. Cyriac Manavalan was the Vicar at that time. At the grand function, the new church constructed there on the Indian architectural model was dedicated to the service of God. On 14th February 1958 (Prot.534/43) the diocese of Tiruvalla was further extended to Malabar and to a few districts in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. When the hierarchy had been erected in 1932, only those regions

¹⁰⁸ But recently one notices once again a lot of latinization, creeping into the liturgical life and practices in the Malankara Church. The priests in the parishes reintroduce them.

coterminous with the dioceses of Vijayapuram, Varapuzha, and Kochi had been included in the diocese of Tiruvalla. In other words, in territorial extension was coterminous with the ancient *Apostolic Vicariate of Verapoly*, which was between the rivers Pampa and Bharathapuzha. That means most of the Malabar region was not included. The Archdiocese of Trivandrum was between the River Pampa in the north and Kanyakumari in the south.

5) The Second Vatican Council (1962-5)

The two declared goals of the Second Vatican Council were renewal and ecumenism. This Council made tremendous changes in the Church and in the world, mainly in the areas of theology, liturgy and the cultic practices of the Church. The attitude towards the other Churches underwent radical changes. There emerged a new outlook towards the other religions and to those who did not practice any religion and to the whole world at large. It was a great revolution in the religious realm. The Second Vatican Council could be called, “a Second Pentecost”, “a Second Resurrection”, “Preparation for the twenty first Century” and “the latter day ointment of the Holy Spirit”.

Prior to the Second Vatican Council, no bishop of the Malankara Church had ever participated in an Ecumenical Council. It was for the first time in the history of the Malankara Church, that two Malankara Bishops took part as members of the Catholic communion with full voting power in the Second Vatican Council. *Abun* Benedict Mar Gregorios and *Abun* Zacharias Mar Athanasios of Tiruvalla had the privilege to participate in all the sessions of the Council. While the bishops from the non-Catholic Malankara Churches participated only as observers, the Malankara Catholic bishops, being in canonical communion with the Roman Catholic Church, participated with full voting power. Moreover, Archbishop Mar Gregorios had the good fortune to participate in all the preparatory Sessions since 1959 and in all the post-Conciliar Synods of Bishops till his death in 1994. In the Council, the Eastern Catholic bishops represented the Eastern Orthodox Churches. The non-Catholic Orthodox had only the status of observers. It was the Eastern Catholic bishops who presented in the Council the views, opinions and expectations of the Eastern non-Catholic Churches. Patriarch Maximos IV of the Melkite Catholic Church of Antioch was the spokesman of the Oriental Catholic

Churches. The Malankara Catholic bishops supported him wholeheartedly. Mar Gregorios spoke about the equality of all the Particular Churches in the Catholic communion and the grave need for the pastoral care of the Oriental emigrants,¹⁰⁹ social concerns of the Church, and the vast gulf between the rich and poor nations, inequality and similar social evils. The Western Catholic bishops listened eagerly to the voice of the Eastern Catholic bishops in the Council. Although, the vast majority of the bishops in the Council were from the Latin Church, they wanted to know the views of the Easterners on various issues.

In addition to the official interventions, there was ample scope for unofficial encounters and dialogues. It was indeed a great opportunity for the Malankara Catholic bishops to encounter a lot of eminent bishops of the Catholic Church throughout the whole world. Our bishops were also the spokesmen of the Malankara Church and Orthodoxy. It was in the Council that many of the Latin bishops heard for the first time about the Apostolic Malankara Church, and the St. Thomas tradition. This is one of the glorious results of the Reunion Movement of Mar Ivanios. He enabled the Malankara Catholics to be in communion with the Roman Catholic Church and our bishops to participate in an Ecumenical Council with full voting power.

6) Ecumenism

With the Second Vatican Council one could notice a marked change in the outlook of the Catholic Church towards the other Churches. Let us briefly explain the pre-Vatican and post-Vatican attitudes of the Catholic Church.

The pre-Vatican mentality

It had certain characteristics and was different from the post-Vatican mentality of the Catholic Church. The Christian Church in the Western Patriarchate considered itself as the Catholic Church, and all the rest as non-Catholic. That is, it identified itself with the Church of

¹⁰⁹ *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani Secundi*, Vol. III, part V, Vatican, 1975, p.258-9; the English translation first published in *CO 6/2*(1982) 73-74; G.Chediath-T. Vellilamthadam, *Ecumenism in Danger*, Kottayam, 1986, p. 77-79.

Christ, our Lord. This was in fact, the claim of all the Churches. Owing to a one-sided growth in ecclesiology,¹¹⁰ a much centralised administrative system developed in the West. As a result of the formation of the Papal States, the Bishop of Rome had absolute authority in all the affairs of the Papal States. As the Patriarch of the West and as the ruler of the Papal States, he had a very prestigious position among the European rulers and the faithful. With the colonialism of the 16th century, the Western missionaries went to the Asian, African and American countries where the Latin Church established its own dioceses. Thus, geographically the Latin Church became a global entity. But still it was a Church, following one ecclesial tradition, namely Roman or Latin. It did not have full communion with the other Christian Churches.

The Western missionaries carried on vigorous missionary activity among the Orientals “in order to convert them to the true Church for the salvation of their souls”. Thus there originated the Eastern Catholic Churches of the Byzantine tradition and others in the East. These missionaries believed in uniformity and tried to merge the non-Latin Churches into the Latin Church, keeping the bare minimum of external liturgical diversities. They appeared to be Orientals, but their priestly formation was in the hands of these missionaries who introduced the Western pious practices and created a mentality among the Oriental Catholics, which upheld everything Western. Their philosophy and theology were those of the Latin Church. In general, latinization was the general policy in those days. The Church was viewed in a monolithic pattern in which, Eastern mentality was not at all taken into consideration nor given its due honor and status. These Eastern Churches were dubbed as *Rites*, which were part of one monolithic Church, having slight liturgical diversities. The autonomy and individuality of these Particular Churches was not at all given credit. This lopsided thinking prevailed till the Second Vatican Council. Many of the theologians, since the *General Synod of Lyons* held in 1274, were uniformists. They believed that unity is uniformity and plurality or diversity is the root cause of all evils in the Church. One typical example is the expression, “*Varietas mater est et initium discordiae*” (Variety is the mother and beginning of disunity)

¹¹⁰ This was the case of all the Churches.

coined by the Dominican Master General Cardinal Humbert, who dominated the General Synod of 1274. The autonomy of the Eastern Churches was foreign to the Western thinking at that time.

The post-Vatican Roman Catholic Ecclesiology

There is a marked difference in the outlook of the Roman Catholic Church towards the other Christian Churches in its ecumenical relationship in the post-Vatican period. The Catholic Church does no more identify itself with **the** Church of Christ. On the contrary it claims that the Church of Christ *subsists* in the Catholic Church. It avoids any exclusive claim that it alone is the Church of Christ. The other Churches which were called heretical or schismatic are now called *Sister Churches*. Latin theology is no longer the norm and criterion to judge other theologies. In stead of demanding *uniformity*, it accepts *legitimate diversity and plurality* in the forms of expression in Liturgy, Catechesis, Church life, Church administration, Spirituality and Canonical discipline. It makes a distinction between the *content of faith* and the *formulation of faith*. It acknowledges that there is a *Hierarchy of Truths*. It publicly confesses its mistakes in its treatment of other Churches and asks pardon for its faults. It declared publicly that it pardoned every Church, which had offended it in any way in the past. It assured that the mistakes of the past *would not be repeated* in the future. It clarified that unity consists not in the merging of any Church in another Church, but in the communion of Churches. It believes firmly that division in the body of Christ is a grave sin, where as unity is the gift of God for His Church. We do not determine the nature or the time of union, which will take place according to the divine plan. In other words, there is no preplanned model for unity in the future. We prepare ourselves through *dialogue of love* and *theological dialogue*, change of attitudes and conversion of hearts and through personal and common prayer. The Catholic Church believes that for the full, visible, canonical communion, the ecumenical relationship which existed at the time of separation should be taken into account. Even though the Churches can no longer go back fully to that state because of changed circumstances, that goal cannot be discarded. All the Churches should have a will to pardon others and to reevaluate their ecclesiologies, which they had developed in isolation.

Moreover, the Catholic Church firmly believes that on basic tenets of faith, the Eastern Churches uphold the Orthodox faith. Even those remaining apparent differences could be considered as diverse formulations of this one faith and could be solved under divine providence. They are no more sound reasons for remaining isolated and separated. The Catholic Church is in *almost full communion* with the Eastern Apostolic Churches. “We have become almost one Church” is the words of the Pope. The Catholic Church does not persuade anybody from the Eastern Church to join it for the sake of salvation. The Orthodox Churches are not mission fields of the Catholic Church. At the same time, Catholic Church, respecting the freedom of conscience of the individuals, does not hinder anybody who wants to join it. But the Churches are invited to become united because it is the will of Christ whereas division is sinful and counter witnessing.

The Catholic Church makes a distinction between full communion and partial communion. With the Eastern Apostolic Churches, it is in almost full communion; i.e., it recognizes the basic faith, Holy Orders and other Sacraments and the apostolic succession of these Churches. The Western Protestant Churches are also related to the Catholic Church in varying degrees. There are more uniting elements among the Churches than separating ones. But at the same time, it realizes that there are still weighty differences in doctrine existing between the Catholic Church and the Western Protestant Churches. The Catholic Church is today even prepared to discuss the ministry of unity of the bishop of Rome. It is trying to solve all the remaining problems through fraternal discussions and dialogue. It upholds that unity is necessary only in the essential things. It is trying to understand the varying formulations and terminologies of the other Churches and is examining whether they are complementary.

Even before the Council, the Malankara Catholic bishops were ecumenically oriented. Mar Gregorios had a very broad ecumenical attitude towards the other Churches. When three bishops of the Marthoma Church were given a reception at Trivandrum in 1953, he participated in the function. In those days it was an unusual event. Secondly, there were some unresolved problems with the Orthodox regarding some schools. Mar Gregorios took the initiative to settle the dispute amicably.

Throughout his life, he maintained an open mind towards all people, especially towards the non-Catholics in Kerala.

The new ecumenical orientation is the guiding principle of the Malankara Catholic Church. We give priority to the communion of Churches. We stand for communion, but with the post - Vatican sense. We have no desire to justify ourselves, but aim at truth, unity, concord and peaceful co-existence. We must prepare ourselves for the visible communion, as God wills it in His time and in the manner He determines. In the vast Indian sub-continent, the Christians must be united to bear witness to Christ in one voice and concertedly to preach the Gospel. We are no longer in the apologetical stage. We recognize the already existing communion of the various Churches and work for perfecting this communion. The *Nilackal Trust* and the *Nilackal Church* are symbols of this new vision. Mar Gregorios tried his best to spread this new thinking of the Second Vatican Council. He never saw the other Christians as schismatics and heretics. He always considered them as brothers and sisters and their Churches as *Sister Churches*. He taught the Malankara Catholics to imbibe this new spirit of the Second Vatican Council. The Malankara Christians in the various communions should reunite in the Lord and for that the Malankara Catholics should earnestly pray and renew their personal life. Mar Gregorios could effect a change from the pre-Vatican apologetical approach to the post-Vatican ecumenical approach. He co-operated positively with all the various ecclesial activities of the Episcopal Churches in Kerala and encouraged the Malankara Catholics to do the same. He gave plots of land at Bethany Hills to the various Christian Churches for their cemeteries, the first beneficiaries being the Jacobites. Once he led a delegation of all the heads of the Episcopal Churches to Rome and to the other Christian centers in Europe. He was a great ecumenist, who loved all the Churches. But just like Archbishop Mar Ivanios, Mar Gregorios also was misunderstood. He was depicted as an anti-ecumenist by some Orthodox publications! There are some people with a retrograde mentality and others filled with prejudices, who can not at all read the signs of the times and the changed mindset of the Catholic Church. They persist in their old prejudices and accuse the Roman Catholic Church and the Malankara Catholic Church of proselytism.

7) The Eucharistic Congress at Bombay and the Visit of Pope Paul VI to India (1964)

In 1964, in connection with the Eucharistic Congress at Bombay, Pope Paul VI arrived in India. This was the first time that a Pope visited India. Mar Gregorios and Mar Athanasios together with the clergy of the Malankara Church concelebrated the holy Eucharist according to the Malankara liturgy in the presence of the Pope. Several Malankara Deacons were ordained priests there. Accepting the invitation of *Abun* Mar Gregorios, the Major Archbishop of the Ukrainians, Josyf Cardinal Slipyj visited several of the Malankara Catholic centers. The author had the good fortune to participate in the reception accorded to him at the Vadavathoor Seminary. Next year the construction of the Cathedral at Pattom having been completed, it was consecrated for divine service. In 1972 a new Cathedral at Tiruvalla was also consecrated. In 2003 another new Cathedral was being built in the place of the former one and was consecrated in 2004. In 1972 there was a common celebration in Kerala to commemorate the 19th centenary of the martyrdom of St. Thomas at Mylapore.

In February 1968 H.E. Cardinal Maximilian de Furstenberg, Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches visited the Malankara Church. He was given a warm welcome everywhere in the Church. There was nothing spectacular to mention in connection with his visit.

In 1964, Mar Gregorios started the St. John's College at Anchal. He also bought the Estate at Mukkampala. After the Council, there were fewer individual reunions; but the conversion from non-Christian communities increased. It was during this period that several of the new parishes in the Trivandrum District were started. There was better contact with the other Churches; resulting in local ecumenical gatherings. Almost all the Churches turned from the apologetical mindset to ecumenical thinking. However, some people still persisted in their old anti-Catholic ill feelings. Mar Gregorios went ahead with the construction of new Churches and Presbyteries instead of the thatched sheds and primitive residential quarters.

8) Reunion of Mar Philoxenos of Thozhiyur (1977)

On 28th August 1977, the head of the Independent Syrian Church of Malabar based at Thozhiyoor, Paulose Mar Philoxenos entered into canonical communion with the Catholic Church. He was appointed titular bishop of Chayal and Episcopal Vicar in Trivandrum. He was present for all the functions of the Malankara Catholic Church. But he spent the rest of his life in prayer and retirement. He had the privilege to go to Rome and stay there for about six months, during which he had an audience with the Pope. He could also visit the holy places in Italy and other European countries. He had the conviction that his Episcopal ordination from the Marthoma Church was not valid. That was why he entered the Catholic Church. He was a man of deep spirituality.¹¹¹ On 28th September 1977 Mar Athanasios of Tiruvalla died, after his visit to Rome and other places.

9) The Establishment of the Diocese of Bathery (1978)

The Malankara Catholic Hierarchy continued with two dioceses and two bishops for about 46 years. On 28th October 1978 the diocese of Tiruvalla was divided and two new bishops were ordained at Tirumulapuram on 28th December of the same year: Isaac Mar Yuhanon for Tiruvalla and Cyril Mar Baselios for Bathery. It was a great step forward in the growth of the Malankara Catholic Church. With the establishment of the new Diocese of Bathery and the appointment of Mar Baselios as its bishop, an avenue opened to proclaim the message of unity more actively and vigorously in the Malabar region, which had not been sufficiently taken care of in the vast diocese of Tiruvalla. Mar Baselios took charge of the diocese on 2nd February 1979. Within 16 years, he reached out to the faithful who had been neglected and abandoned for a long, and who lacked the spiritual ministrations of any Church. He bought land, built houses of prayer for them and entrusted them to zealous priests, with the result the number of the faithful increased from 8,500 to 22,507 and the number of the parishes from 43 to 110 in 1996 when he left the diocese to become the Archbishop of Trivandrum. The Diocese of Bathery is territorially very vast (75,000 square

¹¹¹ S. Kanjiramakalil, *Punarakhya Rekhakal*, p. 185-201.

kilometers). It includes the Districts of Kannur, Kasargod Wayanad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, (in Kerala), Nilgiri (in Tamil Nadu), and Mysore, Mandya, Hasan, Chikmangalore, Kurg, and Shimoga (in Karnataka). The people speak Malayalam, Tamil, Kannada, and Thulu. Mar Baselios bought a College at Pulpally and started several educational institutions. He built several new churches and presbyteries too.

It was on 19th December 1978 that the present author defended his doctoral dissertation on *the Christology of Mar Babai the Great (+628)* at Augustinianum in Rome. On the following day he had the good fortune to visit the Holy Father Pope John Paul II personally and present him a copy of his doctoral Thesis.

In 2003 in connection with the Reunion Day Celebrations, the Malankara Catholic Church, celebrated the Silver Jubilee of the establishment of the Diocese of Bathery and of the Episcopal ordination of Mar Baselios, its first bishop. In 2003 there are 87 priests, 121 churches and 25.000 Catholics in the diocese of Bathery.¹¹²

10) Golden Jubilee of the Reunion Movement (1980)

In 1980 December (26-28) the Golden Jubilee of the Reunion Movement was celebrated at Nagampadam, Kottayam. During the Jubilee celebrations, Lawrence Mar Ephraem was ordained the auxiliary bishop of the Archdiocese of Trivandrum. There were also priestly ordinations. Among the participants were Mother Theresa of Calcutta, Cardinal Rubin as the special envoy of the Pope, Patriarch Maximos V of the Melkite Catholic Church of Antioch and the Internuncio in Delhi. Several bishops of the Episcopal Churches and a very large gathering participated in the celebration. This celebration helped to unfold the significance of the Malankara Catholic Church and the meaning of communion.

11) The Birth Centenary of Archbishop Mar Ivanios (1983)

It was celebrated at Mavelikkara, the birthplace of Mar Ivanios. There was concelebrated holy Eucharist, in addition to a mammoth rally

¹¹² *Bathery Rupatha Rejatha Jubilee Smaranika, 1978-2003*, Bathery, 2003.

and a public meeting. All the speakers emphasized the need of the reunion of all the Malankara faithful.

12) Papal Visit to India (1986)

Pope John Paul II made his historic visit to India in February 1986. He visited the Malankara Catholic Church on 8th February. He was given a very warm reception at the Cathedral at Pattom. He spoke in very high terms regarding Mar Ivanios and the Malankara Catholic Church at the Pattom Cathedral and at the Stadium at Sankhumukham in Trivandrum.

Next year on April 28, Isaac Mar Yuhanon passed away. On 18th August 1987 His Eminence Simon Cardinal Lourdasamy, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches visited the Malankara Church. It was just a formal visit, when he assumed his office as the Prefect. In 1988 Geevarghese Mar Timotheos was appointed the bishop of Tiruvalla.

13) The Malankara Major Seminary (1989)

It was the earnest desire of Mar Ivanios and the other Malankara Catholic Bishops to have a Major Seminary of our own. In his applications and requests to Rome, Mar Ivanios often referred to the clerical formation house. The Bishops realized that the formation should be ecclesial, liturgical, Indian, Oriental and Catholic. For the leadership to be in accordance with the nature of the Church, the formation must adequately conform to it. The Malankara Major Seminary was inaugurated on 29th June 1983. Rome granted formal recognition to the Seminary on 8th September 1984 (Prot.No.87/83). It was in the beginning housed in the St. Aloysius Seminary at Pattom with very limited facilities, offering only the Philosophy Course for three years. The blessing of the new buildings for the Philosophy section was performed on 25th May 1989. His Holiness Pope John Paul II blessed the foundation stone of the Theology Block on 8th February 1986, on the occasion of his visit to the Cathedral at Pattom.

In his address he referred to the Malankara Major Seminary:

“The establishment of the Major Seminary dedicated to Mary, the Mother of the Church, is a sign of your vitality. It offers great hope of further strength and consolidation”¹¹³

¹¹³ *L'Osservatore Romano*, Feb.17, 1986.

The Theology Course was started in the Seminary in 1992. The blessing of the Chapel was on 9th February 1996 and the staff quarters on 22nd June 1998. The Seminary is dedicated in the name of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. The first batch of the students of the Malankara Seminary, 30 in number, was ordained in 1996. This Seminary at Nalanchira is meant for the diocesan and the religious priests of the Malankara Catholic Church. Both have to cooperate wholeheartedly, by sending the students for studies and the Professors for teaching. The priests and the religious of the Malankara Church have one unique goal, the good of the Church. This Seminary came into existence at a period, when the Malankara Church entered into a very important period of its growth. There are also some students from the other Churches.

It is very necessary that those who are appointed as teachers must be saintly, learned, well balanced, missionary minded, men filled with human qualities, men with a definite purpose, imbibed with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council and thoroughly committed to the cause of the unity of all Christians. They should not close their eyes at the rapid changes, taking place in the social and political realm, at the national and international levels. They should have a clear ecclesial vision to prepare the future priests in the Malankara Church for the evangelization of India. They should respect what is Indian and Oriental. They should be filled with the Reunion ideals of Mar Ivanios and have a very broad outlook in accordance with the Conciliar and post-Conciliar ecumenical changes. In short this holy institution should be able to give to the Church, leaders equipped for the New Millennium.

Until 1962 the Malankara Catholic priests were trained in the Latin Seminaries by Latin priests, and from 1962 a few had their training at the Vadavathoor Seminary, Kottayam under the Syro- Malabar Church. The present author was a student at the Vadavathoor Seminary. We are thankful to them for their great and generous service for about fifty years. Each Seminary has its own life style and type of formation. In the Seminaries under the leadership of the Jesuits, preference would be given to the Jesuit spirituality while in the Carmelite Seminaries preference is given to the Carmelite spirituality. In all the Latin Seminaries, the Programme of Studies consisted of scholastic theology and philosophy

and everywhere they followed the Latin pious practices. The Vadavathoor Seminary tried in the beginning to give some kind of Oriental, liturgical and ecclesial formation. Otherwise, the history and Liturgy of our tradition were totally neglected in many of the Latin Seminaries. The knowledge of Oriental matters was non-existent. Till 1965 the textbooks printed in the West in the Latin language were used and the medium of instruction was Latin. Local cultural heritage was not taken seriously. It was a foreign training, conducted mostly by foreigners, especially in the Latin Seminaries, to prepare the Latin students. It was in no way adequate for the Malankara Church.

If the teachers in the Malankara Seminary are imparting solely the theology envisaged in the Latin theological books, if they form the students spiritually with the pious exercises of the Latin Church and teach only the Latin thought patterns which they have learned in the Latin Seminaries or in the European theological faculties, it is likely that the students may not get adequate ecclesial formation. If the Malankara Seminary is a carbon copy of the Latin Seminaries, it will not realize what the Church intends to give through this Seminary. If one considers as unorthodox or heretical what is different from Latin theology, or maintains a pre-Conciliar theological thinking, ignoring the changes of the Second Vatican Council, the formation would not be suitable for the priests of tomorrow.

14) The Saphathi of Bethany (1989)

In 1919 Archbishop Mar Ivanios as a priest of the *Metran Kakshy* had started the Bethany Monastic establishment at Perunad. Its 70th anniversary was celebrated at Kottayam. It was Bethany, which had paved the way for the canonical communion with the Roman Catholic Church. Since 1930 it was doing excellent evangelical work in the ecumenical field and in the field of conversion to Christianity. Bethany followed the Indian and Oriental way of life. Simple living, deep prayer life, earnest mission work are the special characteristics of Bethany. The priests of Bethany are working in several parishes and mission centers. Bethany thus continues the ideals of Mar Ivanios, taking into consideration the changed situation in the country and in the world at large.

15) The Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI)

The Catholic Bishops' Conference came into existence in 1947. After the Second Vatican Council there were discussions about the nature of its structure. It was decided to have three Conferences, as there are three Individual Churches in India: the Latin Bishops' Conference, the Syro-Malabar Bishops' Synod, and the Syro-Malankara Catholic Bishops' Synod. It was agreed that the CBCI might remain as an institution to deal with the supra ritual matters and other matters of common interest and that the enactments would have no legal binding. In 1988 Archbishop Mar Gregorios was the president of the CBCI for one term. At one stage it was decided that the Presidents and other office bearers be appointed by rotation from the three Particular Churches. In practice, the system is in vogue. In 2003 Archbishop Mar Baselios became its President.

16) The 60th anniversary of the Reunion Movement (1990)

It was held at Bathery with various programmes. It helped to spread in the Malabar region the ideals of the ecumenical movement and the need for canonical communion with the Roman Catholic Church. The bishops of the Episcopal Churches in the Malabar region come together for regular regional meetings and there is very close collaboration and understanding among them. Even the dispute over the temporalities between the Jacobite and Orthodox factions is minimal there. It is largely due to the generous attitude of all the bishops in the region. All of them are aware that they are migrants and that they all still live in difficult situations mostly among the poor people.

17) The Kollam Jubilee (1992)

The 62nd anniversary of the Reunion Movement was held at Kollam, where Bishop Benziger had received Mar Ivanios into the Catholic Church on 20th September 1930. The 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Hierarchy was also celebrated simultaneously. It was an occasion to remember in a special way the place and the persons involved in the Reunion Movement of 1930 and also to thank in a very

special way the Kollam diocese for its generous help towards the event. In 2003 the diocese of Kollam placed a new memorial stone, with detailed description of the Reunion event, at the wall of the Chapel at the Bishop's House, where Mar Ivanios had been received into the Catholic Church. We must be thankful to Bishop Stanley Roman for this generous gesture and to Fr. C. M. George, who was acting behind the curtain. Archbishop Cyril Mar Baselios and Bishop Joshua Mar Ignathios were present on the occasion. Special mention was made at the Kollam Jubilee of the help we had received from the Latin Catholics of the Kollam diocese. At Kadappakkada, Kollam there is a parish for the Malankara Catholic Church. It is also a Marian pilgrim center.

18) One Rite Movement

Immediately after the Second Vatican Council, there arose a Movement somewhere in India, known as the *One Rite Movement*. The protagonists called the three Particular Churches *Rites*, in the pre-Conciliar manner. They proposed to merge the three existing Particular Catholic Churches in India into one Rite, thereby abolishing the two Oriental Churches for good. It is not clear who was behind this well planned pre-Conciliar and anti-Oriental move. The proponents systematically propagated the idea for which a lot of money was spent unnecessarily. It was contrary to the documents of the Second Vatican Council and the constant teaching of the Catholic Church. It was also against the nature of the Church to be uniformly structured. Still the protagonists could convince a few and make their voice heard. They succeeded in getting adherents from the Malankara Catholic Church also. They propagated the idea through the publication *Vaidika Mitram*. In the place of stiff opposition and strong protest from the part of the Individual Apostolic Churches in India the movement died out. But there was much waste of energy and money for a very negative ideology.¹¹⁴

19) National Seminar- Church in India Today (1969)

When the one Rite Movement died out at least externally, it was proposed in the *All India Seminar* in Bangalore under a new guise. The Seminar had a lot of noble aims, but its hidden agenda was to restrict the

¹¹⁴ C.A. Abraham, *A Matter of Rite*, Trivandrum, s.d.; N. A. Thomas, *One Territory- One Bishop? or Shall the Syrian Rites Die?* Changanassery, 1971.

Malankara and the Syro-Malabar Churches in a tiny corner in India and to pass resolutions totally opposed to the Documents of the Second Vatican Council, regarding the equality of the Particular Churches in the Universal Church. The whole tone of the documents of the Seminar was pre-Vatican, especially in using regularly the term *Rites* instead of *Particular Churches*. The autonomy of the Malankara Church was foreign to the organizers and the vast majority of the participants in the Seminar, which stood for uniformity and not unity in diversity. They propagated the idea that *diversity is division and unity is uniformity*. Practically they denied multi-jurisdiction. Of course they tolerated the Malankara Catholic Church in Kerala, but did not respect the equality of the Churches in the Catholic communion. By calling the Particular Churches, *Rites*, they considered them as ritual Churches, attached to the Catholic Church. And for them Latin Church was the Catholic Church. During the last session of the Seminar, the proposals of Fr. Jonas Thaliath cmi, a Syro-Malabar priest (later bishop of Rajkott), were adopted¹¹⁵. There were six recommendations, which were basically pre-conciliar and against multi-jurisdiction. It was proposed that the Oriental personnel should continue to work for the Latin Church.¹¹⁶ It speaks of “the difficulties occasioned by plurality of jurisdiction.”¹¹⁷ Among the recommendations, there is none, which respects fully the teaching of the Second Vatican Council¹¹⁸.

They wanted the missionary activities to be confined to the Latin Church. All the Latin missionaries, wherever they went, worked for and extended the Latin Church, even when they worked among the Orientals. But here in India, they expected the Orientals to put on the Latin garb in order to do mission work under the Latin bishops. Of course, co-operation among the Churches is a very good thing, which must be encouraged. But no Church should become the nursery for another Church. The growth of the Eastern Churches is also the growth of the Catholic Church. However, one of the recommendations appeals for more exarchates for the Orientals in the various parts of India.

¹¹⁵ CBCI, (ed.), *All India Seminar-Church in India Today, Bangalore, 1969*, Delhi, 1969, p.206-210.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* 207.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.* There are six recommendations.

These recommendations as a whole have to be discarded by the very fact that they are contrary to the teachings of the Ecumenical Council. If any teaching, even of a whole group, is against the teaching of the Ecumenical Council, has to be disregarded. In his explanation, Fr. Jonas added:

“If there is any one problem that is facing the Church in India that needs serious and immediate attention, I think it is the question of Rites... Rite is a problem very much connected with life”.¹¹⁹

It is curious that one hears such a statement from an Oriental priest in the post-Vatican period. Why should Rite be a problem? His assertion that the “Church is a symbol of unity”¹²⁰ is very correct. But that unity must be *a unity in diversity and not a unity of uniformity* which is pre-Vatican. It is clear that the organizers wanted to “get it sanctioned by the Holy See”¹²¹ by which means they thought of pressurising the Malankara Catholic Church to agree against the multi-jurisdiction.

Cardinal Gracias said: “It would be the greatest achievement of this Seminar”¹²² by which he betrayed the hidden agenda. Bishop Louis Morrow of Krishnagar said, “If the Church did not make greater progress in India, it was because of lack of unity among the various Rites”¹²³ which is not a true statement. The poor Orientals were limited and restricted to a very tiny corner of India while the vast Indian Territory was in the hands of the Latin bishops for centuries. How can one find fault with the Orientals for their missionary output?

From the Malankara Catholic Church, a Church in communion with the Roman Catholic Church, there were only very few participants. Still Fr. Cyril Malancharuvil oic (later head of the Malankara Catholic Church) was courageous enough to speak in the name of this Church.

May I quote the report about the intervention of Fr. Cyril:¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* 208

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* 209

¹²¹ *Ibid.* 210.

¹²² *Ibid.* 211.

¹²³ *Ibid.* 213.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* 214.

“Fr. Cyril of Bethany Ashram, Trivandrum (Syro-Malankara rite) rose to give expression to the fears of his rite about the eventual outcome of this movement toward ‘unity’ - would it ultimately result in ‘uniformity’? He appreciated, Fr. Cyril explained, the sympathetic approach adopted by various speakers, but he failed to understand the principle behind Fr. Jonas’ resolution. He could not be convinced of the soundness of an ecclesiology that denies multi-jurisdiction. The resolution was pre-Vatican II, because Vatican II had defined the Church as a community of the People of God and not an empire of rigid centralized administration. Vatican II had encouraged various worshipping communities or liturgies and, therefore, once liturgical communities were allowed, it was wrong to deny them the proper structures that are necessary for their effective functioning. Fr. Cyril, therefore, pleaded for the retention of ecclesiastical multi-jurisdiction.”

Even though the tone of this reporting was pre-Vatican, there was at least one person from the reunited community to say that the proposals were not sound in the light of the Second Vatican Council. But Mar Gregorios, the then head of the Malankara Church, although he noticed the danger inherent in these proposals, said in the following way:¹²⁵

“I cannot think it is proper on my part to take a partisan view and to enter into the merits or demerits of the resolutions proposed here... I can tell you that I had the greatest difficulty to convince the few, very few members of my community to accept this proposal that has been made by Fr. Jonas. Because, if you go into detail, there are various propositions *which may be explained in a different way*, which may be considered as an *impediment for the growth of the Eastern Churches*; but in view of the general approval, I have convinced the members of my community to accept, with grace, this great proposal... I assure you of my utmost cooperation.”

We are not to condemn our Fathers. They might have acted in good faith. But if one is convinced that a certain proposition would be against the growth of the Malankara Church, it must not be endorsed. And in fact it has become an impediment. The Latin bishops made use of the resolution as a tool to impede the growth of the Oriental Churches

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* 215-218: 216.

in India. A few parishes had been erected for the Orientals in a few places. No new possibility is given for missionary activity. The pastoral care of thousands of Orientals is still impeded. At the same time the flow of the Orientals to the Latin dioceses continued. Alas! No new territory is allotted to the Orientals as proposed. The net result was tragic.

Mar Gregorios himself had to speak against this unjust situation in the Synod of Bishops in Rome in 1985, *sixteen years after the National Seminar!*¹²⁶ That means nothing positive happened during these sixteen years in implementing the Decrees of the Second Vatican Council regarding the pastoral care and missionary activity. One is forced to believe that there was a hidden agenda in the National Seminar. The *One Rite Movement* was a prelude to propagate the false idea that multi-jurisdiction is the cause of division, that diversity is division and uniformity is unity. The protagonists of the Seminar wanted to maintain the old dictum of Cardinal Humbert (13th c.): “*Varietas mater est initium discordiae*”.

The present Holy Father himself proved the fallacy of the resolution of the Seminar through his *Pastoral Letter to all the bishops in India in 1989*, and through the establishment of the Kalyan diocese in the Bombay-Pune-Nasik region for the Syro-Malabar Church, thus putting an end to the single jurisdiction.¹²⁷ But at that time the Malankara Catholic Church was not at all considered.

The bishops, who participated in the National Seminar, or at least those who controlled it, were from the old generation. Most of them had the pre-Vatican training. It appears that the Council did not matter them and so there was no ecclesiological change in them. They continued to think about the Church in the old way. Most of the Oriental participants also were no exception to this. They all had their training in the same Seminaries and their system of education was the same. But there must have been at least some among them, who participated in the Ecumenical Council before they drafted the documents. But even they forgot that

¹²⁶ CO 7/1-2(1986) 43-4: G.Chediath, *Ecumenism in Danger*, 80-82.

¹²⁷ Paul Pallath, *Important Roman Documents Concerning the Catholic Church in India*, Kottayam, 2004, p.245-251.

they had to stand between Orthodoxy and Catholicism. They had forgotten, perhaps, that for the Malankara Catholics, Catholicity is to be maintained in the Autonomy of the Church. The only exception was Fr. Cyril Malancharuvil OIC.¹²⁸

20) The Oriental Canon Law (1990)

The new Code of Canons for the Oriental Churches was promulgated in October 1990. As the various Oriental Catholic Churches exist in diverse cultural, political and social conditions, it was practically very difficult to form one Code for all the various Churches. Moreover the majority of the Eastern and Oriental Churches have not yet entered into in canonical communion with the Catholic Church. Almost all the Eastern Churches in the Roman Catholic communion underwent latinization. They have in major part the Latin mentality. Although there had been participants from the Eastern and Oriental Churches in the preparatory meetings of the Oriental Code, basically the Code reflects the Latin mentality. In the context of the wider ecumenism of all the Eastern and Oriental Churches, there is need for a new Code of Canon Law. There are provisions in the Code for Particular Laws for each Church. With the approval of the Holy See the Malankara Catholic Church has promulgated the Particular Laws for the Church on the 10th March 2012. The Syro-Malabar Church has also published its Particular Laws.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ CBCI (ed.), *All India Seminar-Church in India Today, Bangalore, 1969*, New Delhi, 1969, p. 205-218.

¹²⁹ *The Code of Particular Canons of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Trivandrum, 1912; Particular Laws of the Syro-Malabar Church: Synodal News Bulletin of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church, Kochi, 11/1(2003).*

21

Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios (1916-1994)

In the 73 years' history of the Malankara Catholic Church since 1930, the major portion coincided with the leadership of Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios. God gave him good health, leadership qualities, abundant graces in all his endeavors and the ability to guide the Church in its growing period.

Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios, the successor of Mar Ivanios (+1953), was a great gift of God in the 20th century for this country in general, and the Malankara Catholic Church in particular. As St. Basil wrote in a letter, "Blessed is God, who selects those in each generation who are pleasing to Him and makes known the vessels of His election and uses them for the ministry of the Saints,"¹³⁰ God selected him and made known this vessel of His election to Mar Ivanios. One of the great achievements of Mar Ivanios was that he found out with his prophetic eyes this precious gift, which God had prepared for this land and the Church during this particular period in history.

Short Life History

Mar Gregorios was born and brought up in the Malankara Jacobite Church. His baptismal name was Varghese. God brought him closer to the Bethany Religious Movement and he was attracted by the magnetic personality of Mar Ivanios. Later we find him as a member of the Catholic Church, and a Bethany religious. According to the custom of Bethany in those days, he adopted the name Benedict. He had his philosophical and

¹³⁰ *Epistle*, 161.

theological studies at Kandy, Sreelanka. In 1944 he became a religious priest of the Bethany Congregation. After that he returned to Trivandrum and taught Syriac language for some time at the Minor Seminary at Pattom. In 1946 he was sent for higher studies (B. A. Hons.) at Tiruchirappalli, where he successfully graduated in 1949 and became the first Principal of the newly established Mar Ivanios College. In 1952 he was nominated bishop and was ordained in January 1953 under the name Gregorios. Following the death of Mar Ivanios, he was appointed the Administrator in 1953 and the Archbishop in 1955. He took part in the Second Vatican Council (1962-5). In 1976 the citizens of Trivandrum celebrated his 60th birthday. Shortly before his death in 1994, he celebrated also the 50th anniversary of his priestly ordination.

Archbishop of the People

When we look back on the life of Archbishop Mar Gregorios, we are astonished at the immense amount of work he had done in diverse fields and the variety of interests he had shown in all of them. He was a religious and a Catholic bishop of a small ecumenical Christian community, scattered throughout Kerala and other parts of the world. He had under his leadership fewer than half a million faithful. But by the end of his episcopate he had filled the hearts and minds of all the people in Trivandrum and several thousands in Kerala and in the vast subcontinent. When Mar Ivanios was in Trivandrum, the *Divan* C. P. Ramaswamy Ayer had tried to chase him away from the city. But the successor of Mar Ivanios found a place in the hearts of thousands of the inhabitants of Trivandrum. He was a charming person, who was deeply interested in men and matters. He had special concern for the poor and had absolutely no sectarian prejudice in his ways of thinking. He loved everybody and everybody loved him. His doors were open to all, irrespective of religion, status in society, political allegiance or position. Thus one can say without any exaggeration that he was the bishop of the people than his own community of Christians.

He was at home in every circle

He was at home with all groups. Today we may find him in a meeting sponsored by the SNDP (of the Ezhava community) to commemorate Sree Narayana Guru; tomorrow he may be speaking at a meeting sponsored by the NSS (Nair community); next day he may be

participating in a meeting of the Moslems; another day he may be seen among the Christian bishops of Kerala, discussing the common problems facing the communities. He would be the first person to visit and console the people in an area subjected to communal violence. He feared nobody and he had access to every place.

A New Face to the Episcopate

There was a ray of glory which radiated every moment from within him. It was the indwelling Spirit of God. He gave a new face to the Christian episcopate during this period. He lived ahead of his co-workers who often could not keep pace with him and even misunderstood him at times. But he was sure that he was guided by the Spirit of God. Only people of his own mental caliber could understand him and his ways of doing. As one reads about St. John Chrysostom, he had a “soul noble and unselfish” and committed to God and His cause. His sense of personal dignity was very high. However, several of his noble projects, aimed at the uplift of the poorest of the poor in society, either turned to be only partially successful, or completely came to an end after his death, chiefly because of the incapability of those who were responsible for executing them. The beneficiaries of his projects were all the poor people in the area of the project and not exclusively his own community. As an eagle flying very high in the air, he lived in a very lofty realm.

His Speeches

He could mingle with the rich and the poor, very ordinary and learned people, university students and farmers, religious and political leaders, believers and non-believers alike. He had a very special ability to convey very serious spiritual truths in the simple language of the ordinary people. One was not bored at his speeches, however lengthy they might be. He combined lofty ideals with the contemporary life situations of the people. He starts with the spiritual, thence descends to the temporal and again he raises the audience to the spiritual. He would start with the Trinity, and then suddenly descend to the Incarnation and the earthly priesthood and concludes with the pastoral visit of the parish priest to the poor huts of the ordinary men. He would discuss with them their field of cultivation, their daily activities, their hard work, their hunger and suffering and sickness and then he would raise them to the cross of

the Redeemer and ultimately to the highest heaven, where the glorified Son sits and intercedes for us. Suddenly he would descend to the church where the Lord is present in the Eucharist and then come out and see the Lord in each and every one of the faithful, especially in the suffering, the needy, the poor, and the distressed.

A luminous Light

He was like a luminous light shining high above in and enlightens everyone far and near alike. He promoted the ecumenical spirit among the Christians and pointed out the noble goal of bearing witness to Christ in one voice in the vast Indian subcontinent. He used to say, “We cannot convert any body. We do not convert anybody. Only God can give the grace of conversion of heart and mind. We proclaim the Gospel, the Good News, the Gospel of love, the Gospel of salvation to all; we have a mandate from the Lord and we cannot desist from that mandate; we have to proclaim Him; He is the light and we have received the light from him; so we are the light of the world; the light cannot but shine; if we shine as true light, definitely people will no more walk in darkness. Who can discard Christ, the Son of God, who became a man to save all people!” He believed in the goodness of mankind and he had confidence in the Indian society. He firmly believed that the Indian population was not against Christ. He lamented that the Christians, who are called to make known Christ, are not properly and sufficiently bearing witness to Him. It is not the antagonism of the Hindus towards Christ and His message, but the counter-witnessing of the Christians themselves that prevent the spreading of the Good News.

Love is my Light-His Motto

All the people in this land bear witness that Archbishop Mar Gregorios could love all men, irrespective of caste and creed. He was a man of love and he showed in his life the love of the Lord. “Love is my light” was his motto. He believed that all men are God’s children. He wanted that all should rise from the poverty level. All should have better human life. He put into practice the teaching of the Second Vatican Council that the bishop should take care not only of his own Catholic faithful entrusted to his pastoral care, but also of the entire humanity at that area. He should not restrict himself to the spiritual realm but to the

total development and liberation of all the people of the area. He loved God and he loved God’s children in the name of God. Once a friend asked him, “Why do you work so hard for these poor people?” The answer of the Archbishop was the pointing of his finger to the distant figure of Christ on the top of the church. After a short pause he said, “I work for Him, I live for Him and I do everything in His name.” This reminds one of the blessed Mother Theresa of Calcutta, who did everything for the Lord and in the name of the Lord. This is what every good Christian should do. “Never have I come across in my life a religious leader of such kindness, tolerance and love of the poor”, was the comment of Dr.N.A.Karim, the former Pro-Vice Chancellor of the Kerala University.

A Lover of Nature

Since he loved God, he loved God’s children and nature, created by God for mankind. He wanted to put into practice the teaching of the Lord, “Just as I loved you, love one another”. He extended it to plants and animals, to the visible and invisible world. The underlying motive in all his social activities was the uplift of the poor. That is why he ventured at the new projects. That is why he started the Garment Factory at Nalanchira, the Choir lap factory, the fisheries at Thottappally and several other big and small projects. He had a natural liking for cultivation. Some of his best friends were agricultural scientists.

Model of hard Work

He exhorted people to hard work; he encouraged the university students to dedicate themselves fully to their studies. He did not at all approve the destructive *Strikes*, *Bandhs* and *Harthals*. He strongly disapproved the way in which politicians handled the innocent school children and energetic college students and how they dragged them to strike and destruction of public properties. He used to say that unless our people put an end to these unnecessary strikes and destruction of the public properties, we are not going to progress. He pleaded for the rights of the workers. But he didn’t approve the laziness and destructive mentality of the politicians, which drag the innocent children and enthusiastic youth to pernicious activities. All the same, he loved them all and exhorted them to be positive in their attitude to life and activity.

Among Brother Bishops

As a bishop he was very highly respected by his brothers in the episcopate. He gave efficient leadership to the Malankara bishops and attended to the various spheres of activities of the Malankara Catholic Church. He was several times the President of the Catholic Bishops' Council in Kerala (KCBC). The other Sister Churches also invited him for their functions. He had wide contact and good relationship with them for 40 years. In 1988 he was elected as the President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India (CBCI). He was a known bishop in the Catholic world in India. He had to be absent often from the diocese to take part in the CBCI Standing Committee Meetings, the *Synod of Bishops* in Rome, other International Meetings and the Visits to the Malankara Catholics outside Kerala. Even the Government of India invited him to take part in some important meetings, such as the reception accorded in Delhi to Mr. Nelson Mandela and the birth centenary of Vivekananda at Kanyakumari. He was a permanent member of the Synod of Bishops, and the Oriental Congregation in Rome, representing the Malankara Catholic Church. Once he led a delegation of bishops of all the Episcopal Churches in Kerala to Rome and to the other important Christian centers in Europe.

Graceful Man

He was very healthy till the end. He had a very healthy body and a healthy mind. He walked around with the vigor of the youth. He was very pleasant and graceful. The expression *His Grace* was literally realized in him. But the photos, except on the cover page, used throughout the *Smaranika 1994(commemorative volume)* did not at all reflect the true image of the joyful and graceful Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios.

Lover of the liturgical Traditions

He had great love for the Antiochene liturgical traditions. He gathered the faithful in various centers and personally gave them liturgical training. He didn't deviate from the authentic traditions, but he believed that the liturgy must be adapted to the time, in accordance with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. He encouraged renovation. He was not a traditionalist and pietist. He believed in genuine liturgical piety. He

insisted that the worship in common should never be dominated by the musical instruments. In accordance with the tradition of the Malankara Church, he insisted also the common recital by all the faithful, instead of a few members singing or reciting in a selected choir. His liturgical celebrations were devotional. He spent long hours in prayer and meditation. For him the communion with God was a constant and abiding reality. He found strength in the holy Eucharist and as a monk he followed strictly the observances that he learned in the Bethany religious Order. He had great confidence and trust in God. He was ever conscious that he had a mission to fulfill, the great mission entrusted to him by Mar Ivanios. With the strength that he received from the Lord, he went to the poor, the needy and the oppressed.

Care over priestly Formation

He was always very careful in the selection of the candidates to priesthood. He concentrated in their formation and training. It was one of his priorities. That is why he started the Major Seminary. He knew the necessity of imparting ecclesial and liturgical formation. The establishment of the Major Seminary was a great achievement in the life of the Church. Shortly before his death he told the author, who was then Rector of the Minor Seminary, about the necessity of careful selection of the candidates. He called the author at his deathbed and said: "We must be very careful in the selection of the candidates. They may be poor. But they must be from good families, families with good prayer life, God fearing, having good reputation and good family traditions." Throughout his life, the Archbishop used to come for interviewing the candidates for priesthood. He used to take classes for the Major Seminary students on the Council Decrees. And all the students without exception appreciated his classes. He had first hand knowledge about the Council and he was a known good teacher.

The Reunited priests (during this period)

Ampatt Elias, Trichur

C.A. Abraham Cheerakathottam (+2009)

Cheenivilayil Varghese, Konni (1968-)

Chuttivattom Geevarghese, Koodal (2010)¹³¹

Eramangalath Mathai Kassisa, Tiruvalla

Kanneleth Abraham Joseph, Anchal

Kaplasseril Eappen, Ala (+1994)

Kollenkudiyil Isaac

Konniyur John (+2009)

Mundakodiyil Mathew

Nedumpurath P.T. Thomas/Aprem Remban

Peruvinkal George

P. T. Thomas, Kudappanakkunnu

T.V.John (+1970)

Vadakken George, Thozhiyur

V.C.Geevarghese Corepiscopa (+1991)

Spiritual Idealism

He was our real father and close friend. He could not but love everybody. He was filled with the love of God, who came down to love us and to take us with Him to the Father. He spent the whole of his life in the witnessing of this love. He was very simple in his personal life and unassuming. His food was meager. He never spent money for his own comforts. He disliked when people offered him money. In this he was imitating Bar Ebraya, the Great Maphrian of the Jacobite Church. He never kept a personal account. He had very limited needs. He never looked for his personal comforts and conveniences. The main reason was his spiritual idealism, which he maintained all through his life. Secondly, he had a very healthy body. Thirdly he had absolute trust in God. Of course, during his period, there was still poverty and want. The present author too witnessed it in his early seminary life and priestly life.

He was so upright and correct that he could not see the crookedness and cunningness of those who approached him for selfish motives. Among such people, there were some lay people and rarely

¹³¹ With him the whole parish entered into communion in 1962, October 4 (91 families with 453 members).

priests. If those who had more access to him were not so upright as he, it was likely that they could thwart his sacred plans for the Church and end up in failure. It was likely that such people could alienate the clergy from the bishop. Although it often happens in the Episcopal circles, Mar Gregorios could keep such people away from him or take precautionary measures to a certain extent. He was very merciful in giving corrections. On certain deviations of the clergy and the laity he was uncompromising.

Values in Life

He upheld human and Christian values. As long as he was the Archbishop, he never asked donation from the candidates who were appointed in the Schools and Colleges under his management. But the negative attitude of the teachers and professors, when he asked them to contribute to the social welfare fund for the poor, pained him very much. He was much distressed at their hard heartedness. At that time, because of the lack of funds, he could not construct many new buildings. Although he had great financial difficulty, he did stand by his principles and he could challenge the politicians to prove whether there was any corruption in conducting the Schools and Colleges under his management.

Financial Stability

In order to get a steady income to meet the growing needs of the Archdiocese, he bought the Bethany Estate at Kanyakumari District, the Adoor Estate and the properties elsewhere and asked to plant Rubber in all the parishes. He bought also small plots of land at Ambasamudram and Shenkotta. The Archdiocese had huge amount of debts in the banks. Towards the end, the Archbishop was a bit worried about it. He used to tell, "I should not hand over the diocese to my successor with a huge debt". By God's grace, he managed to pay the whole amount before his death.

Institutional Achievements

He completed the construction of the St. Mary's Cathedral, built the new Bishop's House at the site from where the Divan C. P. Ramaswamy Ayer chased Mar Ivanios. He started Mar Theophilos Teachers' Training College in Trivandrum, St. Johns' College at Anchal

(1964) and Mar Gregorios Engineering College at Pady, Madras. And finally he built the new Malankara Major Seminary.

Entering into the Glory

After 50 years of priestly life and 41 years of Episcopal life, on the 10th October 1994 Mar Gregorios, entered into the glory of the Lord. Throughout his life he was healthy. He got sick suddenly and his disappearance was sudden too. He was well nursed by the doctors both in Trivandrum and abroad. At his death, the State Government accorded him the State honor. The burial procession from Palayam St. Mary's church to Pattom Cathedral revealed how he was loved by the people in the city and at large in the State. His mortal remains were laid to rest at the tomb in the Cathedral, at Pattom, near the tomb of Archbishop Mar Ivanios. There was also a meeting immediately after the burial service. There were many distinguished guests to honor his memory.

The Priests who passed away during this period:¹³²

Ayanthy Jacob, Tiruvalla	(+1986)
Ayrookuzhy Joseph, Tiruvalla	(+1991)
Azhakath Abraham, Tiruvalla	(+1988)
Chackalamuriyil Philip	(+1993)
Charuvileth Geevarghese, Pandalam	(+1974)
Chenthiyath Abraham, Pathanamthitta	(+1992)
Cherupuzhathottam Joseph, Tiruvalla	(+1992)
Elavatta Koshy, Tiruvalla	(+1973)
Inchackalody Thomas, Maramon	(+1974)
Kilileth Zacharias	(+1985)
Kochukallil Philip Thomas	(+1987)
Koikal Kuriakose, Ayur	(+1980)
Kottarathil Thomas	(+1991)
Kuttiyil Geevarghese, Kattanam	(+1966)
Malancharuvil Mathai	(+1989)

¹³² Priests not mentioned in the previous lists.

Manalel Thomas, Bathery	(+1987)
Mattamanayil Abraham	(+1989)
Muttathuparampil Chacko, Tiruvalla	(+1989)
Mylakatt Cherian, Tiruvalla	(+1992)
Nechikattil Eappen, Tiruvalla	(+1980)
Padinjarekara Joseph, Ayarkunnam	(+1980)
Padinjarekutt Thomas, Tiruvalla	(+1993)
Pazhoor Thomas, Tiruvalla	(+1994)
Plaparapadickal George	(+1971)
Powathikunnel Cherian, Tiruvalla	(+1990)
Puthenpurayil Joseph	(+1994)
Thekkecharuvil Joshua, Kumbazha	(+1983)
Thekkedath Abraham	(+1989)
Thekkedath George Oommen	(+1991)
Thekkumparampil Peter, Tiruvalla	(+1989)
Thengumthottam Mathew, Tiruvalla	(+1990)
Thenguvilayil Samuel	(+1986)
Varikanikuzhy Thomas, Tiruvalla	(+1990)
Vilayil Thomas	(+1973)

Circular of the Malankara Catholic Bishops

The Malankara Catholic bishops sent a circular immediately after the death of Archbishop Mar Gregorios: "The past four decades were for the Malankara Catholic Church periods of great strides. Archbishop Mar Gregorios could develop the Reunion Movement, started by Mar Ivanios of blessed memory, into a grown Church in the Catholic communion. He was able to maintain and strengthen the communion with the Roman Apostolic See. He had the rare opportunity to establish personal relationship with Popes Pius XII, John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II and to work with them for the good of the Universal Church. He took part throughout the Second Vatican Council and acted as the voice of the Malankara Catholic Church in the Council. He visited many of the countries in the world and he could make known the Malankara

Catholic Church abroad. He also took part in all the post-Conciliar Synods in Rome. He was well known in the All India level, both in the political sphere and in the religious sphere. The political leaders considered him as the representative of all the Christian Churches in India. They all sought his opinions and co-operation in several of the national problems. He did also excellent service as the President of the CBCI. He was several times President of the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council. He cherished the visible communion of all the Christian Churches in Kerala and their common witnessing. He gave a new and wider meaning to the Reunion Movement in accordance with the new attitude of the Second Vatican Council. He tried his level best to bring about the unity of all the Churches in Kerala in line with the new thinking.... He gave leadership to make the Christian presence in Trivandrum active and lively. He loved this country, he served the country and he contributed substantially for the well being of this country. He had special love and concern for the poor. He was taken from us at a time when he filled all the spheres of life in this country. Let us continue with more vigor the Christian witnessing initiated by our saintly Fathers.”

Mar Gregorios' Retrospection

Mar Gregorios was sorry about a few things at the end. Because of the various reasons he could not fulfill some of his dreams:

1) He wanted to uphold the Autonomy of the Malankara Catholic Church in the Roman Catholic communion in accordance with the Second Vatican Council. He believed in the Individuality and Autonomy of the Apostolic Malankara Church in the visible Catholic communion. He had great devotion to the Roman Apostolic See. But he could not perfect the autonomy of the Church, which was very dear to Mar Ivanios.

2) He could not concentrate much on the higher education of the clergy, as he desired. He was immersed in the extension of the missions. During his leadership, there was rapid growth of the missions and he needed personnel for that. In such a situation, he could not spare many of his priests for higher studies, as he desired.

3) He did not get sufficient time for his own priests because of his overburdened commitments. Human beings have their limitations. One cannot do everything. One has to choose from among the obligations, a few very necessary things.

4) He longed for the full visible communion of all the Thomas Christians. Alas, the contrary happened. A few non-Catholics could not understand the new ecumenical vision of the Catholic Church. They continued their anti-ecumenical and anti-Catholic attitudes and used international forums to misrepresent the ecumenical outlook of *Abun Mar Gregorios* and to tarnish him. In all the ecumenical platforms, he emphasized that the communion with the Catholic Church is not merging, it is not subjugation and it is not losing ones' own identity and autonomy. There should be new negotiations with the Catholic Church in accordance with the new spirit of Vatican Second for the visible communion of all the Episcopal Churches in Kerala. On the contrary, the Jacobite and Orthodox Churches since 1970 entered into new civil litigations, street demonstrations and became practically two Churches. It pained Mar Gregorios very much. This was known to his very close collaborators. He loved the Jacobite and Orthodox brethren. He wanted the perfect unity among themselves and their unity with the world wide Catholic Church. He repeated always that there could be no communion of the Churches in the world, keeping away the bishop of Rome. “We live in the post Vatican period, and we should have the courage to face the new situations. During the pre-Vatican period the Orthodox leaders gave the leadership for a communion in accordance with the spirit of those days. They could do only that much. Now the present leadership should try for the unity in a new way.” But his dream was not realized.

5) He was also sorry because he could not do enough for the Malankara Catholics outside Kerala: those in the other parts of India and outside India. He had special concern for the Malankara Catholics in the Gulf countries, in Europe and in America. He made several visits to them and tried to organize them. But he could not make it perfect. He had to leave the work to his successor to complete. Cardinal Silvestrini, Prefect of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches referred to this fact in his condolence message: “*Among his achievements, a special mention must be made of his missionary vision and his concern to provide for the adequate and appropriate pastoral care for the Syro-Malankara faithful wherever they are to be found*”.¹³³

¹³³ Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios-Smaranika, Trivandrum, 1994, p.238.

6) He saw that the Community could not grow sufficiently as one Church, but for a long time as two dioceses and since 1978 as three dioceses. Each diocese grew up and developed as separate entities. He hoped that it would soon be remedied with the new leadership. There were various reasons for such a growth during the past forty years.

7) He had an earnest desire to start a super-speciality hospital. This is realized in the establishment of the Medical College at Pushpagiri in 2003.

Statistics

But there was tremendous growth for the Church. The number of the faithful increased from less than one lakh in 1953 to three lakhs (0.3 million) in 1994. The number of priests increased from 137 in 1953 to 436 in 1994. In the same way, there was tremendous increase and growth in all the spheres of ecclesiastical life: the Seminarians in 1994 were 310 (175 Major Seminarians and 135 Minor seminarians), Sisters-1323 and mission stations and parishes from 310 to 900. There was great increase in the establishment of Schools and Colleges, Technical Institutes and Pastoral Centers. Mar Ivanios College has grown into a great educational Institution. All these were realized because of the close collaboration of the bishops, priests and laity of the Malankara Church.

Personal Reminiscence

The present author's first encounter with *Abun* Mar Gregorios was in 1953 when he came to Athirumkal to bless the newly erected shrine, dedicated to St. George, the Patron of the Church. I was then eight years old. There was first communion for the children. I too was one among them. When we were standing and waiting for the bishop in the thatched shed of the parish priest Fr. Cyriac Manavalan, the bishop appeared before us and spoke a few words very kindly, gently and lovingly to each one of us. He was quite young with a very long, black beard and shining face. He was smiling to each one of us. We all liked him at the first sight. Years passed. After the SSLC, the same parish priest brought me to the Archbishop, who admitted me to the Minor Seminary. After two years (one year Minor Seminary and one year Pre-University at the Mar Ivanios College), he sent me to the Vadavathoor Seminary. He ordained me on 20th December 1969 at the Cathedral at Pattom, together

with Mathew Kayyalackal. We were the only two new priests. From my batch I was the first one to receive the priestly ordination. When I finished my Seminary course in March 1970, he came to Vadavathoor Seminary and took me with him to Trivandrum and appointed me first his Secretary and then the Minor Seminary Vice-Rector together with Fr. Joseph Gnayalloor. In 1973 he sent me to Rome for higher studies. I was the first one, sent to Rome in the seventies. When I returned on the 31st March 1979, I became once again his Secretary. Then I joined the Vadavathoor Seminary staff and continued there till 1993, in which year I was transferred to the Malankara Major Seminary; and in December of that year he appointed me as the Rector of the St. Aloysius Minor Seminary at Pattom and member of the Archdiocesan Council. During my absence from Trivandrum, I had very limited chance to get acquaintance with him. In 1993 and 1994, I had rather closer collaboration with him. During his sickness he asked about me, called me and I could visit him every now and then, although those around him controlled and at times prevented the flow of visitors. It might have been their duty to do that! I published most of my books during his episcopate. He used to read and make corrections and write personally the introductions. All those who had an encounter with Mar Gregorios could never forget his magnetic personality. May his soul rest in peace and may he intercede for us all, in the presence of the heavenly Father! He loved us here and he loves us definitely there.

22

The Late Bishops

In addition to Archbishop Mar Ivanios and Archbishop Mar Gregorios, a few other bishops of the Malankara Catholic Church also were taken to the glory of the Lord at the end of their earthly life. In this chapter we propose to present these Fathers of the community. They all stood for the unity of all the believers in Christ and the unity of humankind and worked hard to strengthen the unity with the Roman Apostolic See. Together with the Archbishops, they gave effective leadership to the Reunion Movement and the fast growing Malankara Catholic Church. Let the Lord reward them in His mansions, and let their remembrance be a source of blessing for all of us.

1) **Jacob Mar Theophilos (1891-1956)**

Mar Theophilos was one of the first five members, who entered on 20th September 1930 at Kollam into canonical communion with the Catholic Church. He was born in the Kalapurackal Family at Olassa, Kottayam. His family belonged to the *Metran Kakshy* (Orthodox faction). After the school education, he became a teacher at the M.D.High School at Kottayam, where Mar Ivanios was once the Principal. Vattasseril Mar Dionysius ordained him a deacon. Fr.P.T. Geevarghese took him to Serampore and he continued his studies there. When Mar Ivanios started in 1919 the Bethany Monastic Movement at Perunad, he became his strong supporter. He became a member of that religious Order and was a devout disciple of Mar Ivanios. In 1924 he became a priest in the *Metran Kakshy*. In 1929, the Third Catholicos Baselios Geevarghese, ordained him as the bishop of Bethany.

After his communion with the Catholic Church, he was appointed bishop of Tiruvalla in 1932. In the beginning he stayed in a rented house of a Hindu friend near Tiruvalla. Later he built a double storied house at the sight of the present Pushpagiri Medical College, with the name *Cherupushpagiri* and stayed there. He went to Rome in 1933 and visited Pope Pius XI. The blessing of the new bishop's house was in 1934. He started the St. Joseph's press, a few schools and a few parishes. He founded a society with the name *Witness Society (Saakshya Sangham)*, with the purpose of spreading the true faith. But he could not continue in the office as bishop of Tiruvalla for long because of health reasons. From 1938 to 1956 he led a retired life at Tiruvalla. Msgr Zacharias Vachaparambil and Mar Severios continued the leadership of the diocese. He migrated to the Lord on 27th June 1956 in his 65th year and his mortal remains are laid to rest at the St. John's Cathedral, Tiruvalla.

Mar Theophilos was a saintly bishop, filled with the love of the crucified Lord. He was a loving bishop. During his short tenure of office, he tried to establish a strong spiritual foundation for the diocese. He firmly believed that in the ecclesiastical activities, trust in God must be the fundamental and principal factor. He had great confidence in God and in His Divine Providence. Even during his sickness, he was very kind, gentle, and merciful in his dealing with others. He imparted the spirit of the Reunion Movement through his suffering and prayer life. He led a devout and orderly life. Through his sickness, he became a living martyr. But he was very particular in continuing his life of devout prayer and intense spiritual life. He maintained the same ecclesial vision of Mar Ivanios and stood for the unity and oneness of the Malankara Church. He had great respect for Mar Ivanios. The Malankara Catholic Church will ever remember with devotion and gratitude this saintly bishop who showed great heroic courage to follow Mar Ivanios, when every other bishop in the *Metran Kakshy* kept back.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ *Tiruvalla Rupatha Sapthathi-Sapthathi Jubilee Smaranika-04*, Tiruvalla, 2004, p.9. 13-14.

2) Joseph Mar Severios (1894-1955)

Mar Severios was the second bishop of Tiruvalla. He was born and brought up in the Jacobite Church and was a bishop of the *Metran Kakshy*. He was born in the Valakkuzhy family at Anickad near Mallappally. His baptismal name was Joseph (Aip). He had his early education at Mallappally. As a boy he was God fearing, humble, generous, hard working and earnest in his studies. At the age of 15 in 1909 Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius conferred on him at Kottayam Cheriyaipalli the first clerical order, *Koruyo*. He continued his studies at the M.D.Seminary under Fr.P.T.Geevarghese and passed Matriculation in 1912. When Fr.P.T.Geevarghese went to Serampore, Joseph also accompanied him and took B.A.Degree from there in 1916. He was appointed a teacher at Brahmawar School and later the Head Master of the elementary school there and together with that he did some missionary activity too. In 1923 he was appointed a teacher at the M.G.M. High School and Boarding at Tiruvalla. In 1929 Vattasseril Mar Dionysius ordained him a priest. On 25th May 1933 he was ordained bishop under the name Severios at Tiruvalla, by the Third Catholicos, Geevarghese Mar Baselios. He was then appointed the bishop of Niranam.

Ever since his ordination to the episcopate in the *Metran Kakshy*, he was trying to hinder the visible communion of the Jacobites with the Catholic Church and to retard the growth of the Malankara Catholic Church. He was very earnest like Saul. But God, who converted Saul into Paul, got hold of Joseph Mar Severios and brought him to the Malankara Catholic Church. He became a strong pillar of the Reunion Movement and prophet of Church unity. He was unhappy with the continuous factionalism and civil litigations in the Jacobite Church. He noticed that the Reunion movement was fast growing. He began to think about God's plan for His Church in the world. He sought the true nature of Christ's Church and its mission in the world. He was touched by the Grace of God. Mar Severios' life teaches us that God will not abandon those who earnestly seek and respect truth. Having read the books on both the Jacobite and the Catholic Churches, he came to the conclusion that the Church of Jesus Christ subsisted in the Catholic Church and that the canonical communion with the Catholic Church was needed for the full ecclesiality of any Church. He knew from his studies that the other Churches had separated themselves from this one

Church of Christ and that all should enter into communion with this Church. If one is convinced of the fact and still desists from establishing communion with that Church, it is a grave sin. No one could hinder him from entering into the visible communion with the Catholic Church. It was a question of his personal conviction and conscience. In 1937 he resigned his office as the Jacobite bishop of Niranam and became Catholic. In 1938 Pope Pius XI appointed him the Apostolic Administrator of the Catholic diocese of Tiruvalla, with all the ecclesiastical rights and privileges of a Catholic diocesan bishop. The reason why he was not immediately appointed as the bishop of Tiruvalla was that although sick, Mar Theophilos was still alive in Tiruvalla. Mar Severios continued in that office as Administrator till 1950, when he was appointed the bishop of Tiruvalla. The same year Mar Severios made his first foreign tour. When Mar Ivanios died in 1953, Mar Severios declined to be the Archbishop of Trivandrum and the head of the Malankara Catholic Church. Then he was given the title *Archbishop ad honoris causa*. Together with Mar Ivanios and Bishop Mar Thomas Tharayil, Mar Severios was one of the celebrants in the ordination of Mar Gregorios in 1953. In 1954 Zacharias Mar Athanasios was ordained as the auxiliary bishop of Tiruvalla. In 1955 Mar Severios died and was buried in the St.John's Cathedral, Tiruvalla. He worked hard for the Reunion Movement and he succeeded in establishing several parishes in and around Tiruvalla. Many of his close collaborators and advisers were the venerable priests from the Syro-Malabar Church. Fr. E. R. Hambye sj (Belgium) was one of his best friends. Fr.Placid cmi (Chethipuzha) also was a close collaborator of Mar Severios.¹³⁵

3) Thomas Mar Dioscoros (1884-1943)

Mar Dioscoros was a Jacobite bishop of the *Knanaya* community. He belonged to the *Bawa Kakshy*. He entered into visible communion with the Catholic Church in 1939 and became a bishop of the Malankara Catholic Church. He was born as the Son of Thomman Kuruvilla (Thervalady family) of Chingavanom and Naythiyamma (Ottathyckal family) of Pallam. He had his education at the CMS School at Pallam and the CMS College at Kottayam. Later he entered into clerical life.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* 9.14-16.

Edavazhickal Mar Severios, the Knanaya bishop of the *Bawa Kakshy* ordained him in 1912 at he age of 28 as a priest. In 1926 he was ordained bishop at Jerusalem by Mar Elias III, the Syrian Jacobite Patriarch with the name Mar Dioscoros for the Knanaya Jacobite community. He was the bishop of that community from 1926 to 1939, till his communion with the Catholic Church.

In the Knanaya community, there are Catholics and Jacobites. With the Coonan Cross Oath, this community also got divided. It was the Syrian Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch, Mar Abdalla who ordained a bishop exclusively for the *Puthenkur Knanites* with Chingavanom as their centre in 1911. In the same year Rome established a diocese of the *Pazhayakur Knanites* at Kottayam. Already since 1890 the *Puthenkur Knanaya* community entered into ecumenical negotiations with the Catholic Church. The *Pazhayakur* bishops, Mar Mathew Mackil and Mar Alexander Choolaparambil were enthusiastic about the reunion of the two communities. They got also the permission from Rome in 1921 to maintain their Antiochene liturgical traditions, in case the *Puthenkur Knanites* entered into visible communion. Somehow the full communion did not become a reality. But several of the *Puthenkur* faithful and priests entered into the Catholic Church and they were received into the Kottayam Catholic diocese. Even today they continue the Antiochene liturgical traditions. It was in this background that Mar Dioscoros entered into Catholic communion.

After his communion he was staying in the Catholic Bishop's House, Tiruvalla without any specific Episcopal obligation. He was a very humble and God fearing bishop. Towards the end, he moved to Tirumulapuram and died in 1943. He was buried at the parish church there. By his prayer life, he could attract several *Knanites* to the Catholic communion.

4) Zacharias Mar Athanasios (1908-1977)

Mar Athanasios also was born and brought up in the *Metran Kakshy* of the Jacobite Church. He was born in the Polachirackal family, Tirumulapuram, near Tiruvalla, as the eldest son of Cherian and Saramma. His baptismal name was Zacharias. He had his studies at the M.G. M. High School, Tiruvalla, and M.D. Seminary High School, Kottayam. Then he entered into the banking profession for 12 years at Kottayam. He

also thought about the quarrels and civil litigations in the *Puthenkur* community. He read about the Catholic Church and after six years of study and prayer, in 1938 entered into Catholic communion. He decided to dedicate himself fully to the service of God in the Malankara Catholic Church. He joined the Minor Seminary at Pattom and studied Philosophy at Aluva and Theology at Kandy Seminary. In 1946 he became a priest at the age of 38 and served in several parishes in the Tiruvalla diocese. In 1954 he was ordained the auxiliary of Mar Severios at Tiruvalla under the name Mar Athanasios. After the death of Mar Severios on 18th January 1955, he became first Administrator on 20th January and then bishop of the Diocese on 27th January 1955.

He gave efficient leadership to the diocese for about 23 years. He had great confidence in the Divine Providence. He worked as a good shepherd for the Reunion Movement. He laid a strong financial foundation for the diocese of Tiruvalla. He was an able administrator. He dedicated himself fully to the growth and development of the diocese. He was keen on preserving the purity of the Antiochene liturgical traditions. It was during his leadership that the diocese was extended to Malabar region, beyond the *Ponnani River* and to Karnataka and Tamil Nadu regions. It was a new challenge. But he extended his missionary activity very rapidly to these regions also. He took part in the Second Vatican Council and he could get into contact with a lot of Catholic bishops. He developed the Pushpagiri Hospital, built the St. John's Cathedral, according to Mr. Baker's architectural plan. It was he who bought the big and small estates for the diocese, which in turn enabled to lend a stable financial background for the diocese. When the present writer was in Rome for his higher ecclesiastical studies, Mar Athanasios came to Rome. The writer had the rare privilege to accompany him to several places in Rome. Immediately after his return from the European trip, he died on 28th September 1977.

He had his basic Seminary training under the Europeans in Latin Seminaries. He too realized the inadequacy of the formation in such Seminaries. But the Malankara Seminary still remained as a dream. He earnestly desired for its establishment. He regretted that the two dioceses of the Malankara Church operated as two entities in the Catholic communion, and not as one Church. But he could not do much for changing the situation. All the same, he saw the Reunion Movement as one entity

and he stood with Mar Gregorios. He too realized the unique role of the Malankara Catholic Church and that it is unlike two Latin dioceses. Malankara Church is a *Church in communion* with the Roman Catholic Church and is not a part of that Church. He was conscious of its unique identity. In Rome he could see the roots of the One *Rite Movement* among a few religious, centered in Rome. The present writer is a witness to it. He was also sorry that he could not establish a few more educational institutions. He regretted also that he could not send more priests for higher studies. Because of unknown reasons, he could not also effectively and sufficiently do the liturgical renewal in line with the Second Vatican Council, as he desired. For a long time the Malankara Church remained with only just two bishops and two dioceses, without further hierarchical growth. He wanted to divide the vast diocese into three dioceses. He took the necessary measures for the first division and it was executed after his death and thus the Bathery diocese came into existence in 1978. And the next division, which was also in his mind, took place only in 2003 by the erection of the diocese of Muvattupuzha. Thus he could rejoice that his dreams are now realized.¹³⁶

5) Isaac Mar Yuhanon (1930-1987)

Mar Yuhanon was the fourth Bishop of Tiruvalla. He was born on 1st July 1930 in the *Bawa Kakshy* of the Jacobite Church in the Koottaplackal family as the son of Varkey and Mariamma, at Velianad in the Ernakulam District. His baptismal name was Isaac. He had his studies at Piravam and by the time he finished his school years in 1947, the family became Catholic. Mar Severios was present at Piravam at the time when Isaac's examination result was published. Next day the bishop took him in his car and immediately he started his Seminary studies. After one year Minor Seminary course at Tiruvalla, he was sent to Rome in 1948 for his Seminary formation and ecclesiastical studies. Isaac studied at the Propaganda College and was ordained on 7th December 1954 by Bishop Sigismondi. He continued his studies at the Oriental Institute in Rome till 1957 and took a Licentiate in Theology. In 1957 he returned to India.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*10.16-17.

After his return he served in the various parishes of the diocese of Tiruvalla. He worked hard to establish the parishes in the Malabar region. In 1978 he was called to be the next bishop of Tiruvalla. He was ordained bishop on 28th December 1978 together with Cyril Mar Baselios at Tirumulapuram. Rome bifurcated the diocese of Tiruvalla, formed the diocese of Bathery and Mar Baselios became its first bishop. Fr. Isaac took the name Mar Yuhanon. There is no exaggeration in calling him a *popular bishop*. He had long pastoral experience in Malabar. He knew the problems of the parish priests very well; he knew the utter misery and poverty of the poor migrants in the Malabar region. Everybody could approach him at any time without any inhibition. The diocesan priests saw him as their best friend. He found time to meet the parish priests and talk to them and listen to them and discuss their problems with brotherly care and solicitude. He gave priority to the priests and faithful of his diocese. He was a very sincere and honest bishop. He was quite outspoken and was not a diplomat. One could take his words as they were. He was true to his words. He walked around with the youthful vigor of a young man. He wanted to give a new direction to the diocese. He used to say: "Our priests and lay people must be educated and through education they will be better equipped for the service in the Church and the country at large. There must be arrangements for that."

He realized that it was lacking in the diocese. He had a wide vision for the diocese. He started the St. John's Parallel College and new Vocational and Industrial Training Centers. It was under him that Fr. Jacob Thekkeparambil started the *St. Ephraem Ecumenical Research Institute (Seeri)* at Baker Hills, Kottayam. Today it has grown into a big Ecumenical Research Institute and the Syriac section of the Gandhi University functions at Seeri. Every one was sorry, that he passed away so soon. But it was the divine plan for the diocese and for the Malankara Catholic Church. He was taken away from among us in the midst of his Episcopal ministry. He died in 1987 and entered into the glory of the Lord.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*10.18.

6) Paulose Mar Philoxenus (1928-1998)

Mar Philoxenus was the bishop of the Thozhiyur Church. He entered into visible communion with the Catholic Church in 1977. It was the result of his long study and prayer that he entered into Catholic communion. After his reunion he worked around Thozhiyur. He established two parishes at Anjoor and Kallumpuram. He was trying to spread the reunion ideals among his former flock. He took part in all the common functions of the Malankara Catholic Church. He was a very humble and unassuming bishop. He was a man of prayer and deep spiritual life. He considered the Catholic communion greater than being the head of the small community at Thozhiyur. He believed that this communion brought him to the main body of Christ and communion with all the Catholics throughout the world. He was even prepared to remain as a layman in the Catholic communion. He did not want any Episcopal function in the Catholic Church. In 1977 when Zacharias Mar Athanasios died, he was the main celebrant for the funeral celebrations. Archbishop Mar Gregorios was in Rome at that time. In 1978 he was one of the concelebrants in the Episcopal ordination of Cyril Mar Baselios and Isaac Mar Yuhanon at Tiruvalla. In 1980 he participated as the link of the reunited bishops, at the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Reunion Movement at Kottayam. In 1987 he took part as a concelebrant at the funeral celebration of Isaac Mar Yuhanon. He was also one of the concelebrants in the ordination of Geevarghese Mar Timotheos. In 1994 when Mar Gregorios died, he was one of the concelebrants for the funeral celebrations. He participated at the funeral of Lawrence Mar Ephraem in April 1997.

He was born in 1928 in the Ayyankulangara family. His baptismal name was Paul. He had his early education at Thozhiyur and Kunnamkulam. In 1952 he became a deacon and in 1961 a priest. In 1967 Yuhanon Mar Thoma Metropolitan and two other Marthoma bishops ordained him bishop for the Thozhiyur Church with the name Mar Philoxenus III. When he was convinced of the necessity of visible communion with the Catholic Church, he left everything he had, even his precious books and manuscripts at Thozhiyur and in 1977 embraced the Catholic Church. Before he became a Catholic bishop, he sent a *Pastoral Letter* to all his faithful, explaining to them the need for communion with the Catholic Church and exhorted them to follow him

but that is not yet fully realized. Later he built a bishop's house at Anjoor and established a small library. He also started a school. Pope John Paul II received him into the Catholic Church as a bishop and according to the tradition of the Catholic Church he became the titular bishop of Chayal. He was appointed the Episcopal Vicar of the Archdiocese of Trivandrum. In 1979 he went to Rome and visited the Pope. He stayed there for about six months, visiting the various holy places in Europe. He led his life in reading and prayer. Towards the end, he was sickly and led a retired life. He entered into the glory of the Lord on 3rd November 1998, and was buried at the St. John's Cathedral, Tiruvalla.

7) Lawrence Mar Ephraem (1928-1997)

Bishop Lawrence Mar Ephraem was first the auxiliary of Trivandrum and then the first bishop of Marthandom. He was ordained as a bishop at Kottayam in 1980, during the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Reunion Movement.

He was born on 15th May 1928 as the son of Justus and Victoria, at Vellalump, Nellickakuzhy in the Neyyattinkara Taluk. His parents joined the Malankara Catholic Church during the early period of the Reunion Movement. Till the age of ten, he studied at the English School at Kanjiramkulam. Later, the then Rector of the Seminary, Fr. Mathew Pothanamuzhy (bishop of Kothamangalam) took the boy to Trivandrum. At that time there was the *Apostolic School system*, where boys at an early age were brought to Trivandrum and given the opportunity to get better school education at the St. Mary's School at Pattom. Some continued the Seminary life while others returned home after the 10th standard. Lawrence was one among those who continued in the Seminary. In 1944 Lawrence started the Minor Seminary course and after two years, he was sent to Mangalore Major Seminary. He was known as Lawrence Thottam. Archbishop Mar Gregorios ordained him, together with Zacharias Kilileth on 14th May 1953. They were the first ones to receive priestly ordination from Mar Gregorios. He was first Secretary to the bishop and teacher in the Seminary and from 1954 to 1962 Rector of the Minor Seminary, at Pattom. During this period, he was immersed in the mission work in and around Trivandrum. He, together with Fr. Mathai Malancharuvil, started more than 30 mission centers. The present author had the good fortune to be a student under

Fr. Lawrence in the Minor Seminary, where at that time Fr. Samuel Mannil was the Vice Rector. In order to visit the mission centers, he used to tape record the classes and go to the missions very early morning and return late. By the time he returned, we would be in beds. Some of these centers have now grown to parishes. Some did not develop, but eventually died out. Some continue nominally. There are several reasons for this varied growth of the mission centers. All the same he had a great charisma to start new mission centers and attract people to Christ and the Good News of Salvation¹³⁸. Archbishop Mar Gregorios gave him full support for his missionary apostolate. It was not a daily program. He also found time to take care of the Seminarians. He had special care for the weaker students. We lived at that time in the Minor Seminary with very limited facilities.¹³⁹ He was with us as our Rector just for a year and then he was sent to Rome for higher studies for two years in Missiology and Sociology and then Fr. Samuel Mannil succeeded him as the Rector.

When he returned from Rome after his short course of studies, he became the Director of the St. John's Hospital at Pirappancode and took care of the leprosy patients. He was Vice-president of the *All India Catholic Hospitals' Association* for three years and President for six years. He was the Vice President of the *Volunteer Health Association of India* for two year and President for one year. He was the mastermind behind the project known as *Health for Million (HOM)*. He started the *Mini Health Centres* in several places. He spent most of his time for the poor and the oppressed. He started also a few mission centers centered on Kanyakumari and started also centers for the education of the elderly people. He started a High School at Kirathur and five Upper and Lower Primary Schools in the neighborhood. He was the Parish Priest at Kirathur and was the Director of the Hospital there.

It was when he was the parish priest at Kirathur, that Pope John Paul II appointed him in December 1980 the auxiliary bishop of

¹³⁸ Fr. Mathai Malancharuvil, Fr. Lawrence Thottam and Fr. Philip Ozhunalloor were chiefly responsible for starting several of the mission centers in the Trivandrum District.

¹³⁹ There were not sufficient dormitories, the food was not as it is today, and in many other things there was depravity. But he cared for us, as best as he could and we did not at all feel the difficulties at that time.

Trivandrum. During the Golden Jubilee Celebrations at Kottayam, on 27th December 1980 Saturday, he was ordained by Archbishop Mar Gregorios and the other bishops of the Malankara Catholic Church, in the presence of His Eminence Cardinal Rubin, the Papal representative for the celebration, blessed Mother Theresa of Calcutta and other dignitaries. He took the name Lawrence Mar Ephraem. Even as the auxiliary bishop, he concentrated on *HOM*. He spent his time to visit the parish priests during their gatherings and gave them pastoral advice. In the meantime, he got sick and underwent a heart surgery at Madras.

When Cyril Mar Baselios became the Archbishop of Trivandrum, on 16th December 1996, he bifurcated the Archdiocese and formed the diocese of Marthandom for the Tamil speaking Malankara Catholics in the Kanyakumari district. The division was on language basis. Lawrence Mar Ephraem was appointed as its first bishop. On 23rd January 1997, he was installed as the bishop of Marthandom. He ran about doing good, consoling the poor and helping the needy. He did not take care of his heart condition. As a result, he got sick and died on 8th April 1997. He was buried in the Marthandom Cathedral. Practically he could not do much within the short period for the new diocese. But his name will ever be remembered as the one who loved the poor, the needy, the sick, the underdeveloped, the marginalized, the uncared, the hungry and the oppressed. His name will be remembered in the missions in and around Trivandrum. He did all these missionary apostolate, because he loved the Lord and his poor people. He had a very compassionate heart. He was a pioneer in the missions and an apostle of the first quality.

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Abun Geevarghese Mar Timotheos (1928-)

Abun Geevarghese Mar Timotheos was the fifth bishop of the Diocese of Tiruvalla. His Episcopal ordination was on 6th August 1988 at the St. John's Cathedral, Tiruvalla. He took the name Timotheos. Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios together with Paulose Mar Philoxenus, Cyril Mar Baselios, and Lawrence Mar Ephraem ordained him as bishop. He guided the diocese in an excellent way and retired at the age of 75 in 2003. He had the good fortune to celebrate also the Golden Jubilee of his priestly ordination. In 1997 he appointed an Auxiliary in the person of Mar Thomas Kurillos. In 1998 Mar Timotheos celebrated his 70th birthday (*Sapthathi*). One of his great achievements was the erection of the Muvattupuzha diocese, by bifurcating the diocese of Tiruvalla and the appointment of Mar Kurillos as its first bishop in 2003. He could raise the Pushpagiri Hospital to the status of a Medical College. Great are his achievements in the short span of leadership.

He was born in the Chundevalel family as the son of Rev.Fr. Jacob and Annamma in Amayannur near Kottayam on 2nd February 1928. Fr. Jacob was serving in the parishes of the *Bawa Kakshy*. He was baptized in the Jacobite Church and the baptismal name was Varkey. He had his early school formation at Amayannoor, Manarcad and Kidangur. In 1940 Fr. Jacob and his family embraced the Catholic Church. When he finished the tenth standard in 1943, Mar Severios invited him to enter the Seminary and he listened to that voice. After two years of Minor Seminary, he was sent to Kandy for further training. On 24th August 1953, he was ordained a priest. He was known as

Fr. George Chundevalel. After his return to India, he served the parishes at Kothamangalam, Nellimattam and Amayannur. In 1956 he became the diocesan Procurator for two years and since 1958 till 1963 he was the Minor Seminary Rector. In 1963 he was sent to Rome for higher studies and his field of specialization was spirituality. When he returned in 1967 he was appointed once again the Rector of the Minor Seminary. He was in that office till 1980, when he was appointed the Cathedral Vicar. In 1984 he was appointed the Vicar General of the Diocese by Bishop Isaac Mar Yuhanon. At the sudden demise of Mar Yuhanon, he was elected the Administrator in 1987. As Administrator he gave leadership to the reception accorded to Cardinal Lourdasamy, and the Reunion Anniversary Celebration held at Niranam in 1987. On 6th August 1988, he was ordained bishop at the St. John's Cathedral, Tiruvalla. He took the name Geevarghese Mar Timotheos. He was the Secretary of the *Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council* (1993-1996). In 1994 he became the Vice President of the *Catholic Bishops' Conference of India* for four years. He was also once the Chairman of *Caritas India*. He was the Chairman of the Malankara liturgical Commission. On 9th May 1989, he visited Pope John Paul II. He had the opportunity to visit many foreign countries several times.

As Mar Timotheos was for a long time Rector of the Minor Seminary, he has a large group of disciples in the Tiruvalla, Bathery and Muvattupuzha dioceses. He had always a kind heart to the poor and the needy. As the Cathedral Vicar, he used to visit the families, taking care of their spiritual and material needs. Since he knew each and every priest in the diocese personally, and they knew him from their boyhood, the mutual contact was easy and personal. He was a loving father to all of them. He took special interest in starting new parishes and centers and erecting churches and presbyteries for them. At the same time, he was acting in accordance with the directives of the Second Vatican Council and the post-Conciliar documents on Ecumenism. He had very friendly relationship with the leaders of other Christian Churches, especially with the bishops in and around Tiruvalla. He continued the policy of his predecessor regarding the education of the clergy. He started new educational institutions such as the Mar Severios Memorial Training College at Chengarur (1995). In Elanad he bought a High School and renamed it as St. John's High School. He developed four English Medium

Schools: Matha Senior Secondary School, Alapuzha, St. Joseph's Central School, Mundakkayam, St. Mary's Central School, Ranni and Vimalagiri School, Kothamangalam. He had encouraged the starting of new English Medium Schools or developing the already existing ones at Chungappara, Kumarakam, Tirumulpuram, Anchalpetty, Kompazha and Valanjavattom. He started also schools at the backward High Range areas such as Kothapara, Marigiri, Udumpunchola and Mulakamedu. He made arrangements for hostel facilities for poor students and thus encouraged their education. He invited the Don Bosco (Salesian) religious to the diocese to undertake educational activities. He developed the *Industrial Training Centres* at Piravam and Mallappally and started one at Elanad in the Trichur District. In 1992 he opened *Mar Theophilos Birth Centenary Memorial Block* at the Pastoral Center at Tiruvalla, new Pastoral Centers at Kattappana and Peechi. In 1997 when he celebrated his 70th birthday a new ITC was started at the Cathedral compound as a Memorial of the *Sapthathi*.

The *Abhaya Bhavan* in Tiruvalla received always support and encouragement from the *Abun*. He had a great concern for the *Dalit* community. Justice is denied to these poor Christians by the Governments only on the basis of their faith in Jesus Christ. He tried his level best to lift them up through education and hostel facilities, Marriage Bureaus and Social Works. He had always been aware that what was done for them was not at all sufficient in proportion to their sub human existence. He started also a house for the poor elderly people. In all the nine ecclesiastical districts of the vast diocese, he succeeded in starting new projects or developing the already existing ones. He did not abandon any area and he did not concentrate all the developments at Tiruvalla alone. When he developed the Pastoral Centre at Tiruvalla, he established two others at Kattappana and Peechi. In certain dioceses one often finds how all the developments were concentrated in one area and the other areas were totally ignored and abandoned. Once he led a rally in front of the Parliament house in the name of the *Dalit* Christians. He also did his share for the development of Tiruvalla Municipality. He gave two and a half acres of land freely for the Public Stadium in the heart of the city.

He is a man of deep prayer and unassuming behavior. He is always humble, very polite and courteous. Just as he is physically tall, he is spiritually tall too. He stood for principles and values. He had always a

spiritual message to convey. He spoke in a language easily intelligible to the ordinary people. He spoke only what he believed and what he tried to put into practice. He lived in accordance with his words. Without any exaggeration, one can say that he is a spiritual leader. In one word, one may say, *a great man of God and a man of prayer*. It is not a totally unknown fact that on more than one occasion Fr. George Chundevalel declined the heavy cross of the episcopate. He took the episcopate seriously. In an atmosphere where one finds people running after episcopacy, *Abun* Mar Timotheos stands as an exception and model.

How could one do so much work in so short span of life! It was because of two reasons: 1) Our *Abun's* total trust in God. His motto reveals it. "At your word I will let down the nets"(Lk 5:5). 2) The wholehearted cooperation of all the clergy of the diocese and their continuous prayerful support to his projects and plans. One can say that the leadership period of *Abun* Mar Timotheos was the Golden period of the diocese of Tiruvalla.¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ *Tiruvalla Rupatha Sapthathi- Sapthathi Jubilee Smaranika 04*, p.11.66-107.

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Major Archbishop Moran Mor Cyril Baselios Catholicos (1935-2007)

When Archbishop Mar Gregorios was asked about his successor, always his answer was, “the Holy See will see to it”. He had great confidence in the leadership of Rome. And he was right in his trust in the Roman leadership. At the death of Archbishop Mar Gregorios in 1994, Mar Baselios became the Administrator of the Malankara Catholic Church and on 29th November 1995, Pope John Paul II appointed him the Archbishop of Trivandrum and the Metropolitan of the Malankara Catholic Church. On 14th December 1995, he was installed in office at the St. Mary’s Cathedral, Pattom. On 9th January 1996, he received the *Pallium* directly from the Pope as a sign of communion. In 2005 he was appointed the Major Archbishop of the Major Archdiocese of Trivandrum and Father and Head of the Malankara Catholic Church. According to the decision of the Synod, he was called Catholicos. The title Catholicos was later included in the Particular Laws of the Malankara Catholic Church, with the recognition of the Holy See.

Early Life

He was born on 16th August 1935 in the Malancharuvil family, at Ullannur in the Pathanamthitta District, as the son of Sreeman Mathai Sir and Sreemathi Eliamma. His baptismal name was James. His parents followed Mar Ivanios and became Catholics in 1932. So James was born in the Catholic family and in fact he is the first one among the Malankara Catholic bishops, who was born and brought up in the Malankara Catholic Church. All the previous bishops were born and

brought up in the Malankara Jacobite Church. He had his early education at Mezhuvely. Mar Ivanios appointed Sreeman Mathai Sir as his *Mukthyar* in the temporal management. As Mathai Sir was dedicated to the Church, his children also from the very early days showed a liking towards the Church and to the service in the Church. Priests like Fr. Samuel Mannil and Thomas Kaithanal testify how early in the morning these children used to run to reach the church for the holy worship. They were all really religious people. That is why God called James, George and Mathai, three sons to be his priests, and Helena, Eugenia, Berchmans and Felicia, four daughters to be sisters in the Bethany religious community. The two priests, Fr. George and Fr. Mathai went to their eternal rest, while James is called to guide the destinies of the Malankara Catholic Church, as its Metropolitan and Archbishop of Trivandrum and in 2005 Major Archbishop-Catholicos.

Religious formation and Ordination (1951-1960)

After the tenth standard in the school, James joined in 1951 the Bethany Religious Order and according to the custom, changed his name to Cyril. He had his Philosophy and Theology formation at Pune and on 4th October 1960, he was ordained a religious priest by Cardinal Agagianian there. In 1961 Fr. Cyril was sent to Rome, where he took a Doctorate in Canon Law from the Gregorian University. He did his research on the Syro-Malankara Church. He brought to light a lot of unknown documents, related to the history of the Malankara Apostolic Church. His thesis is a very substantial contribution in this field. He was in Rome at the time of the Second Vatican Council (1962-5). He had then the opportunity to meet several Catholic and non-Catholic ecclesiastics.

Professor at Vadavathoor (1965-70)

He returned in 1965 to Kerala and immediately began his teaching career at the Vadavathoor Seminary, as the Professor of Christology and Eucharist. Although his field of specialization was Canon Law, he had to teach dogmatic theology. The present author was one among his students. In fact I was his first student from the Malankara Church. His classes were excellent. He had an exceptionally great capacity to explain theology in an intelligible way. His were the best classes at that time. In

fact, it was he who created in me the interest for Christology. That is why I turned to Christology for my doctorate in Rome. He prepared the classes and introduced the topics clearly and read previously the books connected with the topic. There were some students in the class who would go through some of such books and ask questions, as if the professor had not seen them. On every occasion, Fr. Cyril could correctly tell the student the exact location from where he drew inspiration for the particular question. He followed the teaching method of Pune; it was clear and precise. Fr. Cyril was staying in the Seminary at Vadavathoor. Several students used to consult him on various matters. As the student leader of the community, I used to consult him often on several issues and followed his direction. It was at a difficult period of the Seminary and he was a sure guide and helping hand to me. He loved the students. When I studied Christology, I got new insights and they were all based on the sound foundation of Fr. Cyril. He created the love for the Eucharist through his classes. As mentioned earlier, he was the voice of the Malankara Catholic Church in the National Seminar in Bangalore in 1969 and argued for the *autonomy* of the Malankara Church and its individuality in Catholic communion. He clarified the Conciliar idea that the Catholic Church is the communion of Churches. Although it is an accepted idea of the Church and is normative today, at that time in the Indian context many, including the bishops, could not digest it, because they were still continuing the pre-Conciliar ecclesiology.

Further Studies

In 1970 Fr. Cyril went to New York for higher studies in Psychology and returned to Vadavathoor and this time he had to teach also at Aluva Seminary. He took part during this period in several National meetings, dealing with the Church in India. From 1973 he was a *member of the Commission for the Codification of the Oriental Canon Law* in Rome. He had to go to Rome regularly for this meeting. He had several of his former students at that time in Rome doing research work. The present author was also one among them. And we had often chances to speak on common problems and issues related to our Church. He did not deal with us as our former Professor but as a good and loving friend. He encouraged us in every way to complete our doctoral dissertation in the most excellent way. He had always a kind heart for his students. It was a pleasant thing for us, his students, to talk to our former Professor.

Superior of the Bethany Religious Order (1974-78)

In 1974 he was elected as the Superior General of the OIC. He gave a new orientation to Bethany. He began to send more and more priests for higher studies. It was under his leadership that Bethany gave more emphasis to the education ministry. He started the Girideepam School at Kottayam and the Mount Bethany School at Mylapra. He constructed the Generalate at Kottayam and the Novitiate Building at Aluva. He was President of the Catholic Religious of India (CRI). During this period, he became a known Retreat Preacher in Kerala. He preached Retreats in all the dioceses, Seminaries and many religious houses in Kerala.

Bishop of Bathery (1978-1995)

It was when he was the Bethany Superior General, that he was appointed bishop of the newly erected diocese of Bathery. He was ordained bishop on 28th December 1978 at Tiruvalla. At his Episcopal ordination he took the name Baselios. On 2nd February 1979 he was installed as the bishop of Bathery at the pro-Cathedral there. At that time there were in the diocese 8500 Malankara Catholics in 43 parishes and mission centers, assisted by 18 diocesan priests and 2 religious priests and 30 Bethany sisters. There were two Lower Primary Schools, two Upper Primary Schools, and one Nursery School. He went around the diocese organizing the scattered Malankara faithful, which were uncared and abandoned and established churches and appointed priests there. He built new presbyteries and cared for the total development of all the people, especially the *Aadivasis* in the area. He started the various ecclesiastical departments for the good and effective functioning of the diocese. He organized the Catechetical Department, Youth Movement, and Social Works Department. He organized all levels of the faithful, by starting *Pithrvedi* (for men) and *Mathrvedi* (for women). He made arrangements for making the parishes self-sufficient. He built *Sreyas* (Center for Social Welfare Activities), *Gurukulam* (Minor Seminary), *Dharmapedhom* (Bishop's House), *Pratheeksha* (Youth Center), *Srothas* (Catechetical Center), *Sannidhanam* (Priests' House) and St. Joseph's English High School Bathery. He bought the *Pazhasiraja*

College at Pulpally and built 60 Churches and 20 Presbyteries. He sent 15 students for higher studies, both secular and ecclesiastical. He used to assemble all the priests once in three months and discussed the ways and means for the effective running of the diocese.

When he left the diocese after the leadership of 17 years, there were 22507 Malankara Catholics in 108 parishes and mission centers, 61 diocesan priests and 11 religious priests 185 religious sisters and 92 Seminarians. The number of Schools increased to 58; he started two Technical Schools. He laid a very strong foundation for the Malankara Catholic Church in the diocese of Bathery. He had a special care and affection for the poor, the needy and the down trodden. He loved them sincerely and extended help in all possible ways.

Whenever Bishop Mar Baselios came to Kalathipady, the present author together with Fr. Kurian Valuparambil used to go to meet him and talk to him for long hours over the various issues related to our Church. I was teaching during that period at Vadavathoor (1979-1993) and Fr. Kurian was doing his doctorate there. One could discuss with him for any duration of time and he had no hurry to dismiss us. They were the pleasant occasions. Till my return to Trivandrum in 1993, our contact was frequent and in several ways very fruitful for me. I am sorry that since 1993, I could meet him very seldom.

Archbishop of Trivandrum (1995-2004)

Abun Mar Baselios was the third Archbishop of Trivandrum and the fourth bishop from the Bethany Religious Order. As a bishop, he maintained the same ecumenical and ecclesial vision of *Abun* Mar Ivanios. He saw the Malankara Church as one body. During the course of history, it is divided and is now under separate leaderships with varying allegiances. He ardently desired the unity of these communities. The Malankara Church was fortunate to have a very blessed and learned Archbishop. He was one of the leading theologians in India. During the theological discussions, he was more attentively listened to. His theology was *Incarnation theology*. Just as St. John, the Evangelist used to repeat often and again the theme of Love, Mar Baselios' favorite theme was the Incarnation of the Son of God. He could discuss effectively any theological theme with the modern vision. He was very clear in what he

exposed as a Professor. He went over and again to the same topic, so that the main content might go deep into the heart of the hearers.

An Ecumenist

He could very well distinguish between the content of Faith and formulations of Faith. That is why he believed in diversity of expressions and plurality in view points. Truth has several faces and there could be a point of truth in what others point out. So he listened to them attentively and once convinced, he accepted their views. He never imposed his ideas on any one. He had a very wider ecumenical vision to recognize and accept the other Christian Churches and communities. He was one of the ten Catholic participants of the delegation for ecumenical discussions with the Malankara Orthodox and the Malankara Jacobite Churches. The present writer also participated in the discussions, representing the Malankara Catholic Church since its beginning in 1989. The Archbishop had an extraordinary ability to understand the Orthodox, the Jacobite and the Marthomite and other Christian Churches. He was very calm and serene in his discussions.

Relation with other religions

He was very respectful towards the other religions in India. He believed that Hinduism has something to contribute to Christianity and Christianity has something to give to Hinduism. He believed in *dialogue* and was prepared for dialogue with any Hindu, whatever may be his viewpoints about Christianity. He considered dialogue as the best means for presenting the truth and understanding the other religions. Keeping aloof from the persons, having differing ideologies and avoiding them is often the cause of prejudices. If Christ is presented in the proper and adequate way and if we have direct contact with the Hindu leaders, their prejudices would definitely disappear. When he was in Bathery, he had very close contact with the Moslem leaders there. He firmly believed that the Christian message should be presented to the Indians in a language intelligible to them. At the same time, he never allowed to dilute it so as to diminish the *uniqueness of the Lord*. He took part in the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference (FABC), representing the Indian bishops. He always stood for the unity and at the same time the *identity of the Churches* in the Catholic communion. Often his opinions were sought by the highest authorities in the ecclesiastical circles.

First Visit to Rome as the Archbishop of Trivandrum (1996)

Immediately after his installation as the Archbishop of Trivandrum, Mar Baselios had to go to Rome for the *ad Limina Visit*. On 9th January 1996, he visited the Pope. Both Geevarghese Mar Timotheos and Lawrence Mar Ephraem were also present for the Visit. On the same day he was given the Pallium. Then he visited the heads of the various departments in Rome. On the 10th the Malankara bishops were invited by the Pope for a special dinner with him. On the 18th there was the common visit of both the Syro Malabar and Malankara Catholic bishops. At that time the Pope made special mention of *Abun* Mar Ivanios and *Abun* Mar Gregorios: “Present in our thoughts at this happy moment are the figures of two unforgettable Pastors, Mar Ivanios, who led you on the path of rediscovered full communion with the See of Peter, and Mar Gregorios, who so wisely directed the development of your Church. I am confident that you will follow their footsteps, guiding your Church *fortiter et suaviter*”.

Establishment of the Diocese of Marthandom (1996)

The first major achievement of Mar Baselios as Archbishop was the erection of the diocese of Marthandom bifurcating the Kanyakumari Civil district from the Archdiocese of Trivandrum. The new diocese comprised two ecclesiastical districts of the Archdiocese of Trivandrum: Kaliyakavila and Marthandom. On 16th December 1996, Pope John Paul II erected the diocese and appointed Lawrence Mar Ephraem as its first bishop. This became the fourth eparchy of the Malankara Catholic Church. It was a long cherished desire of the clergy and laity of the Archdiocese of Trivandrum. It was the appropriate time for its establishment. Mar Ephraem was installed on 23rd January 1997. Before he could do anything concrete for the diocese, Mar Ephraem, after prolonged illness, passed away on the 8th April 1997. After one year the next bishop was appointed. On 16th April 1998, Fr. John Kalloor was appointed its second bishop. He was ordained bishop, under the name Yoochanon Mar Chrysostom on 29th June 1998, at the Pavilion in the Stadium of Mar Ivanios College, Nalanchira together with Fr. Koshy Varghese, who took the name Joshua Mar Ignathios. Mar Ignathios was appointed as the auxiliary bishop of Trivandrum in 1998.

Appointment of the Apostolic Visitor (2001)

On 18th June 2001 Fr. Isaac Thottungal was appointed the Apostolic Visitor of North America and Europe for the Malankara Catholics. His Episcopal ordination took place at Tirumulpuram on 15th August 2001. He was at the same time the Auxiliary of Trivandrum. He took the name Isaac Mar Cleemis. He was the Vicar General of Bishop Mar Baselios, when he was at Bathery. In 2003 Mar Cleemis was transferred to the vacant See of Tiruvalla as its bishop. Later he became its first Archbishop when the diocese of Tiruvalla was raised to the status of an Archdiocese. After the sudden death of Cyril Mar Baselios Catholicos, Mar Cleemis was elected by the Synod as the second Major Archbishop-Catholicos of the Malankara Catholic Church.

Establishment of the Muvattupuzha Diocese (2003)

Another achievement during this period was the establishment of the Muvattupuzha diocese, by bifurcating the Diocese of Tiruvalla once again, and the appointment of Thomas Mar Kurillos its first bishop. It is the fifth eparchy of the Malankara Catholic Church. In his pastoral letter *Abun* Mar Baselios pointed out the purpose of the erection of the new diocese: “It is God’s will that the salvific graces revealed through the Church must reach effectively each and every one living in the new diocese. For that all the faithful in this diocese should be strengthened in ecumenical activities and deep spiritual renewal.”¹⁴¹

The Priests who passed away during this period

Chempothinal Mathew	(+2002)
Chenkileth Geevarghese	(+2004)
Chundevalel John	(+2002)
Dominic Zacharias	(+2000)
Edathil Varghese	(+1996)
Elavumparampil Chacko, Tiruvalla	(+1999)
Elavunkal Thomas, Tiruvalla	(+1998)
Francis Acharya	(+2002)

¹⁴¹ *Thiruvananthapuram Athibhadrasana Bulletin*, 8/3 (March 2003, p.4).

Gnayalloor Jacob	(+1997)
Kaithanal Thomas	(+2005)
Karackalolickal Joseph Abraham	(+2003)
Kilichimala Varghese	(+2002)
Kizhakkedath Jacob	(+1996)
Kochumuriyil Louis Philipose	(+1997)
Kompanal Mathew	(+2002)
Kuttiyil George	(+2005)
Kuzhimuriyil Kurian, Bathery	(+1998)
Kuzhiparampil Zacharias	(+1999)
Madathiparambil Abraham, Tiruvalla	(+1997)
Malancharuvil George	(+1994)
Mootheril George	(+1995)
Mootheril George	(+1995)
Neelampilalil Thomas	(+2003)
Neriattil Thomas	(+1995)
Nilackal Samuel	(+2002)
Njayappally Xavier	(+1998)
Padinjaremannil Kuriakose, Tiruvalla	(+2000)
Panamkunnel Alexander	(+1998)
Paniker Thomas K.G.	(+2005)
Payyampallil Alex, Tiruvalla	(+1997)
Plavilayil George	(+2005)
Puthen Kandathil Lazar	(+2001)
Puthen Kandathil Philip	(+2003)
Puthenpeedikayil P.M.Abraham	(+2004)
Thadathil Tomy	(+2004)
Thazhathuveettill Joseph	(+2001)
Thuruthiyil Philip	(+2003)
Valiyaparampil Jacob	(+2005)
Valiyavilayil Thomas	(+1998)

Valuparambil Abraham	(+2005)
Vandakathil Sabu Philip	(+2001)
Viruppel Augustine	(+1999)
Y.Joseph	(+1996)

Major Archbishop-Catholicos (2005-2007)

His Holiness Pope John Paul II raised the Malankara Metropolitan sui juris Church on 10th February 2005 to the status of a quasi – Patriarchal Major Archiepiscopal Church and appointed Archbishop Cyril Mar Baselios as its first Major Archbishop. The Major Archbishop is the President of the Episcopal Synod and has all the rights and duties of the Patriarch, of course, without the title “Patriarch.” His Beatitude Moran Mor Cyril Baselios took charge on the 14th May as the Major Archbishop of the Malankara Catholic Church. The Major Archbishop is called Catholicos according to the local custom and Tradition. The title Catholicos is included in the Particular Laws of the Malankara Catholic Church, approved by the Apostolic See. Hence the use of the title Catholicos is canonical. On 14th May 2006 the Ecclesiastical Province of Tiruvalla was erected with the suffragan Sees of Bathery and Muvatuupuzha and Tiruvalla Eparchy was raised to the status of a Metropolitan See. Isaac Mar Cleemis became the first Metropolitan-Archbishop of Tiruvalla. On the 1st of January 2007 Cyril Mar Baselios Catholicos declared that Mavelikkara Eparchy would be erected as suffragan to the Major Archieparchy of Trivandrum.

On the 18th of the same month His Beatitude died suddenly of heart attack. He was for a long time sick and was undergoing treatment. However, his sudden death shocked many, both inside and outside the Church.

25

Religious in the Malankara Church

In the Malankara Catholic Church there are several religious orders, doing excellent service to the people at large through the family visits, social activities and educational apostolate. Mar Ivanios realized the importance of religious in the life of the Church and its renewal. That was the reason why he started the Bethany Order for men in 1919 at Perunad and the Bethany Order for women at Tirumulpuram, Tiruvalla, in 1925.

The Order of the Imitation of Christ (OIC-Bethany)

We have already spoken about the early history of the Bethany Order. The order has altogether 290 members, out of which 2 bishops, 138 Priests and 9 Religious Brothers and 169 Students. The Bethany Fathers divided their Order into two Provinces. The inauguration of the Navajeevan Province was on 25th September 2000 at Nalanchira. The inauguration of the Navajyothi Province was on 27th September 2000 at Tiruvalla. The Bethany Fathers in Trivandrum have built a new Formation house (2002), a Provincial house and a CBSE School (2003).

In the Najeevan Province (Trivandrum) there are Zoor Dayaras in Borsi-Durg, Chunakkara, Kattanam, Kulappada, Kumbazha, Mukkampala, Nalanchira, Nedumangad, Trippadam, Vencode and Mylapra and two Dayaras in Nalanchira and Mission-Mandirams at Kolkotta, Kalayapuram, Kanjiramkulam, Pinkulam, Hyderabad, Ludhiana, Delhi and Angamoozhy. This Province has 30 Institutions. It has Schools in Chunakkara, Kalayapuram, Kumbazha, Mylapra, Nalanchira, and Vencode and in Chunakkara, Kattanam, Mylapra and Nalanchira boarding facilities.

In the Navjyothi Province there are Zoor Dayaras in Adimaly, Chelakara, Cherukulanji, Chirackal, Desom, Kadaba, Kallar, Kalewadi, Girideepam/Kottyam, Meenangadi, Nellyyady, Nilambur, Noojibalthila, Bathery and Surat and one Dayara in Tiruvalla and Mission Mandirams in Kirkee, Thane, and Mangalore. The Province has 19 Institutions. It has six Schools: in Kottayam Girideepam, Nellyyady and Noojibalthila -all the three with boarding facilities-Cherukulanji, Kalewadi and Surat.¹⁴²

Bethany Sisters (SIC)

The Bethany Congregation for women was officially started at Tirumulpuram on 21st September 1925, after Mar Ivanios became a bishop in the Orthodox Church on May 1, 1925. But already before that they were being trained for religious life at Barisol in Calcutta. The first ten members (Mothers) were the following. They all had Syriac names:

Saina/Peace (1925)

Huba /Love (1925)

Denha /Epiphany (1925)

Salga/Ray of Light (1926)

Maxa /Meekness (1929)

Thaibus/ Grace (1930)

Basim /Goodness (1930)

Saibar /Long Suffering (1930)

Haimnus /Faith (1930)

Trissus /Uprightness (1930)

On 22nd September 1930 all of them entered into the Catholic communion. Thus all the Sisters of the Bethany congregation followed Mar Ivanios. Later the convent was transferred to Nalanchira in Trivandrum. Bethany acted as two diocesan congregations from 1932-1956. In 1956 August 6, it was raised to the Pontifical Status and was divided into Trivandrum and Tiruvalla provinces. Fr. Placid Podipara CMI was the Visitor from Rome. The Generalate was at Tiruvalla. In 1972 it was transferred to Kalathipady, Kottayam.

¹⁴² Order of the Imitation of Christ (Bethany Ashram) Directory 2003, Kottayam 2003.

The following were the Mother Generals since 1956:

Mother Maxa	(1956-1967)
Mother Philomina /Tiruvalla	(1968-1973)
Mother Semaha	(1974-1979)
Mother Vincent	(1980-1991)
Mother Philomina/Trivandrum	(1992-2004)
Mother Benjamin/Tiruvalla	(2004-)

Bethany celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 1950 and the Golden Jubilee in 1975 and the Platinum Jubilee in 2000. At present there are five Provinces: Trivandrum, Tiruvalla, Bathery, Pathanamthitta and Muvattupuzha.

Trivandrum Province

The Mother Provincials in Trivandrum were: Mothers Basim (1956-1959), Slomo (1960-1964), Resma (1965-7), Maxa (1968-70), Slomo (1971-6), Vijaya (1977-82), Felicita (1983-8), Rehamas (1989-94), Alphonsa (1995-7), Rehamas (1998-2000), Lumina (2001- 2007) and Ardra (2007-). There are at present 40 convents in this Province and they work also in some 10 Institutions in the Major Archdiocese. They have their own Schools and Hospitals (Perumpuzha, Puthur) and the Sisters teach in the Schools, work in the Hospitals, conduct Orphanages and Ladies' Hostels, and undertake several other charitable activities. At Kundara they have a *Balabhavan* for girls. At Pirappancode they work for the leprosy patients. At Kumarapuram, Trivandrum they have a Rehabilitation center for physically handicapped girls. At Kuriode they have a house for the deaf and dumb. They work in the various parishes of the Major Archdiocese and organize women-welfare activities. There are 258 sisters working in the Major Archdiocese.

Tiruvalla Province

The following were the Mother Provincials: Huba (1956-9), Debaha (1960-4), Macrina (1965-7), Mary Magdalene (1968-70), Monica (1971-6), Jain (1977-9), Annuncietta (1980-2), Patience (1983-8), Jain (1989-94), Annuncietta (1995-7), Serena (1998-2001) and Benjamin (2001-4) Serena (2004-7) and Shanthi (2007-). There are at present 27

houses and 212 Sisters in the Province and they work in 16 institutions of the Diocese of Tiruvalla. The Sisters work in Schools, Hospitals, and Homes for the Aged, *Balabhavans*, Women's Hostels. They work in the Pushpagiri Medical College, Tiruvalla and St. John's Medical College, Bangalore. They work in the *Abhayabhavan* at Muthoor, where the poor and abandoned are taken care of. It is a common enterprise of all the Christians of the locality. At Chengarur and Mallappally they have well established Institutions.

Bathery Province

In 1980 it was separated into a Vice-Province and in 1986 it was declared a Province. The Mother Provincials were: Nirmala (1980-4), Helena (1985-8), Scholastica (1989-94), Nirmala (1995-2000), Thabeetha (2001-- 4), Rosetta (2004-7), Thejus (2007-2010) and Parimala (2010-). They have 32 convents and 156 Sisters and 8 Institutions. They work in some of the institutions of the dioceses of Bathery and Puttur. They too work in the Missions, Schools, and Hospitals. They conduct *Balabhavan*, *Abhayabhavan* and Community Health Centres.

Pathanamthitta Province

It was established in 1998. The blessing of their new house was on the 18th February 1999. The Provincial Superiors were: Sr. Vijaya (1998-2004), Sr. Philomina (2004-2010), Sr. Sukrutha (2010-). They have 28 Convents and they work also in the missions and institutions of the Major Archdiocese of Trivandrum, the Diocese of Mavelikkara and Pathanamthitta. The Province comprises the civil Districts of Pathanamthitta and Alapuzha. The sisters conduct schools, teach in the schools and engage in social welfare activities. They have 150 members. They have famous schools at Bhopal, Nangiarkulangara and Puthenkavu. They have a *Balabhavan* at Erezha, and Ladies' Hostel at Palayam and Puthenpedika and an Orphanage at Vakayar.

Muvattupuzha Province

It was established in 2004 by separating 13 Convents from the Tiruvalla Province. It has 62 Sisters. They work in the Schools and the parishes in the diocese of Muvattupuzha. The Provincial Superiors: Sr. Patience (2004-2010), Sr. Remya (2010-).

The Bethany Sisters work also in Germany, Italy, USA and Israel. They are very active in the mission work in all the Malankara Catholic dioceses. Mar Ivanios can be happy that the religious community for women, which he founded, developed into a very big and blessed establishment. They do great service to the people at large in and outside Kerala.¹⁴³

The Daughters of Mary Congregation (DM Sisters)

The DM Congregation was started by Fr. Joseph Kuzhinjalil and Mother Mary Kallarackal in 1938 at Marthandom. The Chayikottukonam Novitiate House was blessed in 2001.

Fr. Joseph Kuzhinjalil was a charismatic person. God chose him to be an instrument in founding the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary. He had full confidence in the Providence of God. He loved everybody and he realized the value of religious life in the life of the Church. The area where he was appointed, when he came to the Archdiocese for mission work, was very poor and the people were mostly illiterate. He lived with them and worked for them. He was unassuming and loving. His greatest contribution was his faithfulness to be an instrument in God's hands. He was extremely truthful and honest: honest to God, to himself and to others. He was very courteous and polite. He had the good human qualities, necessary for a good pastor of souls. Today one can see very clearly the hand of God in his works. It was God who was guiding him to found the religious order. Mar Ivanios started one, of course, as a bishop. Fr. Kuzhinjalil started another, as a priest, as a young priest. His life proves how God can work wonders through His humble instruments. Fr. Kuzhinjalil is the greatest missionary, the Malankara Catholic Church has seen so far. Today the DM Congregation has grown to a big establishment, doing wonderful service in 23 dioceses in India and outside India. They have at present 114 houses and 850 Sisters. It was God's work for the Reunion Movement and for this country at large.

The DM Sisters were in the beginning chiefly engaged in pastoral apostolate such as visiting the families in the Kanyakumari District. Today they have a variety of Apostolate. Many teach in the Schools, work in the Hospitals, conduct *Abhayabhavan*, and *Balabhavan*. They are engaged in several other Social Welfare Activities. They have Ladies'

Hostels, and a first-rate Hospital and Nursing School at Anchal. A few of them work in Germany, Egypt and USA. They have a special attachment to the parish activities. They maintain their original charism in spite of the diverse undertakings in recent years. The Daughters of Mary congregation divided the St. Joseph's Province and formed the Nellimood Region on 6th November 2000. Later on 22nd August 2002, they were divided into three Provinces, 2 Vice Provinces and a region. They are *St. Mary's* (Pongumood), *St. Joseph's* (Marthandom), *Nirmala* (Venniyur) Provinces and *Mary Matha* (Bathery), *Christu Raja* (Punjab) Vice Provinces and *Amala Region* (Chanda). The birth centenary of Fr. Kuzhinjalil was celebrated on 23rd August, 2003.

Other Religious Communities

There are also the following religious communities working in the Malankara Catholic Church: Franciscan Missionary Brothers at Nalanchira, Kesavadasapuram, Killiyur and Panvur; Order of the Friars Minor(Cap.) at Mukhathala and Mundukottackal; Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB) at Puthupally; Kristiya Sanyasa Samaj (Cistercians) at Kurisumala; Malabar Missionary Brothers in Amalagiri; Santhi Ashram at Mukkadal and Dhyana Ashram in Nambiarkunnu/Wynad.

There are also Holy Spirit Sisters at Tholassery/Tiruvalla, Bhadravathi/Karnataka, Kattappana, Kothamangalam, Kumily, Mavelikkara, Nalanchira, Nilambur, Pallimala, Bathery and Surat. Sacred Heart Sisters in 14 places, Vincentian Sisters in three places, Mount Tabor Sisters at Thattathumala, Snehagiri Missionary Sisters in 5 places, Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco at Kattappana, Deena Sevana Sisters in 5 places, Little Sisters of Jesus at Pirappancode, Sisters of John the Baptist in Pazhoor, Basilian Sisters in Paliykkara/Tiruvalla, Gethsamem Samarpitha Satsangam in Thekkemala and Manjinikkara, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary in Cheeril, Sisters of Charity in Nadaikkavu and Kulathur and Fervent Daughters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Anicad and Tripadam, working in the various Malankara Dioceses.

¹⁴³ Sr. Helena, *Bethany*, Kottayam, 2003.

26

Ecumenism and Reunion

After the Second Vatican Council, at least some raised doubts about the relevance of the Reunion Movement of 1930; some even falsely think that Reunion Movement is against the Modern Ecumenism, envisaged by the Second Vatican Council. Hence it is useful to clarify the issue.

It is true that the communion established in 1930 was in accordance with the ecclesiology and mentality of those days. Now we have a post-Vatican ecclesiology. The Malankara Catholic Church grew into a Particular Church, a Major Archiepiscopal Church, in the Catholic communion. Since 1930 it has been witnessing to the unity of the Church and to the need of communion with the Pope, the successor of St. Peter in the ancient See of Rome. All those who were convinced of the necessity of full and visible communion with the Roman Catholic Church followed Mar Ivanios. With the Second Vatican Council, there is a change of attitude of the Catholic Church towards the other Churches. But the Council recognized that both the entering of the individuals into the Catholic Church and the full communion of the separated Churches with the Roman Catholic Church are the result of the working of the same Holy Spirit.

The Decree on Ecumenism says:

“It is evident that the work of preparing and reconciling those individuals who wish for full Catholic communion is of its nature distinct from ecumenical action. But there is no opposition between the two, since both proceed from the marvelous ways of God.” (4#4)

When the individuals are convinced of the necessity of entering into canonical communion with the Catholic Church, according to their

conscience, they are free to enter into it. If persons out of conviction enter into the Catholic communion either as individuals or as groups, Catholic Church does not hinder them. But Catholic Church does not encourage any coercion. The Catholic Church is against proselytism. It respects the freedom of individuals. But it earnestly seeks the communion of Churches. Modern ecumenism encourages the canonical communion of Churches with the Roman Catholic Church and works towards attaining it. This communion has to be visible and full. That means Catholic Church considers that it is in partial communion with the ancient Apostolic Churches. It has to be perfected. With them the Catholic Church is in almost full communion. With the Western Protestant Churches and their filial Churches and ecclesial communities, the relationship is different; but all the same they are also related to the Catholic Church of Christ in varying degrees. The communion has to be visibly manifested. Catholic Church calls the ancient Eastern Churches, Sister Churches and recognizes their Sacraments, Apostolicity and Ecclesiality. It considers that the Holy Spirit has appointed their pastors to take care of a portion of the flock of Christ. The Catholic Church entered into ecumenical dialogue with these Churches to perfect this partial communion.

The Catholic Church is committed to that sort of ecumenism, envisaged by the Second Vatican Council and the post-Vatican documents, especially, the *Ecumenical Directory* and the papal document, *Ut Unum Sint*. Catholic Church does not consider other Churches as its mission fields, nor does it believe that for the sake of salvation one has to change his Church allegiance. On the contrary, it believes that division among the followers of Christ is a grave sin and it has to be remedied and the full communion should be reestablished. All the Churches in the Catholic communion are irrevocably committed to the unity of all Christians. They consider it as one of their chief priorities, not as one among the many commitments of the Church. Catholic Church wishes that the other Churches also realize this change of attitude of the Catholic Church. They should no more maintain a pre-Vatican attitude of prejudice, antagonism and confrontation.

The Reunion Movement of 1930 is a Movement originated in the Malankara Orthodox Church without any external force. All those who came under the Bethany Revival Movement entered this communion. When there was a spiritual renewal through the activity of Bethany, God

showered His blessing of unity upon all those who were prepared and they entered into the visible communion with the Catholic Church. It has developed into a Particular Church-Major Archiepiscopal Church-in the Catholic communion. There were among many, misunderstandings and misrepresentations. But now it is time for the change of attitude. Vatican Council has given the guidelines and the Malankara Catholic Church is following them.

Still there is a constant accusation by some Orthodox of *sheep stealing*: by Pope, by the bishops and priests of the Catholic Church. The Malankara Catholic Church respects the Sister Churches of the non-Catholic tradition, but it has not taken upon itself the obligation to keep the non-Catholic faithful in the non-Catholic fold. We have to remind humbly our non-Catholic brethren that it is not our obligation to keep them there. They themselves have to undertake that obligation. We have a God-given obligation to accept them, if they willingly and freely enter into communion with the Catholic Church. We do not believe in proselytism. We are even prepared to make an agreement with any Church or ecclesial community on the question of the change of membership from one Church to another. We are prepared to make an interim agreement for *Inter Church Marriage* with the Orthodox Church, without forcing anybody to abandon his/her Church membership at the time of marriage. We have made such an agreement with the Syrian Orthodox Church (Patriarch's group/Jacobites). Our purpose is to bear witness to the unity and communion of all the believers in Christ and having united look forward to the evangelization of the world.

27

Identity and Individuality in Catholic Communion

Another serious issue is regarding the Identity and Individuality of the Malankara Catholic Church in the Catholic communion. Some even think that the Malankara Catholic Church has lost its identity in the Catholic communion. Some think that in the Catholic communion, there is no place for Identity and Individuality of any oriental Church. For some of the Westerners with pre-Conciliar mentality, the Eastern Catholic Churches are still Rites with slight liturgical diversity and tolerated second class Churches. Hence it is necessary to make an inquiry into this issue also.

Communion of Churches or unity of the Christians is necessary and is in accordance with the will of the Lord. When two or more Churches decide to reunite and reestablish the visible communion, they are acting in accordance with the will of the Lord. They are mending the wound in the body of Christ. The Churches in communion should collaborate as much as possible in all possible ways for the glory of God and for His kingdom. There was a pre-Conciliar type of unity and a post-Conciliar understanding of unity. Several Eastern Apostolic Churches, which had entered into full, visible and canonical communion with the Roman Catholic Church, had the pre-Conciliar type of unity, based on the ecclesiology of those days. The Second Vatican Council wanted to correct it and declared categorically that there is the new way of communion among the Churches. That means, in the practical level, there is the need of a change in the relationship among the various Churches in the Catholic communion. In other words, the relationship of the Eastern Catholic Churches should be restructured in the light of the Conciliar Documents.

The Malankara Catholic Church is an autonomous Church. It was to maintain the autonomy that the Coonan Cross Oath was taken. Down through the centuries, both the communities of the Malankara Church, the Pazhayakur and the Puthenkur, literally fought against all foreign intruders for maintaining the autonomy. Mar Ivanios, till the last moment of his canonical communion with the Caatholic Church, demanded that the autonomy should be recognized by Rome through the recognition of the Catholicos and the Synod. But in 1932 when Rome established the Malankara Catholic Hierarchy, the status of the Catholicos and the Synod, which was the symbol of the autonomy in the Metran Kkshy, was not recognized. Since the Catholicos did not enter into communion, Rome was not sure of the further development and growth of the reunited community. The hesitation from the part of Rome is understandable to some extent. But from the part of Mar Ivanios, the recognition was necessary, so that the Catholicos could take up the lead of the Reunion Movement. The territorial extension of the Church at the time of the establishment of the Hierarchy in 1932 was limited between Kanyakumkari (Cape Comorin) in the South and the river Bharathapuzha in the North. That too is understandable in the context of those days. The Jacobite presence outside this region at that time was minimal. The Jacobites were chiefly concentrated in the Travancore-Kochi States. This was equally the case of the Syro-Malabarians.

But when India became independent(1947) and the Malabar region was joined to Travancore and Kochi and the new State of Kerala was formed (1956), together with the other Christians, the Malankara community also began to migrate in large numbers to the Malabar region and to the neighboring districts of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. It was because of this new reality that territorial extension of the Malankara Church was made to these regions in 1958. In 1955 April 28, the Syro-Malabar territory was already extended to Kanyakumari in the South and Coimbatore region in the East and Mysore-Mangalore regions in the North. In other words, Rome rose to the occasion to see that the spiritual needs of the migrants were well taken care of.

It was precisely because of this that the new diocese of Thalassery was erected in 1953 for the Syro-Malabar Church. Rome considered that it was necessary for the pastoral care of the migrants. We must remember that there existed already the Latin dioceses. But

Rome considered rightly that it was not enough for the pastoral care of the Orientals. One must wonder that it happened before the Second Vatican Council. It was because of the greart lover of the cause of Christianity, the illustrious Eugene Cardinal Tisserant of venerable memory. He said once, "I love your Church, because I know your history".

He studied the history of the Thomas Christians and he came to India to study directly and personally the actual situation. He was convinced that the territorial extension for the Oriental Churches was only just and necessary. And he persuaded his co-workers, both in India and in Rome, for doing something, about which they were totally ignorant. It was due to his generous heart that the territorial extension was granted at that time to the regions, were the Malankara people had migrated after the independence of India. One should not think that there was no opposition for this extension. Some of the Latin bishops of the region protested. Even some of the Orientals also wanted to maintain the status quo. But the venerable Cardinal was strong in his decision. It was a very wise decision.

Migration in India

In India during the past sixty years there has been a large flow of educated migrants from Kerala to the other parts, especially to the big cities like Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkotta, Delhi, Kanpur, Bhilai, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Bhopal. People from all religions and walks of life have thus migrated. For the pastoral care of the Jacobite, the Orthodox and the Marthomite faithful, their Church authorities have established hierarchy and they have parishes wherever they wanted.

As mentioned above, according to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, the Malankara Catholic Church is an individual Church, having the same rights and oblilgations as the other Churches in the Catholic communion. It is in principle equal in rights and duties to the Latin Chruch. But concretely as a Church, this basic right was often denied to the Malankara Catholic Church. It was hindered in taking care of its own faithful and doing evangelical works, chiefly because of the opposition from the part of the local Latin Church in India. For the pastoral care of its emigrants in the vast Indian subcontinent, it had to depend on the good will of the local Latin prelates. Wherever the Latin

bishops have shown good will, the Malankara Catholic Church has organized the faithful and started parishes and missions. But all the same these parishes had to depend on the local Latin Bishops. Justice delayed is justice denied. The attitude of many of the Latin Bishops in India was very painful.

Ecumenical Scandal

If this is the attitude they maintain towards the Christians who have entered into the canonical communion with the Roman Catholic Church, how will the Jacobite and the Orthodox Churches dare to think about entering into the canonical communion with the Catholic Church in the future! The Oriental Catholics are test cases for the Orthodox. If the Latin Prelates are continuing their antipathy towards the Oriental Catholic Churches in this way, any number of ecumenical discussions in the Indian context will have no effect. They would rather believe what they experience rather than what they hear and read in the documents. The documents may be good for filing the shelves and for writing thesis. They may be useful as good citations rather than conforming to the actual reality.

Right to preach the Gospel

In the same way, the right to preach the Gospel is the inalienable right of any Church. This is denied to the Malankara Catholic Church by the local Latin bishops, who demand that if the Malankarites want to preach the Gospel, they have to put on the Latin garb. As an Oriental Indian Church, one cannot do mission work in the vast Indian subcontinent. This is against the autonomy of the Church. This is against the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. How long should we wait for another Tisserant? How long should we wait for another Pius? The Latin Church has dioceses throughout India. They have the freedom to preach the Gospel everywhere in India. Nobody hinders them in fulfilling their basic right as Christians. But it is denied to the two Oriental Catholic Churches in India.

It was already brought to the attention of the responsible persons and so far nothing tangible has evolved. In 1980, November 20-23, during the meeting at Ponmudi/Trivandrum, arranged by the Mission Office of the FABC (Bishop's Institute for Missionary Apostolate-BIMA II), the

participants noticed it and sent a letter to the Bishops of Pakistan, Bangladesh, Srilanka and India. There we read:

“The existence in India of three Individual Churches, the Latin, the Syro-Malabar and the Syro-Malankara, is a manifestation of the richness of the mystery of the Church. Fostering communion among them through mutual acceptance and acknowledgement is felt by us as an essential requirement for fulfilling our common evangelizing mission... The essential missionary character of the Church leads us to reflect on the peculiar condition in which the individual Churches find themselves in India. We are painfully aware of a situation in which the Oriental Churches feel unable to exercise their evangelizing activity as Churches in proportion to their missionary potential. We would hope that the authorities of the three Individual Churches of India will face the problem in full sincerity and mutual openness and devise adequate solutions, having for their paramount concern the common evangelizing task of the three Churches.”¹⁴⁴

The Malankara Church is demanding that in the Catholic communion it should also have the two basic rights, namely the freedom to evangelize and the freedom to take care of the Malankara faithful in the various parts of India. We are requesting the ecclesial authorities to do the necessary things for its realization. Nobody has the right to hinder us from fulfilling these two basic rights. The attitude of some of the Indian Latin bishops is contradicting the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, the constant teaching of the Catholic Church and the post-Conciliar teachings of the recent Popes.

There is no justification for the contention of the Latin bishops: “It is my territory. Nobody else can enter here”. We would answer them by saying: “It is contrary to the Gospel teaching. You have no right to hinder the Orthodox, the Jacobites and the Marthomites or any other religious group. Indeed you are not doing that. Why do you hinder us? We are not part of your Church. We entered into canonical communion with the bishop of Rome on the basis of certain conditions. You cannot consider our faithful as belonging to your Church. There is a distinction. You are

¹⁴⁴T.Vellilamthadam et alii, (ed.), *Ecclesial Identity of the Thomas Christians*, Kottayam 1995, 145.

directly under the Pope and part of the Latin Church. We are in communion with the Pope and we are an Apostolic Church. We want Rome to respect its former agreements.” We have entered into canonical communion with the Pope. We accept the Pope as the successor of St. Peter in the ancient See of Rome. It is really painful for us that the opportunity to lead our liturgical and ecclesial life is denied to us in our own home land.

Just as in 1958 the field of service was extended to the Malabar region beyond the river Bharathapuzha, steps must immediately be taken to extend it for the pastoral care of the Malankarites throughout the whole of India. What is necessary today is not platitudes but determined action as in 1930 and in 1958. Nothing less will help the community as an Individual Church.

Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios had already pointed out this situation in India during the Ecumenical Council: “Erection of parishes and proper hierarchy of the Malankara Rite is altogether necessary where the number of the faithful is sufficiently large.” Then the Archbishop gave four reasons: “1) It is necessary from the point of view of justice. We speak of the religious liberty of all the children of God. If so, why should we deny to the Catholics of the Oriental Churches the right of practicing their rite and preserving their patrimony? 2) It is necessary for the existence of the Oriental Churches. 3) It is necessary to restore the union of the separated brethren. The separated Christian brethren enjoy full liberty to erect their own parishes and hierarchies wherever they wish. Today in India, outside the so-called Oriental territory, there are large number of Orietnal Christians, with nearly seventy parishes and two hierarchies. Without the erection of parishes and eparchies for the Malankara Catholics, any kind of dialogue between the Catholic Church and the separated brethren is impossible. 4) It is necessary in order to announce the Good News of salvation.”

The Archbishop continued: “The structures of the Catholic Church in India at present day is far from being realistic, nor does it in any way help the preaching of the Good News. The entire territory of India is divided into the various jurisdictions of the Latin Rite. On the contrary, the Catholics of the Oriental Rites, who once had the sole jurisdiction in the whole of India, are now very strictly confined to a very narrow territory... The best solution will be to erect parishes and eparchies of

the Orietnal Rite wherever the faithful belonging to that Rite are numerous, as also to concede to the Orientals ecclesiastical territories of their Rite... Let us endeavour to see the Church as a treasure in which are found the new and the old, as a community in which there are different Rites, different languages and different rules of life. Let us not tie down the Word of God to any one culture, however excellent it may be.”¹⁴⁵

In 1985 October, in the Synod of Bishops in Rome, Msgr. Henry d’Sousa as the spokesman of the Latin Bishops in India strongly opposed the implementation of the Decree on the Oriental Catholic Churches (OE-3-4) in India. He was invited to the Synod of Bishops (1985) to represent the FABC. But he made use of the time allotted to him to be the spokesman of the Indian Latin Bishops. He said:

“Four Booklets have been published on behalf of the Latin bishops and submitted to the Holy Father for his information and guidance... The principle of one territory one jurisdiction goes back to the most ancient traditions, common to both East and West... Multiple jurisdiction would divide the Catholic faithful in India into ethnic groups.”¹⁴⁶

Archbishop Benedict Mar Gregorios had to respond to the objection of Msgr. Henry d’Sousa and defend the cause of the Oriental Churches:

“Our Church has suffered great loss, because for many of us who are scattered in the different cities of India, there was no faculty for pastoral service according to our proper ecclesial tradition. The people desired earnestly to have their proper liturgy, specially because for us liturgy is the source of the whole religious life... We are glad that after the Vatican Council the ecumenical spirit has prevailed and our Orthodox brethren will be freely accepted and faculty is given to them everywhere in the Catholic churches for celebrating the liturgy. If only the same consideration was shown to the Catholics of the Syro-Malankara Church from the part of our Latin brethren.”

¹⁴⁵G.Chediath, *Ecumenism in Danger*, Kottayam 1986, 77-79.

¹⁴⁶CO. 7,1-2 (1986)42.

Then the Archbishop pleaded for the just cause of the Orientals in India and showed the fallacy in the arguments of Msgr. Henry d'Sousa. The Archbishop concluded: "For the early missionaries, in spite of all their good will, all that was not Latin was heresy. They made a bonfire of our liturgical texts. Two million Thomas Christians today live separated from the Catholic Church, primarily due to the unwise policies of these Latin missionaries."¹⁴⁷

The Syro-Malabar participants, Mar Antony Padiyara and Mar Joseph Powathil spoke as the representatives of the Syro-Malabar Church. Mar Antony Padiyara said:

"Oriental Catholics are denied the right to have pastoral care in their own Rite, because the Latin Church claims to have exclusive jurisdiction in most part of the Indian Territory. This unjust situation was already brought to the attention of the Council Fathers of Vatican II and the art.3 of the Decree on the Oriental Churches was formulated to eradicate this strange situation. We find it our duty to bring to the kind attention of the Holy See the strange situation which our Oriental Churches are facing today in India, because of the unjust territorial restrictions imposed on them from the time of the Western colonialism... We know that justice delayed is justice denied... The Latin hierarchy's opposition to extending the jurisdiction of the Oriental Churches of India is clearly against the Decrees of Vatican II and against the practice in most countries of the world. Adequate provisions may be made for the pastoral care of our Oriental emigrants in their own Oriental Rites... The Orientals are not asking for a favour or concession. They are demanding their just rights, recognized by the Decrees of Vatican II, the new Code of Canon Law and the Directives of the Holy See, which are in practice in the rest of the world."¹⁴⁸

Mar Joseph Powathil said: "The Separated Brethren come closer to us owing to the world wide ecumenical Movement. However, there still remain fears and prejudices and real obstacles in the path of genuine ecumenism. One of the major obstacles is the attitude of some of the Latin hierarchs towards the Orientals in the Catholic communion. A

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*43-44.

¹⁴⁸*Ibid.*35-36

few of their recent assertions are disturbing to the Separated Brethren. They call India, for instance, a Latin territory. They stand for uniformity of jurisdiction and hinder the Orientals from fulfilling their pastoral and missionary obligations. As far as the Orientals are concerned, India is a test case. The Orthodox Thomas Christians have their bishops in Delhi, Madras, Bombay and other places and enjoy All India jurisdictions. They are watching the treatment, which the Catholic Orientals are getting in the Catholic communion. Naturally they feel apprehensive of what would happen to them in an eventual reunion with the Catholic Church. Will they have to subject themselves to the jurisdiction of the Latin bishops outside Kerala? Will they be allowed to carry on their missionary work, remaining faithful to their traditions and their Church? They would ask themselves: Are the Catholics sincere in their statements and declarations? For a genuine Ecumenism in India, much remains to be done. The Separated Brethren should feel confident that in the Catholic communion they will not be losers but can find real enrichment and perfection. This can be achieved only through recognizing practically the legitimate rights of the Oriental Churches in communion."¹⁴⁹

During the same Synod of Bishops in 1985, His Eminence Myroslav J. Cardinal Lubachivsky pleaded for the just cause of the two Oriental Catholic Churches in India:

"Sad to say, we ourselves, the bishops, seem not to understand the decisions of Vatican II. I have in mind as one example the sad case of the two Indian Churches of the Eastern tradition: the Malankara and the Malabar Rites. Although most have been latinised through Western missionaries, some still exist. These Easterners are asking for their own priests to serve them spiritually. About four years ago I have heard of a legal difficulty in India among the Catholics. Here at the Council we have heard their Bishops on November 28th requesting Eastern Rite priests for their migrating people. If we remember correctly, one of our own brother Bishops strongly disagreed on the basis that there is a law which says, "in one location there cannot be two jurisdictions, only one and that must be the one established first."

¹⁴⁹*Ibid.*37-40.

“When Christ stood before Pilate, He also heard the people claim: we have a law, and according to that law He must die (Jn.19,7). Brothers, we must help these Eastern Rite Indians to live. They must be allowed to have their own spiritual leaders and their own mission for their people. We cannot allow religious suppression in the Church. The law needs to be changed. There is no reason to be afraid. We have had successful results trying various jurisdictions. The Church has permitted this in some areas and the system is working very well, thanks to our good brother bishops. As example can present: 1) Lviv/Ukraine, where there were three Metropolitans of three Rites: Byzantine Ukraine, Polish Latin and Armenian. 2) Winnipeg/Canada, where there are now three Metropolitans: Byzantine Ukrainian, English Latin, and French Latin. 3) Most larger cities of USA and Canada, where both Latin and Byzantine Catholics live amidst two or three jurisdictions: in Philadelphia, Chicago, Cleveland and Toronto. There are no problems among these dioceses and the faithful praise God in any one of these various Rites without insult to any Bishop’s jurisdiction.”¹⁵⁰

In 1986 February 1, when Pope John Paul II arrived at Delhi, he assured that OE 3-4 would properly be implemented: “Be assured that I shall do everything possible to ensure a just and fair settlement of the issue that will take into account all the pastoral exigencies of unity and truth.” In 1986 August 4, the Syro-Malabar and Malankara Catholic bishops made a common appeal to the Pope, explaining the urgency of the pastoral care of the Catholic Oriental faithful in India and of restructuring the CBCI. The Pope appointed a Pontifical Commission to study the question.

In 1987 May 28, the Pope sent a letter to all the bishops in India, asking them to educate the clergy, religious and laity to accept the Documents of Vatican II and the post Conciliar Documents on the Pastoral Care of the Oriental Catholic emigrants. In 1988 April 30, the diocese of Kalyan was erected for the Syro-Malabar migrants within the Latin dioceses of Bombay, Pune, and Naazik. But the case of the Malankara Catholic Church was not at all considered, although there was more urgent need for such an arrangement for them. It was simply ignored.

¹⁵⁰*Ibid.* 49-50: *Ecumenism in Danger*, 92-94.

In 1991 January 31, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Secretary of State, sent a letter to Cardinal Simon Pimenta of Bombay in support of the Papal letter. And after the establishment of Kalyan for a long time nothing more was done. There was still “unwillingness from the part of the Latin bishops in India to share the extensive mission territories with the Oriental Churches. The claim on territory without the possibility of evangelizing is a kind of unjust colonial mentality. They are unable to fulfil their responsibility and at the same time do not let others do it. It does not seem to have any justification. But recently a new diocese is erected and a new bishop is appointed in Delhi for the Syro-Malabarians. The headquarters is in Faridabad. In 2007 an Apostolic Visitor was appointed for the Malankara Catholics outside the dioceses in Kerala and the surrounding regions. The Apostolic Visitor Jacob Mar Barnabas resides in New Delhi.

In the Gulf Countries

In the same way, there are thousands of Malankara faithful in the various Gulf countries. There is no adequate arrangement for catering to their pastoral need. Immediate action is necessary to take care of them. We are losing every year many of our faithful. They become victims to the sects, which are very active there. The Marthomites, the Jacobites and the Orthodox have their own priests and hierarchy to take care of their faithful. Why is it denied to us? We are happy to note that there is an arrangement for USA in the appointment of an Exarch and for Europe in the appointment of the Apostolic Visitor for the Malankara Catholics.

The Churches should learn lessons from the past events in the Church in Kerala and understand the mentality of the people here. The Thomas Christians remained with great difficulty under the Latin Jesuit missionary bishops Roz, Garzia and Britto for 53 years. So it is hightime to put into practice the decisions of the Ecumenical Council and show the non-Catholics in India that the Roman Catholic Church respects its own decisions made in the Ecumenical Council. If the statements in the Ecumenical Council are not respected, how can one believe that the other statements of Rome will be respected by Rome itself? So ecumenically also it is very necessary to extend the jurisdiction of the Malankara Catholic Church both in India and outside India, especially in the Gulf region.

28

The Malankara Catholic Church (2005-2012)

The Elevation of the Malankara Catholic Church to the Status of a Major Archiepiscopal Church¹⁵¹

Considering the growth, maturity and “brilliant position” of the Malankara Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II, with the Apostolic Constitution *Ab ipso sancto Thoma* of 10th February 2005, elevated this Church to the status of a Major Archiepiscopal Church in accordance with the norms of the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches.

The Document

The Apostolic Constitution has the following wording:

“John Paul, Bishop, Servant of the Servants of God, for perpetual memory.

By St. Thomas the Apostle himself was founded the Christian Religion in India and was fruitfully guided by his successors and it prospered in the course of the past centuries under various traditions. The Syro-Malankara community, which entered into communion with the Holy See in 1930, has secured the greatest increase in number of its faithful and pastors and at the same time safeguarded its own ancient ecclesiastical patrimony and faith. Hence, considering the brilliant position of the Church, which we fully reckon and esteem, we have decided to raise the same community of the Syro-Malankarites as the Major Archiepiscopal Church of Trivandrum with all the rights and obligations prescribed in the Code of Canons for the Eastern Churches. This Church

shall be recognized under the afore mentioned title and its boundaries shall be the same as the boundaries of the former Metropolitan Church of Trivandrum and the permanent seat of the Major Archbishop shall be the city of Trivandrum. We determine those things through this official document and command that they shall ever be safeguarded and declare that nothing contrary to them shall prevail. We hope that this, our declaration and the new arrangement shall be helpful to the apostolic work of the Church and shall produce visible fruits to the entire congregation of the faithful in the years to come.

Given at Rome, from the Holy See of St. Peter, on the tenth day of the month of February 2005, in the year of our Lord, the twenty seventh year of Our Pontificate.”¹⁵²

Brief analysis

We shall briefly analyse and comment on this Apostolic Constitution, highlighting the important aspects of the nature and status of the Syro-Malankara Major Archiepiscopal Church.

Rapid Growth

First of all the Apostolic Constitution points out that, since the entrance of the Syro-Malankara community into full communion with the Roman Pontiff in 1930 it has secured “the greatest increase in number of its faithful and pastors.” As we have seen above, on 20th September 1930 only two bishops, a religious priest, a deacon and a layman were received into full communion with the Catholic Church. As a result of its phenomenal growth, at the time of the elevation of the Malankara Catholic Church to the Major Archiepiscopal status it could count five dioceses, 476 parishes, eight bishops 476 diocesan priests, 115 religious priests, 206 men religious, 1662 women religious and 402,702 Christian faithful.

Ecclesiastical Patrimony and Faith

The Apostolic Constitution underlines the fact that during these years of growth, the Malankara Church “safeguarded its own ancient ecclesiastical patrimony and faith”. The ancient ecclesiastical patrimony and faith indicate the liturgical, theological, spiritual and canonical heritage according to the Antiochene tradition, which the Malankara Church

¹⁵¹ Paul Pallath, *The Catholic Church in India*, Kottayam, 2000. 235-242

¹⁵² Apostolic Bull *Ab ipso sancto Thoma* : Malankara 1/1 (2005) 14.

officially accepted in the assembly or synod of the priests and lay leaders, held at Mavelikkara on 16th January, 1836. Since the Malankara Church entered into full communion with the Catholic Church in 1930, when the missionary Latinization and the tendency of “uniatism” had almost ended and when the Roman Curia began to catholicize and not to latinize, it has remained the least westernized Eastern Catholic Church in the whole of Christendom. Even the phenomenon of spontaneous self-westernization present in some Eastern Catholic Churches has not yet exerted much influence on the Malankara Catholic Church.

All the Rights and Obligations

The Roman Pontiff elevated the Malankara Catholic Church to the Major Archiepiscopal status “with all the rights and obligations prescribed in the Code of Canons for the Eastern Churches”. This phrase can be well understood, if we consider the case of the Syro-Malabar Church. Due to internal problems, when the Syro-Malabar Church was constituted as a Major Archiepiscopal Church on 16 December 1992, the Roman Pontiff entrusted the pastoral governance to a Papal Delegate and reserved to his own person all that concerned Episcopal elections and the liturgical order. The Pope ceased to reserve the liturgical powers on 19th January 1998 and the faculty to appoint bishops only on 3rd January 2004. In contrast to the case of its sister Church, at the very moment of its elevation to the Major Archiepiscopal status, the Malankara Church obtained a real hierarchical head and a Synod of bishops with all the rights and obligations stipulated in the Eastern Code. The rights, powers and obligations of a Major Archiepiscopal Church are equal to those of a Patriarchal Church.

Title and See

According to the Eastern Code, a Major Archiepiscopal Church must have a permanent See for the residence of the Major Archbishop in a principal city inside its own territory from which the Major Archbishop takes his title (CCEO. c.57,3). The city of Trivandrum has been the principal See and the residence of the Chief Bishop of the Malankara Church since the establishment of full communion with the Catholic Church in 1930. When two ordinariates were created on 13 February 1932, the residence of Mar Ivanios was officially fixed in the city of

Trivandrum. At the time of the constitution of the Syro-Malankara hierarchy on 11 June 1932, Trivandrum became an Archdiocese and the See of the Metropolitan Archbishop. In the course of time the ecclesiastical status of Trivandrum mutated owing to the erection of the Latin diocese of Trivandrum on 1 July 1937 and its elevation to Metropolitan status on 3 January 2004. However, Trivandrum continued to be considered as the “ecclesiastical capital” of the Malankara Catholic Church. Now in the Apostolic Constitution the Pope definitively granted to the Malankara Church the official title the “Major Archiepiscopal Church of Trivandrum” and fixed the permanent seat of the Major Archbishop in the same city.

Territorial Extension

As we have seen above, when the hierarchy was erected in 1932, the territory of the Malankara Church was determined to be coterminous with the boundaries of the then Latin dioceses of Kollam, Kottar, Kochi, Varapuzha and Vijayapuram. Later, in 1958, the territory was extended to the northern part of Kerala and to some parts of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The present Apostolic Constitution states that the territory of the Malankara Church “shall be the same as the boundaries of the former Metropolitan Church of Trivandrum”. With the elevation of the Malankara Church to the Major Archiepiscopal status no change was effected with regard to its territory. Hence the territory of the Malankara Church is limited to the external boundaries of the five eparchies of this Church. The powers of the Major Archbishop and Synod of bishops of the Malankara Church are limited to the frontiers of this Church in accordance with canons 146-150 of the Eastern Code.

The Major Archbishop

On 10 February 2005, with the Apostolic Bull *Cunctis ecclesialibus communitatibus*, Pope John Paul II appointed the “venerable Brother Cyril Baselios Malancharuvil, Metropolitan Archbishop of Trivandrum of the Syro Malankarites” as the first Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malankara Church. In the Apostolic Bull the Pope stated: “...we nominate you using our Apostolic authority as the Major Archbishop of Trivandrum of the Syro-Malankara Church. You

will have the rights and duties inherent to your office and status. You are obliged to safeguard all the requirements prescribed in the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches¹⁵³. On 14 May 2005, in a solemn ceremony Metropolitan Cyril Mar Baselios was enthroned as the first Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malankara Church and began to use the title *Catholicos* in accordance with the decision of the Malankara bishops.

Syro-Malankara Catholic Church since its Elevation to the Major Archiepiscopal Status

The first canonical synod of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, held from 16 to 18 August 2005, constituted the Permanent Synod, a committee for the preparation of the Statutes of the various organs of the Major Archiepiscopal Curia. 18 Synodal Commissions to assist the Synod and the Church in coordinating the various apostolic activities and an expert group for drafting the particular law¹⁵⁴. The Synod endorsed the previous decisions that “the hierarchical head of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, being its Father and Head shall be called ‘Catholicos’, according to our Syro-Antiochene and Malankara traditions.”¹⁵⁵

With the consent of the Synod of bishops and having consulted the Apostolic See, on 14th May 2006 the Major Archbishop Cyril Mar Baselios established the ecclesiastical province of Tiruvalla in accordance with canon 85,1 of the Eastern Code, raising the eparchy of Tiruvalla to the status of a Metropolitan See, with the eparchies of Bathery and Muvattupuzha as its suffragans.¹⁵⁶ Isaac Mar Cleemis Thottunkal, the incumbent bishop of Tiruvalla, was appointed its first Metropolitan-Archbishop¹⁵⁷. He was installed as the Metropolitan-Archbishop of Tiruvalla on 10th June 2006 at St. John’s Cathedral Church in Tiruvalla. Thus the second Metropolitan Province of the Malankara Catholic Church came into being. In accordance with the provisions of the Eastern Code, the fourth Synod held from 31 October to 3 November 2006 deliberated on organizing the Tribunals of the Church to ensure efficient administration of Justice.

¹⁵³ *Malankara* 1/1 (2005) 13.15

¹⁵⁴ *Malankara* 1/2 (2005) 18-22. 36-38.

¹⁵⁵ *Malankara* 1/2 (2005) 24.38

¹⁵⁶ *L’Osservatore Romano*, 15-16 May 2006.

¹⁵⁷ *L’Osservatore Romano*, 15-16 May 2006, 1 ; *Malankara* 2/1 (2006) 62-63.

In accordance with the norms of canon 1062 of CCEO, the Synodal Tribunal of the Church was constituted with the election of Thomas Mar Koorilos as the General Moderator for the administration of Justice and three other bishops as Judges. The Synod resolved to constitute the Ordinary Tribunal of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church and determined the personnel necessary for the same¹⁵⁸. The Synod also decided to erect the Eparchy of Mavelikkara, bifurcating the northern part of the Archdiocese of Trivandrum.¹⁵⁹ After consulting the Apostolic See as per canon 85 of the Eastern Code, the Major Archbishop Cyril Mar Baselios constituted the Eparchy of Mavelikkara on 1 January 2007 as a suffragan of the Archdiocese of Trivandrum.¹⁶⁰

On 18 January 2007 Major Archbishop Cyril Mar Baselios Malancharuvil died and on 20 January he was buried in St Mary’s Cathedral Church at Pattom in Trivandrum. On 8 February 2007 the Synod of bishops of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church elected Isaac Mar Cleemis Thottunkal, until then Archbishop of Tiruvalla, as the second Major Archbishop.¹⁶¹ In accordance with canon 153 of the Eastern Code, on 8th February 2007, the Synod notified the Roman Pontiff of the canonical conduct of the election and the Major Archbishop-elect petitioned the confirmation of his election.¹⁶²

On 10 February Pope Benedict XVI confirmed the election of Mar Cleemis as the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church.¹⁶³ On the same day, before the Synod, the Major Archbishop-elect emitted the profession of faith and the promise to fulfil his office faithfully, and then the official proclamation was made¹⁶⁴. The new Major Archbishop, who assumed the name Baselios Mar Cleemis, was enthroned on 5th March 2007 during a solemn ceremony conducted in St Mary’s Cathedral at Pattom in Trivandrum¹⁶⁵. On 28 May 2007 the new Major Archbishop visited the Pope to manifest hierarchical

¹⁵⁸ *Malankara* 2/2 (2007) 28-29.

¹⁵⁹ *Malankara* 2/2 (2007) 27-28. 46

¹⁶⁰ *L’Osservatore Romano*, 2-3 January, 2007, 1 : *Malankara* 2/2 (2007) 80-81.

¹⁶¹ *Malankara* 2/3 (2007) 72-75.

¹⁶² *Malankara* 2/3 (2007) 83-88.

¹⁶³ *L’Osservatore Romano*, 11 February, 2007, 1 : *Malankara* 2/3 (2007) 198.140

¹⁶⁴ *Malankara* 2/3 (2007) 74.

¹⁶⁵ *Malankara* 2/3 (2007) 118-120.

communion with the Roman Pontiff, the successor of St. Peter, through the fidelity, reverence and obedience that are due to the Supreme Pastor of the entire Church.¹⁶⁶

Because of the sudden demise of Major Archbishop Cyril Mar Baselios, the Ordinary Tribunal of the Malankara Catholic Church, already decided by the Synod in November 2006, was constituted only on 15 November 2007 by the new Major Archbishops.¹⁶⁷ With this act the Malankara Church completely introduced the Oriental judicial system as defined in the Eastern Code. On 25th January 2010 the Major Archbishop Baselios Mar Cleemis, with the consent of the Synod and having consulted the Apostolic See of Rome, created two new eparchies. The eparchy of Pathanamthitta in Kerala was erected bifurcating the Major Archdiocese of Trivandrum as its suffragan See. The eparchy of Puttur was created in the state of Karnataka consisting of the northern part of the eparchy of Bathery as a suffragan of the Archdiocese of Tiruvalla.¹⁶⁸

In February 2007 Pope Benedict XVI appointed Fr. Chacko Aerath OIC as the Apostolic Visitor for the Malankara Catholics outside the Malankara Catholic dioceses in India. He took his residence at Delhi and took the name Jacob Mar Barnabas at the time of his Episcopal ordination on 10th March 2007. His installation was on 22nd March 2007 in Delhi.

On 14th May 2010 Pope Benedict XVI erected a new exarchate for the Syro-Malankara Catholics in North America. Fr. Thomas Naickamparambil was appointed the first Exarch of USA and Apostolic Visitor of Canada and Europe of the Malankara Catholics. Fr. Thomas took the name Thomas Mar Eusebios at the time of his Episcopal ordination on 21 September 2010. His installation was on 3 October, 2010 in USA.

Then there were some changes in the jurisdiction of the bishops: Bishop Geevarghese Mar Divannasios was transferred from Bathery to the new Eparchy Puttur (2010) and Bishop Joseph Mar Thomas, the

¹⁶⁶CCEO, c. 92#1; *Malankara* 111(2007) 5-8. 76-84.

¹⁶⁷*Malankara* 2/2 (2007) 80-81.

¹⁶⁸*L'Osservatore Romano*, 25-26 January, 2010, 1

Apostolic Visitor, was transferred from USA to Bathery (2010). Bishop Yoochanon Mar Chrysostom was transferred from Marthandom to the new Eparchy Pathanamthitta (2010) and Bishop Thomas Mar Koorilos was transferred from Muvattupuzha to Tiruvalla as the Archbishop (2007). Abraham Mar Julios was appointed as the Bishop of Muvattupuzha (2008) and Vincent Mar Paulos was appointed as the bishop of Marthandom (2010) and Thomas Mar Anthonios was appointed as the Curia bishop (2010) and Samuel Mar Irenios (2010) was appointed as the Auxiliary bishop of Trivandrum and Philipose Mar Stephanos (2010) was appointed as the auxiliary of Tiruvalla with his residence at Kattappana. The Malankara Catholic Church has 13 bishops (including one Emeritus, one Curia bishop, one Exarch, one Apostolic Visitor and two Auxiliaries), 652 diocesan priests, 138 religious priests, 236 other men religious and 1835 women religious, 983 parishes and mission stations and 436.657 Christian faithful.

At present the Syro-Malankara Church has eight eparchies organized into two ecclesiastical provinces: 1) Trivandrum with its suffragan eparchies of Marthandom, Mavelikkara and Pathanamthitta. 2) Tiruvalla with its suffragan eparchies, Bathery, Muvattupuzha and Puttur. There is also an Apostolic Visitor in India to take care of the Malankara Catholics throughout India, outside the boundaries of the Malankara eparchies. There is also an Apostolic Exarchate in USA. The exarch takes care of the Malankara Catholics in USA and Canada and Europe.

Conclusion

The original plan of Mar Ivanios, the prophet and protagonist of the Indian ecumenical movement in the twentieth century, was the entrance of the whole Malankara Orthodox Church with its head the Catholicos and the Synod of bishops into the Catholic Church, preserving its individuality, autonomy and Antiochene ritual identity. Although the original project failed because of various adverse circumstances, the authentic thirst for unity and communion led Mar Ivanios, together with Mar Theophilos and the representatives of the clergy and laity to Catholic communion in 1930. In the course of time that "little flock" attained steady growth and sufficient maturity. With its promotion to the rank of a Major Archiepiscopal Church, the Malankara Catholic Church obtained

a real “Father and Head” in the person of the Major Archbishop and a Synod of bishops for authentic collegial governance with all the rights, privileges and obligations in accordance with the norms of the Eastern Code. Now the great challenge and responsibility of the Malankara Catholic Church will be to achieve what Mar Ivanios earnestly desired, namely the unity and communion of the Indian Orthodox Churches of Antiochene tradition in the bosom of the Catholic Church.

Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis, Major Archbishop-Catholicos promulgated the Code of Particular Canons of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church on the 10th March 2012 at the Catholicate Centre at Pattom, Trivandrum, with the *recognitio* of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, obtained on 7 September 2011. The Cardinal Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, His Eminence Leonardo Cardinal Sandri in his *recognitio* says, “Approval recognizes that the Syro-Malankara Church has the inherent right to enact those canonical norms, which seek to preserve and express its specific identity and sacred patrimony.”¹⁶⁹ The expression in use in the Malankara Catholic Church of calling its “Father and Head”, who is canonically equal to a Patriarch in rights and duties, except the title, **Catholicos** is officially approved by Rome through this *recognitio*.¹⁷⁰ On 10th March His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis Major Archbishop-Catholicos, in collaboration with the bishops of the Synod of the Malankara Catholic Church solemnly blessed the Holy Myron.

¹⁶⁹. The Code of Particular Canons of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church, Trivandrum, 2012, p.xi.

¹⁷⁰. G. Chediath, Major Archbishop Catholicos, Trivandrum, 2007.

APPENDIX - 1

The Memmorial Stone

In the year of the Lord
 One thousand nine hundred and thirty (1930),
 During the papacy of His Holiness Pope Pius XI,
 On September 20, Saturday at 4.00 p.m. in this Episcopal chapel
 His Grace Archbishop Mar Ivanios O.I.C. M.A.,
 His Lordship Bishop Mar Theophilos O.I.C., Rev. Fr. John O.I.C.,
 Rev. deacon Alexander (Later Fr. Seraphion O.I.C.),
 Sri Chacko Kilileth (Representing the Clergy & Laity of the
 Jacobite Church in Kerala), having made their profession of faith,
 Were received into full communion with the Catholic Church
 By His Excellency Bishop Aloysius Maria Benziger O.C.D.,
 Bishop of Quilon
 Whom the Archbishop approached for help
 And whom the Holy See deputed
 To perform the reception
 In the honourable presence of
 Mar Alexander Choolaparambil, Bishop of Kottayam,
 Mar James Kalacherry, Bishop of Changanacherry and
 Rt. Rev. Msgr. Lawrence Pereira, The Bishop elect of Kottar.
 This historic event was followed by
 The very First Holy Mass in the Catholic
 Syro-Antiochian Rite officiated by the Metropolitan Archbishop
 His Grace Mar Ivanios on Sunday 21st September 1930 at 07.30 a.m.
 On the main Altar (still preserved intact) in this chapel.

To perpetuate the historic event of Reunion of Malankara Church,
 this detailed plaque was placed by Bishop Stanley Roman,
 Bishop of Quilon on 17th August 2003.

APPENDIX-2**The Bishops of the Malankara Catholic Church**

1. His Beatitude Moran Mor Baselios Cleemis ,
Major Archbishop - Catholicos
2. Dr. Samuel Mar Irenios, Auxiliary Bishop of Trivandrum
3. Dr. Thomas Mar Anthonios, Curia Bishop
4. Dr. Vincent Mar Paulos, Bishop of Marthandom
5. Dr. Joshua Mar Ignathios, Bishop of Mavelikkara
6. Dr. Yoochanon Mar Chrysostom, Bishop of Pathanamthitta
7. Dr. Thomas Mar Koorilos, Archbishop of Tiruvalla
8. Dr. Joseph Mar Thomas, Bishop of Bathery
9. Dr. Abraham Mar Julios, Bishop of Muvattupuzha
10. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Divannasios, Bishop of Puttur
11. Dr. Philipose Mar Stephanos, Auxiliary Bishop of Tiruvalla
11. Dr. Jacob Mar Barnabas, Apostolic Visitor in India
12. Dr. Thomas Mar Eusebios, Exarch of USA und Apostolic Visitor of Canada und Europe
13. Geevarghese Mar Timotheos, Retired Bishop.

APPENDIX-3**The Malankara Catholic Dioceses**

1. Major Archdiocese of Trivandrum
2. Diocese of Marthandom
3. Diocese of Mavelikkara
4. Diocese of Pathanamthitta
5. Archdiocese of Tiruvalla
6. Diocese of Bathery
7. Diocese of Muvattupuzha
8. Diocese of von Puttur
9. Extra Territorial Regions in India
10. Exarchate in USA.
11. Extra Territorial Regions in Europe, Kanada, Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Muscat, Saudi Arabia und Bahrain.

APPENDIX-4

Terms Explained

Abhayabhavan =	Hospice for uncared women, conducted by the Church.
Abo =	Syriac Term to designate a monastic priest, meaning Father.
Abun =	Syriac Term used to designate a bishop, meaning our Father. Often it is used in front of the name of a bishop. A bishop may call his brother bishop <i>Abun</i> .
Achan =	Malayalam word for a priest (Father)
Anpathu Nomb =	Malayalam expression for the forty days' (fifty days') fast
Balabhavan =	Boys'/Girls' Home or Orphanage
Bandh =	Word used to designate the paralysis of public life by protesters. It is a violent means of protest for any cause. It hinders the freedom of movement of the citizens. In Kerala it is prohibited by the High Court. But it appears under other names.
Bawa Kakshy =	The name of one of the factions of the Puthenkur community in Kerala. They are with the Syriac Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch. Patriarch is called here <i>Patriarcha Bawa</i> (Father Patriarch). This group was also known as <i>Kurillos Kakshy</i> (derived from the leader of the faction in 1913, Bishop Paulose Mar Kurillos). Today they prefer to be called <i>Yakobaya Suriani Sabha</i> (Jacobite Syriac Church).
Bethany Hills =	Place bought by Mar Ivanios at Nalanchira, in Trivandrum. At present several educational institutions of the Malankara Catholic Church are situated there.
Cathanar =	Word formerly used in Kerala to designate a priest: Geevarghese Kathanar is Father Geevarghese
CBCI =	Catholic Bishops' Conference of India

Chenkol =	Scepter
Cheppedukal =	Edicts written on Copper Plates.
Christianikal =	Christians
CMS =	Church Missionary Society
Dalits =	The once down trodden folk. Mahatma Gandhi called them Harigen (People of God).
Desakkuri =	Certificate of the parish for the ordination of the candidates to the clerical state.
Desathu Pattakkar=	local priests; Group of priests attached to a parish.
Dukrana =	Commemoration of St. Thomas, the Apostle on July 3rd.
FABC =	Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference.
Harthaal =	It is a means of protest by the public for any public grievance. Practically in Kerala today it is equivalent to Bandh, where the public life is paralyzed by the protesters.
Hudaya Canon =	The official canonical collection of the Syriac Orthodox Church, codified by the Syriac Orthodox (Jacobite) Maphrian Bar Ebraya (13th c.).
Jaatyaikasangham=	A joint ecumenical venture by Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius V (Puthenkur) and Nidhiri Mani Kathanar (Pazhayakur) during the 19th century.
Kakshy =	Faction, group
Kanni =	The Second Malayalam Month (September 15-October 15)
Kasisa =	Syriac Term to designate a priest
Kattachakonam =	Former name of Kesavadasapuram in Trivandrum
KCBC =	Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council
Kodungalloor =	The place where St. Thomas landed first in India.
Kollam =	A town in Kerala. It was formerly known as Quilon.
Kollavarsham =	Malayalam Era (ME) used in Kerala until recently. ME 1=A.D.825
Koruyo =	A minor order in the Syro - Antiochene Tradition
Kumbham =	Seventh Month of the Malayalam Era (February 15-March 15)
Kurillos Kakshy=	The Puthenkur faction with the Patriarch known after Bishop Paulose Mar Kurillos: see also Bawa Kakshy.
LMS =	London Missionary Society

Malpan	=	Doctor in religious matters, teacher
Mappila	=	A respectful name to designate a Christian in Kerala. Until recently several Christians used it.
Margamkali Paatt	=	Christian war dance, singing and enacting the arrival of St. Thomas and his activities in India.
Marthoma	=	St. Thomas
Mavelikkara	=	The birth place of Mar Ivanios in Kerala. In 1818 and 1836 there were two meetings of the Puthenkur community at Mavelikkara. Both the meetings dealt with the collaboration of the Church with the Protestant Anglican missionaries.
ME	=	Malayalam Era; See also Kollavarsham
Metrachan	=	Respectful name used in Malayalam to designate a bishop: Father bishop
Metran Kakshy	=	The Puthenkur Faction which stood against the activities of Mar Abdallah, the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. It is also called <i>Catholicos faction</i> . This is the faction which stood with the Malankara Metropolitan Vattasseril Mar Dionysius in 1912 for the autonomy of the Church.
Metran	=	It is a shortened form of <i>Metropolitana</i> (Metropolitan). Nowadays it is used as synonym of Episcopa (Bishop)
Mukthyar	=	Manager
Muttukuthal Prasthanam	=	A Latinization tendency in the Malankara Catholic Church during the early period of its growth, under the influence of the pro Latin elements in the Church.
Naveekarana Kakshy	=	The group around Mathews Mar Athanasios and Thomas Mar Athanasios, excommunicated by the Patriarch in 1876 and separated from the Jacobite Church when they were defeated in the civil litigation in 1889. Later they adopted the name The Mar Thoma Church.
Nazranikal	=	Another name for Christians, meaning the followers of Jesus of Nazareth
Nilackal Trust	=	A Trust constituted by all the Episcopal Churches in Kerala for an ecumenical Church and Center at Nilackal, Kerala.
Nivarthana Prasthanam	=	A protest Movement in Kerala at the time of Mar Ivanios against the ruling State Government which wanted to nationalize the private schools.

Padayaatra	=	Pilgrimage on foot
Padiyola	=	A decision of the community written on palm leaves
Padroado	=	A Portuguese word, meaning patronage.
Pampa	=	A River in Kerala. It was the Southern boundary of the Syro-Malabar Church until His Eminence Eugene Cardinal Tisserant extended it to the South, up to Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin).
Panam	=	coin used in antiquity in Kerala.
Paanappaatt	=	A type of folklore narrating the missionary activity of St. Thomas in India. A group of singers known as Paanans used to go around and sing these songs. So they are known as Paanappaatt or Paanan Paatt.
Panchayath	=	Here it means a committee. Kollam Panchayath Kodathy was constituted to settle the dispute between the Puthenkuttukar and the CMS missionaries over the properties owned by them in common.
Parishkarana Padhathy	=	Reform Program
Parumala	=	A small village in Kerala. It was at the Parumala Seminary that the Malankara Synod authorized Mar Ivanios for ecumenical negotiations with the Roman Catholic Church. Mar Gregorios, a declared Saint of the Malankara Orthodox Church, is buried at Parumala.
Pazhaya Seminary	=	The priestly training center at Chungam, Kottayam of the Puthenkur community is known as Pazhaya Seminary, meaning the Old Seminary.
Pazhayakur (Pazhayakuttukar)	=	Terms used to designate those Thomas Christians who continued under the Western missionaries after the Coonan Cross Oath in 1653. They are today's Syro-Malabar Catholics.
Puthen Seminary	=	The Seminary established by the CMS at Kottayam after their separation from the Puthenkuttukar.
Puthenkur (Puthenkuttukar)	=	Terms used to designate those Thomas Christians who remained under the Archdeacon Thomas and eventually lost the full and visible Catholic communion and became Jacobites.
R	=	Returned to the original diocese
Remban Paatt	=	One of the ancient types of folklore, among the Thomas Christians.

- Remban = is a monk in the Syriac tradition; now a days in the West Syriac tradition priests are made Rembans before they are ordained bishops.
- Rish Patriarch = Syriac word meaning Chief Patriarch; a term to designate the bishop of Rome.
- Sacerdos Magnus= Great Priest
- Sakshya Sangam= Witness Society formed in the Malankara Catholic Church during the early period to witness to the unity and Orthodox faith of the Christian Church.
- Sampalur Pathiris= A term used to designate the Jesuit priests who resided at Ampazhakatt in Kerala. The Jesuit house was called St. Paul's (Sampalur).
- Saravanakkunne= The former name of the place at Pattom, Trivandrum, where the present Major Archbishop's house is situated.
- Sliba = Cross.
- Smaranika = Commemorative volume
- Upadesi = Malayalam Word for a Catechist
- Vaidika Mitram = (literally priests' friend): A monthly published in Kerala by a few priests to propagate the ideas of the One Rite Movement.
- Vattippanam = An amount deposited during the 19th century in the British East India company. There are several versions regarding the one who deposited it. The interest could be drawn by the Puthenkur and Pazhayakur leaders and made use of for the good of the communities.
- Veeradiyanpaatt= A form of folklore prevalent among the Thomas Christians in Kerala. It is also known as Paanappaatt.
- Vimochana Samaram=A popular Movement in 1957 against the first communist government in Kerala.

APPENDIX-5

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