

SYRIAC DIALOGUE

**SIXTH NON-OFFICIAL CONSULTATION
ON DIALOGUE WITHIN THE
SYRIAC TRADITION**

**Edited on behalf of the
Foundation
PRO ORIENTE**

By

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PRO ORIENTE Publications in English

The Oriental Orthodox - Roman Catholic - Ecumenical Dialogue

- * **First Ecumenical Consultation** between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 1 of the Periodical "Wort und Wahrheit" (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1972) 190 p.
- * **Second Ecumenical Consultation** between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 2 of the Periodical "Wort und Wahrheit" (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1974) 208 p.
- * **Third Ecumenical Consultation** between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 3 of the Periodical "Wort und Wahrheit" (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1976) 240 p.
- * **Fourth Ecumenical Consultation** between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 4 of the Periodical "Wort und Wahrheit" (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1978) 256 p.
- * **Fifth Ecumenical Consultation** between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church, Papers and Minutes. Supplementary Issue Number 5 of the Periodical "Wort und Wahrheit" (Verlag Herder, Vienna 1989) 208 p.
- * **Selection of the Papers and Minutes** of the Four Vienna Consultations between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. Edited by Ökumenische Stiftung PRO ORIENTE in Vienna (1988) 286 p.
- * **Five Vienna Consultations** between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church 1971 - 1988. Selected Papers in One Volume. Published and edited by the Ecumenical Foundation PRO ORIENTE - Vienna (1993) 370 p.

The PRO ORIENTE Dialogue within the Churches of Syriac Tradition

- * **Syriac Dialogue No 1**, First Non-Official Consultation on Dialogue within the Syriac Tradition, PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1994, 240 p. Available in English, French and Arabic.
- * **Syriac Dialogue No 2**, Second Non-Official Consultation on Dialogue within the Syriac Tradition, PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1996, 228 p. Available in English, French and Arabic.
- * **Syriac Dialogue No 3**, Third Non-Official Consultation on Dialogue within the Syriac Tradition, PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1998, 192p. Available in English and French.
- * **Syriac Dialogue No 4**, Fourth Non-Official Consultation on Dialogue within the Syriac Tradition, PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 2001, 154p. Available in English.
- * **Syriac Dialogue No 5**, Fifth Non-Official Consultation on Dialogue within the Syriac Tradition, PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 2003, 154p. Available in English.
- * **Syriac Dialogue No 6**, Sixth Non-Official Consultation on Dialogue within the Syriac Tradition, PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 2004, 218p. Available in English.

The Oriental Orthodox - Roman Catholic - Ecumenical Dialogue

PRO ORIENTE Booklet Series

- * **Booklet Number 1**, Communiqués and Joint Documents; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1990, 136 p. Available in English, German, Arabic, Malayalam and Armenian, planned in Amharic.
- * **Booklet Number 2**, Summaries of the Papers; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1991, 74 p. Available in English, German and Arabic; planned in other languages.
- * **Booklet Number 3**, Middle East Regional Symposium, Deir Amba Bishoy, October 1991; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1993, 168 p. Available in English and Arabic.
- * **Booklet Number 4**, On Primacy, First Study Seminar, June 1991; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1993, 92 p. Available in English and Arabic.
- * **Booklet Number 5**, On Councils and Conciliarity, Second Study Seminar, June 1992; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1993. Available in English and Arabic.
- * **Booklet Number 6**, Kerala Regional Symposium, Kottayam, October 1993; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1996. Available in English and Malayalam.
- * **Booklet Number 7**, On Ecclesiology, Third Study Seminar, July 1994; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1995. Available in English, planned in Arabic.
- * **Booklet Number 8**, Lebanon Regional Symposium, Kaslik, September 1994, PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1998. Available in English, planned in Arabic.
- * **Booklet Number 9**, On Authority and Jurisdiction, Fourth Study Seminar, July 1996; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1999. Available in English.
- * **Booklet Number 10**, Regional Symposium Kröffelbach, Germany, August 1997; PRO ORIENTE, Vienna 1999. Available in German.

FOREWORD BY THE EDITORS

When the Russian-Orthodox Church celebrated its Millennium in Moscow in June 1988 the founder and protector of the Pro Oriente foundation, Franciscus Cardinal König, and former president Theodor Piffl-Perčević had their first contact with a hierarch from the Ancient Church of the East. Catholicos Mar Addai II who was also invited to take part in the celebrations.

Two years later the well-known Metropolitan Mar Aprem of Trichur (Southern India) gave his first lecture in Vienna, organised by the Pro Oriente foundation, on the crucial topic "Was Nestorius a Nestorian?" On this hot evening at the end of June, an astonishing number of more than 100 interested people had met to listen to the blunt confession of Mar Aprem that Nestorius was more sincere than his reputation supposes.

In summer 1993 we got the message from Rome that an official dialogue is beginning with the Assyrian Church of the East. The late President Alfred Stürnemann and the members of the executive board discussed the option whether to engage in a new kind of unofficial dialogue following the schedule of the successful Oriental-Orthodox-Dialogue, which Pro Oriente established since 1971. In June 1994, the First non-official Syriac Consultation took place in Vienna. Five more consultations followed in the years 1996, 1997, 2000, 2002, and 2003. All the Churches in the Syriac tradition have participated in this unique ecumenical dialogue.

This volume contains the papers and discussions of the Sixth non-official Consultation of March 2003. This marks the end of the second phase which concentrated on the sacraments in the Churches of the Syriac tradition. It contributed remarkably to better mutual understanding and to discover the common rich liturgical heritage of the Churches within the Syriac tradition.

Our gratitude as editors of this volume is extended to Archbishop Christoph Cardinal Schönborn of Vienna who visited the meeting delivering a short speech to the participants. President Dr. Johann Marte from the executive committee of our foundation took part in several working sessions of the Sixth Consultation. We are grateful for his commitment.

The technical organization was once more truthfully conducted by the headmistress of our office, Mag. Marion Wittine who also read and prepared the manuscripts for their publication.

SCHOLARLY ACHIEVEMENTS OF THIS VOLUME

With this publication of the proceedings of the Sixth Non-Official Syriac Consultation „Sacraments in the Syriac Tradition – Part III” an encyclopaedia and handbook has been finished on the liturgical heritage of the Syriac Christianity in its different branches. PRO ORIENTE is pleased and proud to have contributed to a really historical cooperation of theologians of all Churches of Syriac tradition on this crucial matter. The result is somehow a monument of pre-existing and anticipated unity. The three volumes now at hand may serve as a basis of mutual understanding of the churches involved and of a growing consciousness of their common roots. Information here presented will promote mutual sympathy and feelings of friendship and in farther consequence also facilitate interchurch relations and co-operations on various levels, which more and more turn out to be a condition of survival in an increasingly hostile social and political environment.

All Churches of Syriac tradition share the same tradition of sacraments, although those included in the holy number seven, which was introduced in the Middle Ages from the West, are different. Since the Syriac term *raza/rozo* covers all mysteries of God's grace administered by the Church without the Western differentiation between sacraments and sacramentals, the Church of the East has developed her own listings of the Seven. In our first consultation on sacraments we have treated sacraments in Syriac tradition in general and then especially the sacraments of initiation, namely baptism and anointing. In the second consultation in this series we have concentrated on those sacraments among the seven which are not common to the Church of the East and the other Churches, that is on one side matrimony and anointing of the sick and on the other holy leaven and the sign of the cross. And now, in the third part, we have concluded with those sacraments still lacking among the number seven, which are in common, namely eucharist, holy orders and penance.

Three authors are dealing with holy eucharist: Chorbishop *Michael J. Birnie* from the Church of the East, Metropolitan *Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim* from the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and the Maronite professor Father *Elias Khalife-Hachem*.

Michael Birnie describes and explains in detail the celebration of the eucharistic liturgy of Addai and Mari most anciently and mainly used in the Church of the East. Special stress is laid on the reconciliation in and by the eucharist. Interesting is the epiclesis of the Holy Spirit in first line on the faithful, astonishing that the eucharistic elements are called body and blood of Christ from the beginning of the celebration, impressive are the testimonies for the belief of the Church of the East in the real presence of body and blood of Christ in bread and wine. Although not authentic the insti-

tution narrative is added by about half of the priests of the Church of the East to the anaphora of Addai and Mari. *Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim* informs of about 80 anaphoras of the Syrian Orthodox Church, of the structure of the eucharistic liturgy and the ecumenical achievements concerning eucharist between Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Catholic Church. Most attention is paid to the declaration of Pope John Paul II and Mor Zakka I Iwas, initiating a mutual admission of the faithful to the sacraments of penance, eucharist, and anointment of the sick. As added in the discussion this possibility is urgently required and widely used in Middle East in ecclesial schools and in the diaspora among Oriental Christians belonging to different Churches. An issue treated only in the discussion is the insertion into the creed not only of the filioque by the Latin Church but also of the Mother of God by Syrian Orthodox, Copts and Greeks. Commonly unknown may be that till to Jacob of Edessa in the 5th century unleavened bread was used for eucharist at least in some places in Syria. *Elias Khalife-Hachem* gives a detailed overview on the sources of Maronite liturgical tradition. This heritage proves as rich as the Syrian Orthodox, but broader, emerging from the plurifold liturgical landscape of the Church of Antioch including also East Syrian and Greek traditions. Syrian Orthodox anaphoras and Latin influence were adopted in the Middle Ages. The third Anaphora of St. Peter or “Sharar” is very similar to that of Addai and Mari. Both seem to represent the oldest liturgical tradition of Antioch whereas the anaphora of James may have had its origin rather in Jerusalem.

The sacrament of the holy orders is treated by another three contributions: Father *Kondothra M. George* from the Malankara-Orthodox Church, Bishop *Mar Bawai Soro* from the Church of the East and Father *Thomas Munnooramparampil* from the Catholic Syro-Malabar Church. All three authors agree for their respective traditions in the same patristic concept of a threefold hierarchy of bishops, priests and deacons, each order of which is once more unfolded in three levels, resembling the nine-fold heavenly hierarchy of angels in Dionysios Pseudareopagita.

K.M. George refers to Paulos Mar Gregorios and Hans Küng and argues that the term “Hierarchy of Pseudo-Dionysius” has been misunderstood in the West as signifying a leadership in the Church. But the ecclesial office is secondary to the community and integral part of it. Therefore in the Malankara Orthodox Church bishops and priests are elected by the faithful. Information in detail about this process is given in the discussion. In the description of the ordination liturgy for the bishop invocations of the Holy Spirit and laying on of hands are especially highlighted. *Mar Bawai Soro* gives a historical introduction into the very beginnings of ecclesial office and Church organization in Syria East of Antioch. Then he explains the nine orders of priesthood one by one in their functions and their theological relation to the service of Jesus. Also Syrian monasticism and the institute of deaconesses, although no longer existing in the Church of the East, are especially dealt with. Referring to Mar Narsai the author

expands the theology of the sacrament of priesthood. Long before Western scholasticism already Mar Narsai had seen the priest as representing Christ and acting “in persona Christi”. The historical issues of hereditary episcopacy and of the purpose of deaconesses in the Church of the East are clarified in the discussion. *Thomas Munnooramparampil* in the third contribution on holy orders informs that his Syro-Malabar Church in the 16th century has introduced the Roman ordination rites and that only after Vatican II the original East Syrian tradition has been restored according to the sources of the Church of the East. The nine orders of the ecclesial office, and the theological aspects and ordination liturgies of bishops and priests are once more thoroughly reflected and precisely described by an Eastern rite Catholic. The discussion revealed that in the Church of the East marriage of priests was always possible not only before the ordination like in other oriental and orthodox Churches, but also afterward, and that this is the practice till today. In parenthesis: being aware and taking advantage of this most ancient tradition preserved in the Church of the East could enable the Roman Catholic Church to solve a lot of her present problems.

The last three papers deal with penance: Archbishop *Mar Julius Mikhael Al-Jamil* speaks for the Syrian-Catholic Church and Archbishop *Yacub Daniel Hurmizd* for the Church of the East, whereas Father (now Archbishop of Kirkuk) *Louis Sako* of the Chaldean Church shows the historical development of reconciliation in Western Christianity, since his Church has adopted the Latin practice.

According to both of the prior authors the Syriac tradition has never developed a self-standing and established rite of this sacrament. Penance was always a part of the eucharistic liturgy. There the rite of reconciliation was developed on biblical traditions of the Old and of the New Testament. Archbishop *Al-Jamil* presents a historical outline. By Western influence the private confession was introduced to the Syrian Orthodox Church already in the Middle Ages. The Syrian Catholic Church has later adopted the Tridentine Western form of this sacrament. *Al-Jamil* is pleading for a genuine renewal of the rite of reconciliation and other sacraments by co-operation of all Churches of Syriac tradition. Archbishop *Yacub Daniel Hurmizd* concentrates on the biblical, theological and spiritual aspects in the tradition of reconciliation in the Church of the East using as sources among others Isaac of Ninive. The personal confession of sins to the priest is unknown in the Church of the East. *Louis Sako*, after a careful historical review of the Western development, explains the theology of the Second Vatican Council concerning the sacrament of reconciliation and its biblical background. In an intensive discussion the practice of confession in the Syrian Orthodox Church is clarified, and the healing and uniting aspect of eucharist is thoroughly, but controversially considered.

An additional and inspiring contribution by *Mar Bawai Soro* with the title “The Eucharist in the Church of the East: A Means to Unity” concludes with an urgent ap-

peal to understand eucharist as the sacrament of reconciliation as it is the will of Jesus and the tradition in the Church of the East. Unity is not the condition of eucharist but its gift. The gift of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist is to heal our brokenness and bind up our self-inflicted wounds. Churches should use the benefits of this sacrament for their mutual reconciliation instead of excluding each others faithful from receiving their eucharist.

All together, this book convincingly shows that the sacramental and liturgical life of Syriac Christianity has its common roots before all divisions, that the different branches remained in intensive contact and exchange through the times and that their tradition is in fundament one and the same. Some of the most ancient and original elements of this tradition are preserved in the Church of the East because she was least exposed to Greek influence. The different Churches of Syriac tradition may be enriched by the study of the broader heritage. And last but not least the Western reader will be overwhelmed by the depth of biblical reflections and theological considerations. Used to see a sacrament in the sober scholastic and juridical tradition he feels that he has much to learn, that has been lost or rather newer was present in our Western Church.

PROGRAM

Friday, 7th of March 2003: Inauguration

- 18:00 Dinner
- 19:30 Opening Prayer
Inauguration of the Syriac Consultation by
Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna,
Chairman of the Board of Pro Oriente
Address by Dr. Johann Marte, President of Pro Oriente
Addresses of the heads of the Churches of Syriac tradition

Saturday, 8th of March 2003:

- 9:00 Prayer (Syrian Orthodox)
- 9:15 Papers on Eucharist chaired by Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil

Paper by Chorbishop Michael J. Birnie
Discussion
- 10:45 Coffee break
- 11:00 Paper by Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim
Discussion
- 12:30 Lunch
- 15:00 Papers and Discussions on Eucharist chaired by Bishop Mar Bawai Soro

Paper by Fr. Elie Khalifé
Discussion
- 16:30 Coffee break
- 17:00 Paper on Holy Orders / Priesthood by Fr. K.M. George
Discussion
- 18:30 Dinner

Sunday, 9th of March 2003:

Excursion to the countryside of Burgenland

- 8.00 Bus to Oggau
- 9.30 Parish of Oggau
- 10.00 Liturgy (homily by Mar Joseph Powathil)
- 11.00 Lenten fare (soup) in the parish
- 12.00 Lunch in a restaurant in Oggau
- 14.00 Bus to Rust
- 14.30 Visit of the city of Rust
- 15.00 Bus to Rohrau
- 15.30 Visit of the birthplace of Joseph Haydn
- 16.00 Visit of the Harrachsche' Bildergalerie (gallery)
- 17.00 Reception by Countess Stephanie Harrach
- 18.00 Bus to Vienna (Pallottihaus)
- 19.30 Cold supper in Pallottihaus

Monday, 10th of March 2003:

- 9:00 Prayer (Syrian Catholic / Maronite)
- 9:15 Papers on Holy Orders/Priesthood chaired by Archbishop Mar Gregorios Y. Ibrahim
 - Paper by Mar Bawai Soro
 - Discussion
- 10:45 Coffee break
- 11:00 Paper by Fr. Thomas Mannoorampampil
 - Discussion
- 12:30 Lunch
- 15:00 Papers on Penance chaired by Archbishop Boulos Matar
 - Paper by Mar Yacub Daniel
 - Paper by Msgr Jules Mikhael Al-Jamil
 - Paper by Fr. Louis Sako (read by Fr. Pierre Yousif)

16:30 Coffee break

17:00 Discussion on the papers about Penance

18:30 Dinner

Tuesday, 11th of March 2003:

- 9:00 Prayer (Church of the East)
- 9:15 Drafting of the Communiqué chaired by Prof. Peter Hofrichter
- 10:45 Coffee break
- 11:00 Communiqué
- 12:30 Lunch
- 15:00 Communiqué / Concluding session
 - Lord's Prayer in Syriac language

PARTICIPANTS

Assyrian Church of the East:

Mar Bawai Soro, Bishop of Western California
Chorbishop Michael J. Birnie, Seattle

Ancient Church of the East:

Mar Yacub Daniel, Metropolitan of Hassake
Archdeacon Khoshaba Georges, London

Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch:

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim, Metropolitan of Aleppo

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church:

Fr. K.M. George, Principal of the Orthodox Seminary, Kottayam
Mathews Mar Severios, Metropolitan of Kandanadu

Chaldean Church:

Fr. Pierre Yousif, Chaldean Mission, Paris

Malabar Catholic Church:

Mar Joseph Powathil, Metropolitan of Changanassery
Fr. Thomas Mannoorampampil, Kottayam

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Jeanne-Nicole Saint-Laurent

Friday, March 7th, 2003: Opening session

INAUGURATION

Archbishop Christoph Cardinal Schönborn

You have come to Vienna in a moment which is particularly dense of worries and dangers for the peace in that area where most of you come from and where the prayer is intense. I am so grateful that you took the way, left your countries and came to his meeting. Some may say: What is more important in a time of menacing wars and conflicts, than to fight for peace? Is that really the time to discuss on Eucharist, Holy Orders / Priesthood and Penance? But if we think what these sacraments are all about: What is more important in this world than the mystery of Eucharist? What is more important than the mystery of His Apostolic Priesthood, called to be servant of reconciliation, servant of the gospel, for all the sufferings of humanity? The grace of Holy Orders is given by the Lord through the Church to reconcile with God through the sacrament of penance. It is given from blood and water of His holy side, and from the promise He gave the first day of His resurrection.

My dear brothers and sisters, what we do here, might seem to the world something marginal. As seen at the television these days there are much more powerful things in the world, but we know and humbly confess that we are gathered around the One who is the King of Kings, the true King. Therefore I think that especially in these dramatic days it is good to be gathered in the name of the Lord and to intercede for peace and to join together around the mysteries of our faith.

Thank you for coming, thank you for being here, thank you for devoting your precious time to these questions.

Opening by President Dr. Johann Marte

Excellencies, dear Brethren and Sisters in Christ!

We are extremely happy to meet you again here in Vienna. Due to the current political situation we were ready to cancel the meeting, if most of you thought it too risky to leave your country. But we were obviously underestimating your courage, your confidence and maybe the importance you attach to our meetings. We feel encourage-

ment by that and extend to you all, Excellencies and the other delegates of the Churches of Syriac tradition, a cordial fraternal welcome. We welcome also our experts and some observers, among them Father Bonny from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, our old friend, and for the first time Dr. David Taylor from the Anglican Church Birmingham.

We very much appreciate your joining us for the 6th Syriac Consultation – Part III of Sacraments in the Syriac tradition.

With this consultation we will finish the dialogue on sacraments, as this dialogue will be continued by the official discussions between the Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Oriental Orthodox Churches in Rome.

The next consultation in India next year will be dedicated to the development of a concept of primacy which H.H. Pope John Paul II recommended in the mid 90ies.

Over 39 years Pro Oriente gained the experience that a lot of non-theological factors are often a greater obstacle to mutual understanding and unity than the controversial theological ones. Therefore Pro Oriente started some projects to focus on history research in order to eliminate misunderstandings and prejudices. We established for instance in the mid 90ies the commission for the history of South-East-Europe and two year ago we started in cooperation with the Orthodox Church the mid-term study project on the unions of Transylvania and Brest. These action lines are to be continued in the future.

Let me give you know a brief information on those other activities of Pro Oriente of the last year and those planned for 2003 which could be of some interest for you.

Together with our Minister of Foreign Affairs we visited Patriarch Pavle in Belgrade. In Vienna we received His Beatitude Gregory III Laham, the Melkite Patriarch who presented a lecture on the situation of Christians in the Middle East. In cooperation with a Russian Orthodox University we had a meeting on Christian anthropology and a lecture on the anthropological crisis of Russian society. We had the 14th and 15th Meeting of Syriac Commission and the 5th Consultation on Sacraments – Part II which was attended by 32 participants. The papers are already published and to your disposition.

In Sarajevo our Commission for South-East-Europe started a new project: the history of the four denominations of Bosnia-Herzegovina, written by representatives of the Islamic, the Serbian, the Catholic and the Jewish community. The articles will be coordinated and published together.

In January 2003 Archbishop Gabriel Kassab from Basra presented a lecture on the present situation of the Christians in Iraq which was met with a great response. The same evening we opened an exhibition on Christians in the Middle East conceived by Dietmar Winkler and Prof. Hollerweger. The show will travel through Austria according to Orientale Lumen: “The first need for Catholics is to be familiar with

the Eastern tradition, so as to be nourished by it and to encourage the process of unity in the best way possible for each”.

Last Monday in Bucarest the Romanian translation of Dietmar Winkler's book "The Eastern Churches" was presented by our Board member Prof. Hamoncourt. The public response has been unexpectedly big.

In May a big international conference on Nestorianism in China will be organised by Prof. Hofrichter in Salzburg. The second conference on Patristics will take place in June. 28 experts will discuss the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church, charisma and institution.

The autumn program will start with a regional symposium in Armenia. The law on the recognition of the Coptic Church just passed the Council of Ministers. If it will pass the parliament too, there won't be any obstacle for the participation of the Coptic Church in the symposium. Metropolitan Kirill will participate in an enquête on the Social Doctrine of the Russian Orthodox Church here in Vienna. In Moscow will take place the second meeting on Christian anthropology. This times' topic will be: "The human being facing death".

On the occasion of the "Year of the Bible 2003" we organise in cooperation with the Austrian National Library lectures of Metropolitan Staikos and the Vienna bishops of the Armenian and the Coptic Church. In cooperation with the Austrian broadcasting company there will be an evening of hymns performed by the choirs of eight Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches. Pro Oriente plans a new action line. We feel uneasy due to the fact that not very many people know about Pro Oriente, its activities and achievements and ecumenical christianity in general. We will establish a special information desk which will offer lectures and support for organising other kinds of activities for the broad public.

As usually we have worked out the agenda for the meeting which you have in front of you. We are very proud to offer you an excursion this time not into a monastery, but in the nice region of Burgenland (East of Vienna). We will attend a Sunday service in a typical countryside church, we are invited for lunch by Bishop Iby from Burgenland who won't be able to join us. After lunch we will go sight-seeing to a little town famous for its viniculture on the stepp-lake of Neusiedl, Joseph Haydn's birthplace and Austria's most famous private gallery of classical paintings. I bet you will enjoy it.

Opening Address by Peter Hofrichter

Dear participants,

As already His Eminence Cardinal Schönborn and President Marte said, we are so happy that in spite of all rumors of war almost all of you are here. Your presence is once more a convincing proof that what we are doing is really important for you and is a strong encouragement to continue with this work. Indeed, the Syriac Dialogue is one of the most efficient projects of PRO ORIENTE.

Since some of you are new in this meeting I want to tell something about its origins, aims and perspectives. The beginnings of the unofficial Syriac Dialogue of PRO ORIENTE are dating back to a PRO ORIENTE Regional Seminar held 1993 in Kottayam when Father Dubasque from the Unity Council in Rome told me that they are in very hopeful negotiations with the Assyrian Church and that it would make sense that PRO ORIENTE supports these negotiations by an unofficial dialogue. Metropolitan Mar Gregorios proposed to our President, at that time Mr. Alfred Stirnemann, to start this dialogue not only with the Church of the East, but with all Churches of Syriac tradition together, including Oriental Catholic and Oriental Orthodox. In 1994 the first such meeting of about ten Churches took place in Vienna. And it became an overwhelming success.

Representatives of all Churches of Syriac tradition met for the first time, and they discovered that they could pray and even sing together, in spite of their separation for many centuries. Many of the participants heard for the first time about the christological terminology of the Church of the East, that *kyana* and *qnoma* is not the same as *nature* and *hypostasis* in Greek. We learned that Nestorianism as a classical heresy has to be distinguished from the historical teachings of Nestorius and moreover that the Church of the East is not based on neither one nor the other. Myself I presented a paper about the liturgy of Addai and Mari without institution narrative, and I am proud that this paper had – as I was told – some influence on the recognition of the Apostle Anaphora by the Catholic Church only recently published by the Vatican.

Although our Assyrian friends did not accept immediately the Vienna christological formula, unexpectedly by PRO ORIENTE already in the same year 1994 the Vatican published a christological agreement with the Church of the East, which had been prepared in total secrecy and which in fact apparently made use of the Vienna Formula. Meanwhile on the occasion of a further PRO ORIENTE Regional Seminar in Kaslik in Lebanon the Syriac Commission was constituted as a steering committee for the continuation of the unofficial Syriac dialogue. The Heads of all Churches involved were asked to nominate a representative for this group. Its presidency was formed by

one representative of the Assyrians, the Syrian Orthodox, the Maronites and the Malabars.

When the second Consultation took place in Vienna in 1996 the Christological issue was no longer a matter of controversy, because it was in principle already solved by the Roman agreement, which was similar to that with some Oriental Orthodox Churches. So we could meet already as being basically united in faith, and when we discussed about the Council of Ephesus it could already be done on a more academic than emotional level. The Third Consultation took place in Chicago and mainly dealt with Theodore of Mopsuestia and the Three Chapters Controversy. By this third meeting the Christological discussion was completed and more or less exhausted.

Since the next subject of the official dialogue of the Church of the East with Rome was the sacraments, we decided to give support to these negotiations by our next meetings. An additional argument for discussing sacraments was that the Churches involved wanted to treat a subject of more practical relevance for their pastoral work. The whole issue was scheduled for three Consultations all to take place in Vienna. The forth Consultation in 2000 was rather common and with special emphasis on Baptism and Confirmation. The fifth in 2002 was presenting and discussing the sacraments diverse between the Church of the East and the other Churches, as matrimony, Anointing of the Sick, Malka, and Sign of the Cross. The present sixth Syriac Consultation will deal with the sacraments all Churches involved have in common: Eucharist, Penance and Priesthood. Meanwhile the official dialogue on sacraments of the Church of the East with Rome has come to a positive end and an agreed declaration is expected within short time.

The next issue we decided to treat will be Primacy. Pope John Paul II has encouraged in his Encyclical letter *Ut omnes unum sint* theologians to discuss openly his papal office and the service of Peter. Cardinal Schönborn, who being the Archbishop of Vienna is the head of Pro Oriente, asked us urgently to approach this important and sensitive task in our future work. So the Syriac Commission has already scheduled the seventh Syriac Consultation on Primacy to take place in autumn 2004, probably in India. We think that the Syriac tradition of Bible interpretation and Church organisation can contribute essentially to our knowledge of how the role of Peter was understood and related to the ecclesial office in the Early Church.

Let me also inform you of two issues, which are also somehow related to our Syriac Dialogue.

The first is concerning the Coptic-Orthodox Church. The recognition of the Coptic Orthodox Church by the Austrian State is now on the way. A new „Altorientengesetz“, a special law including the Armenian, the Syrian Orthodox and the Coptic Church has been approved by the Ministers Council and will soon pass the parliament. Now the good relations between Coptic Orthodox Church and PRO ORIENTE

will be renewed and the „Austrian problem“ of the Copts will no longer influence PRO ORIENTE activities with the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

The second issue concerns a Conference about „Research on Nestorianism in China“ which I am organizing in Salzburg together with Father Prof. Roman Malek SVD from St. Augustin near Bonn. It will be held from 20th to 26th of May. Almost 50 scholars from 12 countries have applied for reading papers, among them also participants of our present Consultation. The conference is supported by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, by PRO ORIENTE, the University and the Government of Salzburg. The main issues of the congress will be the new archaeological findings of early Christian presence in China and the new investigation about how far the Church of the East in China has adopted Buddhist and Taoist terms and concepts for her missionary work. It seems indeed that early Chinese Christianity has developed an independent and indigenous theology. For the Chinese it will be important to know that Christianity is not at all a foreign religion introduced as late as by the way of Western colonialism.

For now I wish our 6th Syriac Consultation a good success. Our meeting takes advantage of the cordial hospitality of the Pallotti Fathers in this house and of the deep and approved friendship among so many of the participants. God's blessings have accompanied our Syriac Dialogue so far. I am convinced that we shall be also this time with the help of God be on a good way.

GREETING MESSAGES RECEIVED

Assyrian Church of the East

His Eminence Cardinal Schönborn
Pro Oriente Foundation
Vienna, Austria.

Your Eminence:

It pleases us the most to greet Your Eminence and the rest of our brothers and sisters in Christ who are present this evening at the opening session of the Sixth Syriac Consultation. We join Your Eminence, all the participants and organizers in supplication and prayer to invite God's wisdom to dwell upon the speakers, moderators and the participants so that their efforts will result in fruitful and productive dialogue.

We are extremely pleased with the historic progress that Pro Oriente Foundation has made through the labor of its Syriac Commission. Your first three Consultations on Christology have helped many Assyrian faithful to appreciate the richness of their own tradition and the understanding that other churches and theologians attribute to the Church of the East Fathers.

In this regard, we wish to commend the work of the Acting President Dr. Johann Marte, Professor Peter Hofrichter and the Executive Board. We wish to invite them to continue the much-appreciated approach of Pro Oriente in and among the ancient and sister Churches of Syriac Tradition. Our representatives are very appreciative of the overall progress that the Syriac Commission has made during the past nine years, in regard to the systematic treatment of all three areas of Christology, Sacraments and the upcoming series on Church Structure.

We continue to pray for the Spirit of God to bless your efforts and help all the Christians realize a deeper sense of our common faith and witness in Christ our Saviour. The Assyrian Church of the East remains committed to participation in the ecumenical movement and in the venerable work of Pro Oriente.

Yours respectfully in Christ,

+ Khanania Mardinkha IV
Catholicos Patriarch
of the Assyrian Church of the East

Ancient Church of the East

Patriarchate Palace
of the Ancient Church of the East

Honourable Sirs, Acting President and members of the PRO ORIENTE Foundation.
Accept our love and salutation in our Lord Jesus Christ.

We are pleased to point out with great satisfaction, to what your highly regarded foundation had done in the last years, and since it was founded in 1964, of great efforts, and blessed exertions, to solidify the approach together with the Syriac tradition churches, which gave good fruits and noticeable results.

With your generous initiative, you offer a good chance for the prelates and representatives of different branches of the Jesus church to come together on a base of real Christian love. To present researches, studies, thoughts, and interpretations, about some theological concepts, and the effects of some historical circumstances in the church progress. This is leading to the achievement of understanding and becoming together in agreement with the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ, His believers be One as He and the Father are One.

At the time we are blessing your good efforts, it is our great rejoice that our church has two representatives in your foundation, His Grace Mar Yacub Daniel, Archbishop of Syria, and Archdeacon Khoshaba Georges, the vicar of our church in London. With the presence of distinct notables of archbishops, bishops, priests and theologians, from different branches of the church. Specially those among Syriac tradition. So we truly hope that these meetings and conferences as the previous ones are of great affirmation towards achievement of the long-thought hope which is the unity of the church of Christ. We hope that these meetings will lead to good results, like in the good fruits that the faithful harvest from the holy vineyard, that you are labouring in the vineyard of the Lord Jesus Christ.

May the Lord bless your exertions, to succeed, and fulfil everything that is for the benefit of His Holy Church. Let His Grace and Blessings be with all of us every time...Amen.¹

Patriarch + Addai II
Supreme head of the Church of the East
in Iraq and Universe

¹ Translated from original Arabic by Archdeacon Dr. Khoshaba Georges

Malankara Orthodox-Syrian Church

Malankara Orthodox Syrian Catholicate of the East
Baselius Marthoma Mathews II
Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan

Message for the Sixth Syriac Consultation

It is with much joy that we send our hearty greetings and blessings to the sixth Syriac Consultation organised by the Pro Oriente Foundation in Vienna on “Sacraments in the Syriac Tradition”.

We gratefully remember that in the past, the Pro Oriente Foundation has played a key role in bringing together the Roman Catholic Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches in their continuing common search for mutual understanding, agreement in faith and eventual unity in Christ our one Shepherd and Saviour. The Foundation has so far effectively used various means like unofficial theological consultations, regional symposia, exchange of scholars, mutual visits of church dignitaries and publications for the realisation of our common goal.

As a founding member of the fellowship of Catholic and Oriental Orthodox churches in Pro Oriente since 1971, the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India has always faithfully sent its church dignitaries and distinguished theologians to participate in the academic and other events organised by PRO ORIENTE. We particularly remember the very useful regional Symposium organised at Kottayam in 1993.

We wish to send our humble and sincere greetings to our distinguished brothers in Christ HE Cardinal König and HE Cardinal Schönborn whose vision for unity is very inspiring to us. We wish to thank our beloved Mr Johann Marte and Prof Peter Hofrichter and all others who work hard for all our churches. To all assembled bishops and theologians at the Syriac Consultation we convey our love and blessings. May the Spirit of unity save us from all discord and disunity and keep us together as one fold in Christ our Lord.

Baselius Marthoma Mathews II
Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan

Kottayam, March 3, 2003.

Maronite Patriarchate

RE-B4 35/03
Bkerkeh, 24th of February 2003

Dr. Johann Marte, Acting President
A – 1010 Wien
Hofburg, Marschallstiege II

Dear Dr. Marte, Prof. Hofrichter and All Participants of the 6th Syriac Consultation,

It is with pleasure that I answer your faxed letter of the 28th of January 2003, by sending this greeting address to each and every one of you, as you are meeting in the last Consultation in the second phase to study the important topics of Eucharist, Holy Orders / Priesthood and Penance.

Your different backgrounds and deep-rooted traditions in the Church life supporting your science and scholarship, as well as the rich spirituality of your Churches animating your presentations and discussions, will help you come closer in mind and heart so that our Churches also will feel more eager to unite and give the same and one testimony of the Universal Church.

His Excellency Mgr. Paul Matar, Maronite Archbishop of Beirut who is participating to your meeting, will transmit to you all my best wishes for the success of your work.

With these thoughts, I greet you and wish you a fruitful and successful Consultation, I shall be united to all of you in spirit and prayer for those intentions.

Devotedly yours in Christ,

Nasrallah-Peter Cardinal Sfeir
Patriarch of Antioch and All the East

Malankara-Catholic Church

Dr. Johann Marte
Acting President, Pro Oriente Stiftung
Vienna, Austria.

27th February 2003

Dr. Johann Marte and dear members of the Pro Oriente Syriac Consultation,

I am very happy to know that the PRO ORIENTE Foundation, founded by His Eminence Cardinal Francis König in the Catholic Archdiocese of Vienna, is engaged in intense ecumenical activities since 1964. This foundation is a platform for the Churches of diverse traditions and allegiances to come together and foster ecumenical collaboration. Its contribution to the enhancing of ecumenical collaboration between the Byzantine Orthodox Churches and the Catholic Church, between the Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Catholic Church are praiseworthy. Special mention must be made of its formation of the Syriac Commission and the Syriac Consultations under its auspices. The collaboration with the Assyrian Church of the East is most praiseworthy and timely. The Syriac Commission, together with the Syriac Consultations, is the unique platform for the Churches of the Syriac tradition to come together. The Pro Oriente made it possible for the Syriac Churches to come together, meet together and discuss unofficially the common issues and problems facing the Syriac Churches. According to His Holiness Pope John Paul II, the Syriac Church is the first Church. And it had a glorious theological and missionary past. But unfortunately together with the Council of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451) the fragmentation of the Syriac Churches had started. There was once in the Syriac Church a glorious past history of missionary activity of unheard proportion. But, alas, because of various reasons, several of the Churches of the Syriac tradition were leading a fragmented, isolated and sectarian existence, having no missionary dimension for many centuries. The cruel persecutions and sufferings of millions of the faithful of the Syriac Churches in the various parts of the globe, especially in West Asia, because of the successive invasions down through the centuries, are not sufficiently known to everybody. We do remember the martyrs of the Syriac Churches who shed their blood for the faith and stood steadfast in their commitment to Christ. PRO ORIENTE has given the Churches of the Syriac tradition a unique opportunity to seek anew the ways and means for the communion of the Churches of the Syriac tradition. Today's world order with its globalisation, secularisation and consumerism on the one side, and sectarianism, violence and fundamentalism on the other side compel us to be more and more conscious of our

God-given mandate to bear witness to the love and unity of mankind. Today the need to proclaim Christ in one voice is more imperative than before, especially in places where Christianity is a minority religion, and also in places where Christianity has lost its influence on the life of people, in the life of the borderline Christians. The new way of presentation can only be done through mutual collaboration and communion of all those who profess to be the followers of Christ. This missionary dimension should persuade us all to be earnest and committed to the unity of Christ's Church.

I am also happy to note that the Christological controversy centered on Ephesus and Chalcedon is a thing of the past. Now a day's people realize more and more the distinction between the content of Faith and the formulation of Faith. It is widely accepted after the Second Vatican Council that there is plurality in theology and church life. Communion of Churches today does not demand uniformity, submission or merging of one tradition to the other, but mutual recognition and recognition of the God given gifts in the Church. May God open our eyes to see in a new perspective the unity of the Church to face the new challenges and new life situations in the 21st century. May I wish all success to the ministry of unity under the auspices of the PRO ORIENTE Foundation. May the Foundation under the Patronage of His Eminence Cardinal Schönborn continue its ministry of unity and be a link between the East and the West, between the Eastern Churches and the Western Churches, and between the Eastern culture and the Western culture.

Most. Rev. Cyril Mar Baselios
Metropolitan Archbishop of Trivandrum

Syrian-Catholic Patriarchate of Antioch

Dr. Johann Marte, Président
Marschallstiege II, Hofburg
A – 1010 Wien
Autriche

Beyrouth, le 18 février 2003

Vénérés participants à la Consultation Syriaque,

Nous félicitons de tout Cœur Pro Oriente et ses membres actifs d'avoir inauguré un dialogue théologique officiel entre les Eglises de tradition Syriaque. Nous vous

exprimons notre gratitude pour le courage avec lequel vous avez pris une telle initiative pour la première fois depuis le Concile de Chalcédoine.

La première phase de la Consultation Syriacque portant sur la Christologie a donné, pensons nous, des résultats heureux, qui ont été acceptés par toutes les Eglises concernées.

Le sujet que vous avez traité lors des deux premières sessions de la seconde phase, qui ont eu lieu en l'an 2000 et 2002, et qui portaient sur la célébration et le témoignage de la foi dans la liturgie et les sacrements est également important, car c'est à travers la liturgie que s'exprime la foi et l'unité du peuple de Dieu, selon l'axiome théologique *Lex orandi, lex credendi*.

Nous souhaitons que cette seconde phase, que vous avez poursuivie avec patience, dans la sincérité et l'amour fraternel, aboutisse dans cette dernière consultation à une harmonie des cœurs encore plus grande, réalisant ainsi la prière du Seigneur : « Que tous soient un ».

Dans les prochains jours de cette dernière session vous allez aborder des thèmes importants : l'Eucharistie, les Saints Ordres, le Sacerdoce et la Pénitence. En effet pour les chrétiens la liturgie divine représente un aspect primordial où la foi et l'unité s'expriment d'une façon visible et vécue. En cela prennent tout leur sens les paroles du Saint Père dans son Exhortation Apostolique pour le Liban. «La liturgie divine est une participation à la liturgie céleste et anticipation du monde à venir. C'est le don qui a permis aux Eglises Orientales de persévérer dans l'espérance au cours des siècles de tribulations. La liturgie est une source intarissable qui nourrit la foi et la vivifie. Le centre de la liturgie est l'Eucharistie et l'une des parties marquantes est la fraction du pain, qui marque l'unité des chrétiens, qui se partagent le même pain».

Nous souhaiterions que votre consultation insiste surtout sur l'unité de l'Eglise dans l'Eucharistie. Sans cette unité, dans la *communio in sacris*, aucune unité n'est réalisable.

De tout cœur nous vous souhaitons bon succès et que la grâce du Seigneur illumine vos cœurs et vous achemine à découvrir les bons chemins qui mènent à l'unité complète des Eglises dans le domaine sacramentel et dans le domaine disciplinaire.

Merci.

Ignace Pierre III ABDEL AHAD
Patriarche Syrien d'Antioche

Syro-Malabar Church

Cardinal Varkey Vithayathil, C.Ss.R.,
Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church

“The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and has loved them even as thou hast loved me”
(Jn. 17: 22-23).

Your Eminence, Your Graces, Your Excellencies, Dr. Marte, Prof. Hofrichter, Reverend Fathers, and dear sisters and brothers in Jesus Christ,

With these words of Our Lord and Saviour I greet you, the organizers and participants of the Syriac Consultation, being held there. Indeed, the world will know that God the Father sent Jesus Christ to this world to save humanity through His passion, death and resurrection, only if those who have already become His followers become perfectly one. In order that evangelization activities of the Churches bear fruit we have got to be united. Jesus gave us the glory of the Father and it is when we accept that glory that we become one. That glory is nothing but his Paschal Mysteries. Unless and until we learn to live those Mysteries in our personal as well as ecclesial lives unity will evade us. Living the Paschal Mysteries is self-emptying to the extremes and being open to the Holy Spirit. Both in our personal lives and in our ecclesial lives this spirit of self-emptying must become a reality.

The aim of the founders of PRO ORIENTE and of the organizers of this consultation, I believe, is nothing but to seek acceptable levels of that self-emptying and living the Paschal Mysteries. Success of these efforts may not be imminent, but you have made a very encouraging and commendable starting. In this consultation you discuss the various aspects of the Holy Eucharist, Priesthood/Holy Orders and Penance. A common understanding in these matters will take the Churches of the Syriac tradition to a long way in their search for unity among themselves as well as with the Church of Rome. As the Second Vatican Council says, “the heritage handed down by the apostles was received differently and in different forms, so that from the very beginnings of the Church its development varied from region to region and also because of differing mentalities and ways of life. These reasons plus external causes, as well as the lack of clarity and mutual understanding, left the way open to divisions” (*Unitatis Redintegratio* – Decree on Ecumenism 14). I am sure that the present consultation will enable the participants and through them the Churches they come from to look in retro-

spection and clarify the unclear areas and foster mutual understanding in the topics under discussion. It will also help all concerned get an insight into the thinking categories of various peoples. Even the Churches of the Syriac tradition themselves do not have the same thinking categories. It is my hope that these differences even with regard to the understanding the paschal Mysteries and their living in concrete will be clarified in a less charged and polemical atmosphere here in this consultation.

Once again I greet all of you and wish you success in your deliberations and discussions. May the Lord reward your efforts with the unity of all Christians for which He prayed and that which we seek to achieve.

+Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, C.Ss.R.
Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church
Mount St. Thomas
28-2-2003

First working session: Saturday, March 8th

Chorbishop Michael J. Birnie

THE EUCHARIST IN THE CHURCH OF THE EAST

In approaching the teaching of the Assyrian Church of the East on the Eucharist, I will draw from the Liturgy of the Church, the comments of Mar Narsai,¹ and others. In the course of this paper I will describe the liturgy as the drama of redemption and participation in the Kingdom of Heaven. Then I will address the question of the “true presence of Christ” in the elements of bread and wine, and the way this issue has traditionally been handled in the Church. And I will close with observations on the implications eucharistic teaching may have for greater ecumenical understanding and reconciliation among the churches.

1. The Liturgy of Addai and Mari

The liturgical “Order”, or “Takhsa”, the ritual expression of the Eucharist’s meaning and purpose in the Church of the East, is known as “The Liturgy of Mar Addai and Mar Mari”. The Order, in its primitive form, was brought into the East from Edessa², perhaps in the late 2nd or early 3rd century. The original form of this liturgy was strongly semitic and unique in some of its features among the liturgies of the early Church, but over the centuries elements were introduced from the Greek world - again through Edessa, primarily.³ Those who figured prominently in the development of the liturgy were the patriarchs Isho’yahb I⁴ and Isho’yahb III,⁵ and some development occurred in a reform of Sabrisho’ II,⁶ Catholicos-Patriarch in the 9th century.⁷

The liturgy itself is revealing as to the intentions of the Eucharist and instructive concerning the doctrine which lies behind it. It begins with a movement from Heaven to earth, and concludes with a movement from earth to Heaven. It begins by address-

¹ D.c.503. *Narsai’s Commentary on the Mysteries*, Syriac text ed. Joseph Kelaita, with a Neo-Syriac translation, Church of the East Press, Mosul, 1928. This memra has also been attributed to Mar Abdisho of Elam, and as part of the heading reads “in the style [or meter] of Narsai”.

² That is, Urhai, a semi-independent city-state on the border between Rome and Persia.

³ See Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy*, Dacre Press, London, especially pp. 177-187, for an attempted “reconstruction” of the early Anaphora of Addai and Mari.

⁴ 582-595.

⁵ 650-660.

⁶ Ruled 832-836.

⁷ Abdisho of Suba (Nisibis), *Nomocanon*, Trichur MS, pp. 241-246.

ing and serving the needs of the world in general and the catechumens in particular; it concludes by addressing and serving the needs of the faithful specifically. The leaven of truth is communicated from the lips of Christ and his prophets and apostles at its starting point; the leaven of life is communicated through the Body and Blood of Christ through the operation of the Holy Spirit at its conclusion. Throughout there is an anticipation of the heavenly banquet of the kingdom on high, the eschatological meeting with the heavenly Bridegroom. I shall begin by tracing this movement, using the Order of Consecration for Priests⁸ as the basis of my remarks.

2. The Liturgy of the Catechumens

2.1. The Introductory Psalms and Anthems

The liturgy begins behind a wall or curtain which closes off the Sanctuary from the Nave, indicating the inaccessibility of the high and Holy Place to the world of men, represented by the Nave, where the people, both the baptized and unbaptized, are gathered.⁹ The clergy are assembled within the Holy Place and the celebrant begins with the invocation of the name of the Holy Trinity. This is followed by the announcement of the angels to the shepherds at the birth of our Lord: "Glory to God on high, and on earth peace and a good hope to men always and for ever. Amen." Then the worship of Heaven and earth is mingled, as all in the Nave respond to the heavenly announcement and join with those in the Sanctuary as they begin the Our Father, interrupted at "may your kingdom come" by the thrice-holy hymn of the angelic host, then sung in full, restarted a third time, and again, at the prayer bidding the advent of the kingdom, it is interrupted with the heavenly anthem. The scene evokes the image of the two worlds, above and below, anticipating the coming of "our necessary bread"¹⁰. Our ordinary prayer for daily sustenance takes on a heightened sense in this setting as we look forward to the arrival of the "Bread of Life".

2.2. The Psalms

After the celebrant offers a prayer, Psalms¹¹ are sung antiphonally which proclaim the reign of God and promise his coming "to judge the earth", and offer praise, glori-

⁸ *The Order for Priests of the Church of the East*, Church of the East Press, Mosul, 1928.

⁹ For an instructive discussion of the church structure and its meaning see *A Commentary on the Mass by the Nestorian George, Bishop of Mosul*, tr. by Dom R. H. Connolly, ed. by Fr. Robert Matheus, OIRSI, Vadavathoor, Kottayam, India, pp. 21-25.

¹⁰ "The bread of our need" is the Pshitta's rendering of "our daily bread".

¹¹ Psalms 96-98 from Annunciation (Advent) to the Great Fast (Lent), and from the Feast of the Resurrection until Pentecost; Psalms 145-147:11 during the Fast and from Pentecost to the Hallowing

fying the Lord for all his works, past, present, and anticipated. This is followed by the celebrant's prayer which precedes the Anthem of the Qanke (the Holy Place or Sanctuary) in which he declares all the hosts of Heaven to be in continuous worship with us, confessing, worshipping, and offering praise before the throne of the Most High.

2.3. The Entrance into the Nave

As the anthem is begun, the priest goes out through the still closed veil and the clergy accompany him as he makes his way to the Bema. The priest here typifies the coming of Christ, the Word who was "with God and was God",¹² descending from Heaven, entering the world in the body of his assumed humanity, and taking his place among men. The deacons accompanying him represent the angels, escorting the Lord of Glory in his entry into the world for his mission on behalf of men, proclaiming the advent of the Kingdom and the renewal of all. He ascends the Bema and takes his place in the midst of the people as our Lord did among the crowds who came to hear his teaching.

The priest then offers incense and prays, "When the pleasant aroma of the fragrance of your love wafts over us, and our souls are enlightened with the knowledge of your truth, may we be deemed worthy to receive the revelation of your Beloved from Heaven, and there may we confess you and glorify you without ceasing in your crowned Church." He blesses the censer and a deacon takes it round the Church for the censuring of the people, while they in turn acknowledge the lordly presence among them by singing "You, the Lord of all, we confess, and you, Jesus Christ, we glorify; for you are the Quickener of our bodies, and you are the Savior of our souls." By this they recognize the presence of their Lord both typically in the person of the priest, and in truth, according to the promise of Jesus that, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in the midst of them."¹³

2.4. The Trisagion, Lessons, Homily, and Litany

After a prayer they sing the Trisagion and proceed to the reading of the lessons, which consist of a reading from the Law,¹⁴ one from the Prophets (usually Isaiah), one from the Apostle Paul's letters, and one from the Gospels. Between the Old Testament lessons and the Apostle, and between the Apostle and the Gospel, a variable

of the Church (the four final weeks of the church year); and Psalms 147:12-150 during the Hallowing of the Church.

¹² Jn. 1:1.

¹³ Mt. 18:20.

¹⁴ The Law is sometimes replaced by a reading from the Book of Acts following the Prophet.

Psalm-section is sung antiphonally. A homily follows for the edification of believers and the instruction of the learners. This is followed by a lengthy litany, led by a deacon and consisting of three parts, which offers petitions on behalf of every condition of men and the state of the world.

2.5. *The Presentation of the Gifts*

During the litany the priest and a deacon descend from the Bema and go to the Sanctuary, passing through the curtain. There they go to the "Treasury" where the elements of bread and wine are kept and bring them to the Altar while singing the anthem, "The Body of Christ and his precious Blood are on the holy Altar; in awe and love let us draw near unto him; and with the angels let us cry aloud unto him, Holy, holy, holy Lord God." The priest lifts up the Mysteries and asks that Christ, "who commanded us to make a remembrance of his death, burial, and resurrection, accept this sacrifice from our hands in his grace and mercies for ever." He goes on, stating that, by the command of Christ "these glorious, holy, life-giving, and divine Mysteries are placed and arranged upon the absolving Altar until the coming of our Lord the second time from Heaven." He then veils the chalice and paten while devoting the offering as a memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of the patron saint of the particular Church. In the *memra* attributed to Mar Narsai the explanation is given for the veiling of the Mysteries: "And when they have placed them upon the Altar and veiled them, they typify [Christ's] burial."

2.6. *The Dismissal of the Catechumens*

Having presented the gifts, they go out through the veil to the Nave; and when the litany has been completed the priest prays that the gift of grace and its benefits might be poured out through Christ's ministers for the benefit of those present. Then the deacons call out: "Bow down your heads for the laying-on of hands and receive a blessing." The priest prays the prayer of the laying-on of hands, and then the deacons go in to the Sanctuary and call for the dismissal of the unbaptized and those who, for whatever reason, are ineligible to receive communion. The catechumens are ordered to guard the doors against any intrusions during the remainder of the liturgy.¹⁵

¹⁵ Though the dismissal is still proclaimed, in fact no one actually leaves, nor do the catechumens guard the doors.

3. The Liturgy of the Faithful

3.1. *The Entrance into the Sanctuary*

The priest, who is still on the Bema, begins the appropriate Anthem of the Mysteries, and the deacons in the Sanctuary repeat the first verse after him. As they sing, the priest bows toward the four sides of the Bema, while the curtains of the Altar are drawn aside, at last revealing the Holy Place to the sight of the congregation. Access has been provided through the sacrifice of Christ. No longer does the Holy Place represent the inaccessible Sanctuary on high. Instead, Mar Narsai has this to say concerning the meaning of the scene:

The Altar is a symbol of the sepulcher of our Lord without doubt,
And the bread and wine [of] the Body of our Lord, embalmed and buried.
Also the veil upon them sets forth a type
Of the stone, sealed with the ring of the priests and guards.
And the deacons who here and there stand waving¹⁶
Are a symbol of the angels at his head and feet.
And all the deacons who stand ministering before the Altar
Represent a likeness of the angels who surrounded the tomb of our Lord.
Also the Holy Place represents a type of the garden of Joseph
Whence came forth life to men and to angels.
In another order it is a type of the Kingdom
Which our Lord entered, bringing in with him all his friends.
His adorable Altar is a type of the throne of his great glory
Upon which he shall be seen by men and angels in the day of his appearance.

The priest descends from the Bema and goes toward the Holy Place, and the deacons come out to meet him. They meet and reverence one another, and the priest proceeds to the door of the Holy Place. There he lifts up his hands and leads the people in the Nicene Creed.

When the Creed has been completed the priest and deacons enter the Sanctuary, and after bowing before the Altar the priest goes to wash his hands. A deacon bids the people to pray for a list of faithful, living and dead, that "God may crown them at the resurrection of the dead, and give us, with them, a good hope, a portion, an inheritance, and life in the kingdom of Heaven." He bids them further to pray that "this oblation may be accepted", and that it "may be hallowed by the word of God and by the Holy Spirit, that it might be a benefit to us, and salvation and life for ever and ever in the kingdom of Heaven through the grace of Christ."

¹⁶ This is a reference to the fans the deacons would wave to keep insects from alighting on the sacred elements.

Meanwhile the priest approaches the Altar, offering three genuflections, at each one drawing nearer to it. All the while he offers silent prayer, thanking and praising God for having appointed him to exercise his priestly office. When he finishes, he turns to the deacons and asks for prayer that his Offering might be acceptable and that he might be deemed worthy to offer it. This approach he repeats three times, and then offers a silent prayer asking God not to “abhor the burden of our wickedness”, but to “accept this Sacrifice from our hands”, and to grant it power to “pardon our many sins”. Narsai says of the priest:

The priest who is set apart to accomplish the Sacrifice
Bears in himself the likeness of our Lord at that time.
Our Lord served as mediator between us and his Father,
And in outward form the priest is serving as mediator. . . .
The priest, then, offers the Mystery of the salvation of our lives,
Being filled with trembling and clothed with fear and great dread
Because of his own debts and the debts of all the children of the Church.
He is the eye of the whole ecclesiastical body,
And remembers in his thoughts all the affairs of his fellow-servants.
Also he is the tongue of the whole Body of Jesus,
A steward supplying advocacy on its behalf.

All is ready for the prayer of consecration:

3.2. *The Consecration*

The priest now offers preliminary prayers, then gives the Peace, which is passed throughout the congregation. Again, the intentions of the offering, as well as prayer for its acceptance, are proclaimed by the deacons. And while the Peace is passed on, the diptychs are read.¹⁷ Meanwhile the priest is praying silently, after which he lifts the veil from the chalice, signifying the resurrection has taken place. The priest offers another silent prayer, and the deacon calls for the people’s silence and inward prayer.

The priest now censes the Altar, then proclaims: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all,” while signing over the Mysteries, to which the people respond, “Amen.” Concerning the importance of the people’s “amen”, Narsai says,

And everything the priest says before God
The people complete, and they ratify his service with “Amen”.¹⁸
By the “Amen” the people join hands with the priest
And participate with him in his prayers by this expression.

¹⁷ The reading of the diptychs is now obsolete in practice.

¹⁸ Literally, they “ratify his liturgy” with their liturgy of “Amen”

He continues by directing the people to lift up their minds to the true venue of action in the heavens: “Let your minds be above,” to which the people reply, “With you, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Israel, O glorious King.” He sings, “The oblation is offered unto God, the Lord of all,” to which they respond, “It is meet and right.” On this Narsai comments,

The priest adds, “This acceptable and pure Oblation,
“Lo, is offered to the Lord, the Lord of the heights and depths.
“The same is the Lord who bore and is bearing the sin of the world.
“It is sacrificed now that it may blot out and forgive your sins.
“Behold, it is offered on behalf of angels and men,
“That all at once they may be refreshed by it in body and soul.
“Behold, it is offered on behalf of sinners and the just,
“That by it they may be absolved of the spots of their sins.
“Behold, it is offered on behalf of the departed and on behalf of the living,
“That all peoples may find mercy through its sacrificial character.
“Behold, it is offered to the God of all as a pledge,
“That he may deliver us from the torment which is in Gehenna.”

Then, after a silent prayer of petition, the thanksgiving is offered for creation and redemption:

Worthy of glory from every mouth, and of confession from every tongue, and of worship and exaltation from every creature is the worshipful and glorious name of your glorious Trinity, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who created the world in your grace and its inhabitants in your mercy, and saved men in your compassion, and showed great grace unto mortals.

The preface and sanctus follow, concluding with “Blessed is he who came and is coming in the name of the Lord.” Praise for the incarnation of the Son and for his expected return are combined, as the anticipation of the imminent coming is again heightened. A silent prayer is offered by the priest, during which he elaborates on the thrice-holy acclamation, making a personal application of the words of Isaiah and Jacob when they realized fully that they had experienced the divine presence:

Woe is me! Woe is me! For I am amazed. For I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people whose lips are unclean, and my eyes have seen the King, the mighty Lord. How terrible is this place, for today I have seen the Lord eye to eye, and this is nothing if not the house of God, and this is the gate of Heaven.¹⁹

The thanksgiving for redemption then follows:

And with the heavenly hosts we give thanks to you, O my Lord, even we, your feeble, unworthy, and miserable servants, for you have worked great grace in us which cannot be repaid, for you clothed yourself with our humanity, that you might quicken us by your Godhead. You have exalted our humble state, raised up our fallen condi-

¹⁹ A conflation of Is. 6:5; Gen. 28:17; and (perhaps) Gen. 32:30.

tion, given new life to our mortality, forgiven our debts, set right our sinfulness, enlightened our minds, and, our Lord and our God, you have condemned our enemies, and granted victory to the feebleness of our unworthy nature in the abundant mercies of your grace. And when he closes the prayer he signs the Mysteries a second time. He then prays silently, interceding for various classes of distressed people; for the Churches and their clergy; for Christians in all ranks and for himself, after which he prays for the salvation of the whole world.

Here the time has arrived for the invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the elements of bread and wine. The priest first makes a prostration, recalling the institution of the Holy Mysteries:

We too, my Lord, your feeble, unworthy, and miserable servants who are gathered in your name and stand before you at this hour, have received by tradition the example which is from you.

Then he rises and says:

And may there come, O my Lord, your Holy Spirit, and may he rest upon this oblation of your servants. May he bless it and hallow it, and may it be unto us, O my Lord, for the pardon of debts, the forgiveness of sins, the great hope of resurrection from the dead, and for new life in the kingdom of Heaven with all who have been well-pleasing before you.

And when he has concluded he signs the Mysteries a third time.

At the conclusion of the epiclesis he prays for peace and an end to war, and gives thanks for having been deemed worthy of offering the oblation, “minister[ing] to your people, the sheep of your pasture, the pardon of their debts, the forgiveness of their sins, the salvation of their souls, the reconciliation of all the world, and the tranquillity and peace of all the Churches.” He then begins the singing of penitential Psalms²⁰.

3.3. The Signation and Fraction

After offering incense, the priest begins the signation and fraction, breaking a loaf, dipping it while signing the cup, and with the same broken portion he signs the remaining loaves on the paten. He rejoins the broken portions, lifts them up, and proclaims: “These glorious, holy, life-giving, and divine Mysteries are set apart [and] hallowed ... that they may be to us, O my Lord, for the pardon of debts and the forgiveness of sins, for the great hope of the resurrection from the dead, and for new life in the kingdom of Heaven.”

²⁰ Ps. 51:1-13; 123:1-2; and 26:6.

Then he offers praise to the Holy Trinity, removing the veil which is wound round the chalice, signs himself and the congregation, and proclaims again, “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,” etc.

3.4. The Communion

A deacon now leads the congregation in a litany of preparation to receive the Body and Blood of Christ: “Let us, then, with overflowing love and a lowly will, receive the gift of eternal life, and with pure prayer and manifold sorrow, partake of the Mysteries of the Church in penitent hope, turning from our offenses and sorrowing for our sins, and asking mercies and forgiveness from God, the Lord of all.” He bids them to forgive the sins and offenses of their fellow-servants; to purify their consciences from divisions and strife; to cleanse their souls of wrath and enmity; and to receive the Sacrament with minds that are united in mutual agreement. While this proceeds the priest breaks the loaves into portions for distribution. Then he offers a prefatory prayer to the “Our Father”, which is sung by all, as at the beginning, with the same emphasis on “may your Kingdom come”, and with the mingling of the angelic Trisagion. Mar Narsai in his commentary expands upon the petition “may your Kingdom come”:

May your kingdom, which you promised us, come to us,

And may we take delight in it through [its] earnest from this moment on.

The “earnest”, or pledge of the Kingdom of Heaven is the Sacrament about to be administered. It is a foretaste of the divine life to be realized at the second coming of Christ.

After the Lord’s Prayer the elevation takes place with “The Holy Thing is perfectly meet for the holy,” the priest and clergy commune, and they bring out the Mysteries for the communion of the faithful. The priest blesses the congregation, then says: “My brothers, receive the Body of the Son, says the Church, and drink his cup in faith *in the Kingdom*.” While at the beginning of the liturgy the Kingdom descends to earth, at its conclusion the faithful are lifted up to the Kingdom. The heavenly Bridegroom comes to his Bride in a “pledge” of the banquet to be fully realized at his second coming. When all have received the Sacrament the priest and clergy consume the remainder of the Body and Blood of Christ while Psalms and anthems are sung, and prayers of praise and thanksgiving are offered. Then the priest goes to the door of the Sanctuary and seals the people: “By the living sign of the cross of the Lord may you be sealed and preserved from all harm, hidden and open, now, always, and for ever and ever.”

In the language of the liturgy the clergy and people have realized, through the Body and Blood of Christ which they have received, the pardon of their debts, the

remission of their sins, a sure hope of resurrection from the dead, and life everlasting in the Kingdom of Heaven. Like the exodus from Egypt, and the new exodus from Babylon proclaimed by second Isaiah, they have had a foretaste of a third and final exodus from the bondage of this age of sin and death proclaimed by our Lord and promised in his Gospel.²¹ They have been renewed and refreshed and made ready to be the body of Christ within and to the world. As God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, they, through the renewal realized through the Eucharist, have been reconciled to God and to one another, and made ready to be a beacon of reconciliation to the world.

4. The Presence of Christ in the Elements of Bread and Wine

Since there has been no development of eucharistic doctrine in the Assyrian Church of the East in the second millennium, the word "transubstantiation" is not a term the Church would use to describe what takes place in the elements of bread and wine in the "change" prayed for in the anaphora, I thought it might be useful to let the fathers speak on this subject. The language of this liturgy, when referring to the elements of bread and wine, is very realistic throughout. From the presentation of the gifts upon the Altar onward they are referred to as the Body and Blood of Christ. The sealing of the people following their communion quotes the words of Jesus recorded in John's Gospel: "Whoever eats my Body and drinks my Blood remains in me and I in him, and I will raise him up at the last day; and he does not come into judgment but passes from death to eternal life."²² Throughout the liturgy the "real presence" of Christ in the Eucharist is assumed, and the communication of his life through the Eucharist to the faithful is confidently proclaimed. Concerning this Mar Narsai says:

Thus spoke the Life-giver of the ages to his disciples,
Naming bread and wine his Body and Blood.
He did not call them a type or a likeness,
But precisely a Body, and truly Blood,
And although their nature is immeasurably distant from his,
Yet in power and unity the Body is one. ...
The Body which the priests break in the Church is one in power
With the Body which sits in glory at the right hand,
And as the God of all is united to the First-fruits of our race,
Christ is united to the bread and wine which are on the Altar.
Therefore the bread is precisely the Body of our Lord,
And the wine is his Blood, properly and truly.
Thus he commands the sharers of his Mystery to eat his Body,

²¹ Cf. Jn. 14:1-3.

²² A conflation of Jn. 6:56, 54, 44; 5:24.

And thus he instructs his household to drink his Blood.
Blessed is he who believes in him and confirms his word,
For if he dies he shall live, and if he lives he shall not die in his offenses.
With this sign²³ he who communes draws near to receive,
And the priest who gives [to him] says to him, "The Body of our Lord."
He receives in his hands the worshipful Body of the Lord of all,
And he embraces it and kisses it in love and affection.
The leaven of life he puts into and hides in the temple of his own body,
That his own body might be hallowed by the reception of the Body of our Lord,
Pardoning debts, cleansing blemishes, healing diseases,
And washing away and purifying spots with the hyssop of his mercies.

Narsai insists that the bread has become "precisely a Body", and that the wine has become "truly Blood", even though their natures are "immeasurably distant" from flesh and blood. Drawing on "dyophysite" language, his understanding is that the natures of bread and wine do not change in substance; nevertheless, Christ is present in "power and unity", becoming one mystically with the bread and wine. Therefore "the bread is precisely the Body of our Lord, and the wine is his Blood, properly and truly." Babai affirms the same:

One is the parsopa of the Body of Christ and of the bread which is consecrated.... Behold it is not the natural Body which is in Heaven that we eat, but we eat the bread, which is, through the power and the descent [of the Holy Spirit], one bread, and we drink the wine of the libation which is consecrated with the bread, but they are the Body and Blood of Christ in power, and pardon, and forgiveness of sins.²⁴

Again:

In nature [it is] bread, but in power [it is] absolving and sanctifying, which it acquires through the descent of the Holy Spirit, for it is the one Body of Christ. ... This which we receive is not in nature his Body, but the remembrance of his suffering and a consolation.²⁵

Timothy I²⁶ is in agreement with Narsai and Babai, saying that after the consecration the bread becomes Christ's Body and the wine becomes his Blood because it is in union with the heavenly Christ without a change of its nature.²⁷

The use of "type" and "likeness", and "symbol" and "sign", to describe the elements of bread and wine was commonplace among the fathers of the East at least from the time of Cyril of Jerusalem.²⁸ As we have seen above, Narsai, following

²³ I.e., the Sign of the Cross.

²⁴ Babai Magni, *Liber de Unione*, ed. A. Vaschalde. Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Paris, 1915, p. 154-155. See also p. 288.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 284.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 778-821.

²⁷ *Timothei Patriarchae I, Epistles*, ed. Oscar Braun, CSCO, Paris, 1914, pp. 175-176.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 315-386.

Theodore of Mopsuestia,²⁹ stresses that Christ “did not call them a type or a likeness, but precisely a Body, and truly Blood.” Yet in practice symbolic language continued to be used. In a work attributed to George of Arbela he even chides “God-clothed men” for denying the propriety of the use of such terms:

Some God-clothed men have said that these Mysteries are properly the Body and Blood of Christ and not a symbol of his Body and Blood. We say to them . . . the bread and wine have become Body and Blood, not according to nature, but in a union. While we call them Body and Blood in some way, we also call them symbols, so that they may be understood to be signs of the Body and Blood, for in nature they are different.... The bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ in a union mystically.³⁰ Something has mystically “changed” the elements of bread and wine with the invocation of the Spirit while not altering them in their nature. Mar Abdisho’ of Nisibis writes:

Through this divine command [of Christ] the bread is changed into his holy Body and the wine into his precious Blood. ... Whenever we approach these Sacraments we meet with Christ himself and him we bear upon our hands and kiss, and in partaking thereof we are being united with him, his holy Body mixing with our bodies, and his innocent Blood mingling with our blood, and by faith we know him that is in Heaven and him that is in the Church to be but one Body.³¹

And though the Epiclesis in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari does not pray for a “change” in the elements, but only for the benefits to be realized through the reception of them, the other Anaphoras used at different times in the year do call for a change. The Anaphora of Theodore of Mopsuestia reads, “may this bread become the holy Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and this cup the precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;” and that of Nestorius reads, “may [the grace of the Holy Spirit] make this bread and this cup the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, while you change and consecrate them by the operation of your Holy Spirit.” A change—though not in substance—is prayed for and believed in, and the bread and wine are proclaimed to be the Body and Blood of Christ. He is present to the believer, handled by the believer, and taken into the believer, who is made one with him. There is no doubt expressed concerning the “change” that takes place, in spite of the continued “appearance” of bread and wine.

²⁹ See chapter on “The Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist” in *The Eucharistic Doctrine and Liturgy of the Mystagogical Catecheses of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, Francis J. Reine, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C., pp. 9-27.

³⁰ *Expositio Officiorum Ecclesiae*, Vol. 2, ed. R. H. Connolly, CSCO, Paris, 1913, pp. 66-67.

³¹ *Marganitha*, Mar Abdisho’ of Suba, translated by Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII, Mar Themotheus Memorial Printing & Publishing House Limited, Ernakulam, Kerala, India. In a note by the translator he says, “The change which the author refers to, however, is not physical, but rather [he refers] to the power inherent in this holy Sacrament for the remission of sins of them that partake it in true faith.”

5. Reconciliation “In and Through” the Eucharist

One of the important themes of the Eucharist in the Church of the East is reconciliation with God and with one another through the reception of Christ and the realization of his indwelling presence. As mentioned above, prior to the actual communion in the Body and Blood of our Lord a deacon calls upon the people to prepare themselves by forgiving the sins and offenses of their fellow-servants; purifying their consciences from divisions and strife; cleansing their souls of wrath and enmity; and receiving the Sacrament with minds that are united in mutual agreement. This litany recalls the command of our Lord during the Sermon on the Mount: “So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”³² This follows dire warnings about anger and insults between brothers.³³ Forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God are closely tied to forgiveness and reconciliation among brothers.³⁴ In the Epiclesis of the Anaphora of Nestorius this is one of the benefits of the Eucharist prayed for, “that we may all be joined to one another in one unity, in one bond of love and peace, that there may be one body and one spirit, as we are called in one hope of our calling.”³⁵ Though reconciliation is to take place *first*, and then the Sacrament received, it is the communion in Christ which restores the bond of peace with God and men.

In the Epiclesis of the Anaphora of Theodore of Mopsuestia the Holy Spirit is invoked “upon us and upon this oblation”, mentioning together the Body of Christ within the Sanctuary and upon the Altar with the body of Christ waiting with anticipation within the Nave to be renewed and to “take delight in the kingdom of Heaven in the good things which are to come and do not pass away.” This brings to mind the Apostle Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians where he chastises them for profaning the Lord’s Supper by, among other things, factionalism and the neglect of their fellow-Christians who are poor, and thinking only of their own satisfaction.³⁶ “For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself.”³⁷ This suggests not only discerning the true Body of Christ within the holy Sacrament, but discerning the body of Christ within the gathered faithful, to whom charity must be shown and deference, as to Christ himself. When we stand with hands outstretched to receive him we stand under judgment, according to the Apostle, if we

³² Mt. 5:23-24.

³³ Mt. 5:22.

³⁴ Mt. 6:14.

³⁵ Cf. Eph. 4:3-4.

³⁶ 1 Cor. 11:17-22.

³⁷ 1 Cor. 11:29.

have neglected charity toward one another. The Holy Spirit is invoked “upon us and this oblation” to prepare, not only the gifts, but us, that we may give, receive, and become again the true Body of Christ.

In the years we have met with Pro Oriente—almost ten now, and much longer for the Syrian Orthodox—we have, I believe and pray, sincerely and honestly pursued reconciliation with our brethren from whom we have been alienated far too long. The pursuit has been gratifying—and humbling, as it well should be. But that reconciliation, I feel, will realize the seal of the Spirit when we can regularly stand shoulder to shoulder before the sacred Altar and celebrate together the supreme Sacrament of the holy Eucharist, the sign of true and complete reconciliation with the Father, in the Son, and through the Holy Spirit’s operation, to whom be glory, honor, confession, and worship, now, always, and for ever and ever. Amen.

Discussion

Mar Joseph Powathil: We are appreciative of Fr. Birnie’s very clear explanation about the anaphora of Addai and Mari. You have expressed especially the change that has taken place during the celebration and have emphasized the rite of reconciliation, and the way that the Eucharist creates that change.

Archdeacon Georges: I have one question for clarification. It is about the history of the liturgy of Addai and Mari. I would like to know something more about the main changes in the anaphora, first of all in the first century, then in the second century. Also, is there any intention to have some more changes in the third millennium, since we are talking about an ecumenical era?

Fr. Birnie: In the anaphora, most of the changes that were made were just imports from the Greek that came through. I don’t believe that the *Sanctus* was part of the original, nor was it addressed directly to the Holy Trinity. It appears as though the earliest anaphora was addressed to Jesus Christ, as opposed to the Trinity. It shares that with some other early liturgies, but in order to stress the Trinitarian aspects, they introduced the address to the whole Trinity, as a thanksgiving for creation and redemption.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: You say that the liturgy of Mar Addai and Mar Mari, the order in its primitive form, was brought into the Eastern liturgy from Edessa, and then you say that it was perhaps in the late second or early third century. Do you mean that the liturgy of Mar Addai and Mari was formed already in Edessa, that it was used in the Church, and then introduced in the Church of the East, in the same form, without any addition?

Fr. Birnie: I think so, yes.

Fr. Thekeparambil: You said that the Mass begins with the invocation of the Holy Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Is that a later addition, perhaps from the sixth or seventh century?

Fr. Birnie: Yes.

Fr. Thekeparambil: Are you using a *bema*?

Fr. Birnie: No, we have a *bema* in front of the wall. But it is not as it was in, at least, the larger churches. I am trying to get the bishop enthused about building a few new churches with a proper *bema*.

Fr. Thekeparambil: What about washing of the hands?

Fr. Birnie: You are not supposed to bring water into the altar. But I think that just refers to the space in front of the altar. He goes off the side, to the door, you know.

Fr. Thekeparambil: It is not a Latin introduction, because it is done in our church from the *bema* in the nave.

Mar Bawai Soro: If I may add this, the commentary that Fr. Birnie mentioned is based on an outline, a liturgical outline that is not fully practiced today in the Church of the East. One of the reasons why it is not so is, because our liturgical space has changed due to our history of persecution. Our people were forced to flee from Mesopotamia into the mountains of Hakkari after the Mongolian invasion, which conditioned our entire church in exactly a limited liturgical space. For more than five hundred years we had to change our liturgical practices accordingly thus making such a liturgical commentary a thing of the past. And now, as he mentioned, we are gradually trying to restore our beautiful, ancient and original liturgical practice.

Fr. Birnie: This is the way it is described in the *takhsa*, the “Order”. The reason I used it is because the spirit of the liturgy revolves around this movement.

Fr. Thekeparambil: I think you have to think of a restoring of the original structure.

Mar Bawai Soro: We are in that process.

Mar Joseph Powathil: What do you say, Mar Bawai, to the washing of hands? Was it originally at the *bema* or inside the sanctuary?

Mar Bawai Soro: Again, originally it was at the *bema*, because the washing of the hands was before the elevation of the sacraments. The outline of the liturgy remains to be at the *bema*, specialized liturgically, but since we have lost the *bema*, we have altered some of the movements, as a result. We have brought backward and forward segments of the mass in order to suit the new liturgical structure, which follows the Hakkari mountain model of small churches. Since we are familiar with the problem, there is a better possibility that we can address this problem and restore the original practice. The Chaldeans have done so in Baghdad, Paris and in Michigan. They have reintroduced the *bema* as it was used. Fr. Yousif was one of the first Church of the East priests who has restored the practice of the *bema*. I am not sure what is the case in India. I have never been there.

Mar Joseph Powathil: We do. One set of the churches.

Mar Bawai Soro: So, it is really a gradual restoration.

Fr. Yousif: I appreciate much the topic of Fr. Birnie. It is very important. There are many problems, some of which are difficult to give them a definite answer, but here are just some points regarding the original form of Addai and Mari. It is now common opinion and quite sure that the anaphora of Addai and Mari and two other anaphorae, Mar Theodore and Mar Nestorius, all three have the same schema, which is taken from the schema of the blessing, Jewish take after the meal. This consistently passes

the glorification for the creation, which proceeds the *Sanctus*, as it was introduced late, as Father Birnie said. The second part is thanksgiving for redemption and includes the economy. Addai and Mari is addressed to Christ, and a third part is intercessions for the church and for the world. The epiclesis is a part of this intercession. It is not cut, because in the anaphora of Addai and Mari there is a word which is added “*and now may come.*” But in fact it is the reason why we were rejoicing, “*May your spirit come!*” At that same moment the Spirit comes. So, this means that this schema of the blessing of the meal was, first of all, Christianized. And as Father Birnie already said, the insertion of the Trinity was later. At the beginning was just the adoration of the name, “*Holy is Lord, the name of Him who created all the world in His grace,*” etc. So this is an important point. A second point to stress is the fact that the *bema* is an important part, because many prayers are not understandable if they are not said in their proper place. So the *bema* is, according to the symbolism of the church, as Father Birnie said, the place where Jesus preached, and so *there* are heard the readings in which the Word of God is proclaimed, because all are instruments of the Word of God, Jesus Christ. So, the *bema* is an important reality not to restore, but to leave liturgy as it is in itself. I just have to add that three anaphorae, which according to last studies made by two of my students on the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, Nestorius and Theodore, have all three the same schema of East Syrian tradition, and are composed originally in Syriac. They all have the same schema, and they are not translations from the Greek.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: Father Birnie, you speak about the presence of Christ in the elements of bread and wine, which is a very important part of your paper: “*And though the Epiclesis in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari does not pray for a ‘Change.’*” Then you say that the epiclesis does not pray for a change in the elements, but only for the benefits to be realized through the reception of them. What do you mean exactly by that? It is not for the change, but for the reception?

Fr. Birnie: When the Holy Spirit is invoked the prayer goes on like this: “*May it come on my Lord, your Holy Spirit, and may He rest upon the oblation of your servant. May He bless it and hallow it.*” But then he says, “*May it be for us.*” And then he accounts the benefits that we will receive.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: But do you use before the epiclesis the words “*bread and wine*”?

Fr. Birnie: No, we use “*body and blood.*” E.g., from the first offering.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: From the beginning?

Mar Bawai Soro: Even when we elevate the bread and wine, before any words of consecration, the elements are called the Body and Blood of Christ. It is a key word in Fr. Birnie’s paper. Our Eucharistic theology is that from the very beginning of the Anaphora the elements are presupposed as the Body and Blood of Christ.

Mar Severios: The third point concerns “*The entrance in the nave.*” “*As the anthem is begun, the priest goes out through the still closed veil, and the clergy accompany him as he makes his way to the Bema.*” Why do the priest and the clergy go out of the place when the veil is still closed? Is there any particular meaning for that?

Fr. Birnie: When Christ came, the veil was not opened until his crucifixion. Then he provides access at his crucifixion. The sacrifice he gives is reproduced by the bringing

of the gifts at the altar, and they are placed by the altar or on the altar as an offering to God. And then the veil is opened.

Mar Severios: The closing and opening of the veil is not symbolized by the opening of heaven and earth?

Fr. Birnie: Yes.

Mar Severios: When Christ appears, heaven is not opened?

Mar Bawai Soro: No, what he means is that the key phrase that determines our liturgical theology, as far as the veil is understood, is a biblical verse, and I think it is in Matthew. It is when Christ dies on the cross, and Matthew describes what happened in the temple and when the curtain splits in half, thus symbolizing man’s accessibility to God. So at the first beginning of the *raza* the veil is not opened. The priest comes out with the deacons, symbolizing Christ’s incarnation, and Christ’s incarnation did not cause the veil in the temple to open. It was rather Christ’s death that caused the opening of the heavens.

Fr. Birnie: Otherwise we would not be doing the Eucharist, because it is a participation.

Mar Severios: Fr. Birnie, you quote from Narsai: “*He receives in his hands the worshipful Body of the Lord of all, and he embraces it and kisses it in love and affection.*” I wanted to ask whether it is an archaic use, or it is a later practice?

Fr. Birnie: It appears in Babai the Great [Bawai rawa / raba].

Mar Bawai Soro: It is already in Aphrahaat.

Prof. Winkler: You said that the change is prayed for and believed in, and the bread and wine are proclaimed to be the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ -- though not in substance. Do you mean substance where we would say *materia*?

Fr. Birnie: No.

Mar Bawai Soro: *Substantia*, the substance of the bread.

Prof. Winkler: Yes, because we say the *materia* is the bread. After the change, the material is still bread, but the substance is changed.

Mar Bawai Soro: I think we mean the material bread.

Prof. Winkler: It is still bread, but the substance is the body and blood of Christ.

Fr. Birnie: I think everyone was struggling to come up with a definition. At a certain point, they stopped struggling with it, you know. Everything closed down because of the invasions. I just thought we needed to address it.

Fr. Bouwen: That is why I think that your expression “*though not in substance*” is ambiguous, because if we, in the Latin tradition, speak of *transubstantiatio*, it is not the elements that are changed, but their substance. A substance is something abstract.

Prof. Winkler: We would use “*though not in material.*”

Fr. Khalife: I have a small remark about the explanation added to the consecration, from *Marganitha*. I believe this note was added by Josef Kelaita in the first edition in 1923 in Mossul. I have the text. And I believe this was under the influence of Protestantism. Because ‘Abdisho’ used “*nesthtamle*,” – change – and Joseph Kelaita put a note that change is not physical. The note is added in Syriac.

Mar Bawai Soro: Joseph Kelaita is a great contributor to our liturgical reproduction and books and text, and he is perfectly Orthodox as Church of the East priest, never-

theless, he was taught by protestant missionaries in Urmia. And that might be a possibility of defocusing his attention, to a more Protestant understanding of Eucharist.

Fr. George: Is there any Eucharist theory in the history or tradition of the Church of the East of consecration of the bread and wine into the body and blood? Do you have influences of theories of the West?

Fr. Birnie: I don't think so, no.

Mar Bawai Soro: It is not articulated in philosophical, scholastic terms.

Fr. Yousif: The elements are changed not *in natura sed fide*. They are changed not in nature but in faith. The bread is really body of Christ and wine, his blood.

Fr. Chediath: Has the anaphora of Addai and Mari always been the same or has it developed?

Mar Bawai Soro: Since our synod in Iraq in 1979, twenty-five years ago, the only change that is today obviously perceived in our Church is the fact that the priest is allowed to recite the institution narrative. Because in Iraq, as Assyrians fled the mountains after World War I and came in contact with the Catholics and with the Orthodox, there was a severe criticism over not reciting the institution narrative. So the priests in Iraq brought the issue to the attention of the bishops, and the bishops allowed every priest to recite the institution narrative, provided that they preserve the original faith, which is the classical way of looking at it: the consecration "moment" takes place at the epiclesis, not at the words of institution, because that is a Latin way of perceiving the Eucharist. The other would be the Eastern. That is the *main* change that one could see.

Fr. Chediath: Otherwise it is the same?

Mar Bawai Soro: No, the structure is the same, but not everything. Between the Ancient Church of the East and the Assyrian Church of the East, the structure would be practically the same, except for the addition of institution narrative by almost half of our Assyrian priests.

Fr. Khalife: And the official text now used in the Church does or does not have narrative words?

Mar Bawai Soro: No, it doesn't have narrative words.

Fr. Khalife: The one used in Beirut has the words of consecration underlined.

Mar Bawai Soro: That is the product of one priest. It is not the official text. It is a private publication. Even Kelaita used an insertion of the words of institution, with extra paper without a page number inserted into the published text. The size of that page was even smaller than the rest.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim

THE SACRAMENT OF EUCHARIST IN THE SYRIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ANTIOCH

1. The anaphorae

The Syrian Antiochian Fathers commented on and explicated the service of the Eucharist. They wrote about it in terms of history, liturgy, tradition, theology, canon law and spirituality. This information came from syriac sources such as: the poetry, commentaries, and writings of the Syrian poets starting in the fourth century, like: St. Ephrem the Syrian and his disciples, and Mor Jacob of Serug, St. Philoxenus of Mabbug. Some of others were famous for their writings about the liturgical sources like: St. Jacob of Edessa (+708), George Bishop of the Arabs (+725), Ywanees Bishop of Dara (+860), Mor Michael the Great (+1199), and Mor Gregorius Bar Hebraeus (+1286) to name a few.

The composers of the anaphorae are another topic, since the anaphorae exceed eighty in number, as mentioned in the manuscripts. Two contemporary writers tapped into the subject: Patriarch Ephrem I Barsoum and Patriarch Ephrem Rahmani. The first collected and mentioned all who participated in the creation of the anaphorae, starting with the big and little anaphora of St. James the brother of our Lord (+61) and then the rest of the apostles like St. Mark the Evangelist, the big and little anaphora of St. Peter the Evangelist, the big and little anaphora of St. John the Evangelist, and St. Luke the Evangelist. There were also those taken directly from other churches; from Rome: Clement of Rome (+102), Ksostos (Xystus) Bishop of Rome (+251), Julius Bishop of Rome (+356), Celestine of Rome (+404); and from the Alexandrian See: Athanasius (+373), Cyril of Alexandria (+444), Dioscorus Patriarch of Alexandria (+457), Timotheous the Second (+470). From Jerusalem: Cyril Patriarch of Jerusalem (+386). From Constantinople: John Chrysostom (+407), and the anaphora of Phrocles (Proklos) of Constantinople (+444). From the See of Antioch, there are many. The first among them is the anaphorae of Ignatius Bishop of Antioch (+107), then Ostateos (Eustathios) of Antioch (+338), Mor Jacob of Serug (+521), and after him we have a list of composers which ends with the anaphorae of Basilios, the Maphrian of the East (+1575).

The oldest manuscripts, which are in our hands, go back to the tenth century and the end of the twelfth. Most of these anaphorae exist in manuscripts and are still scattered in different well-known libraries all over the world. Some of the contemporary scholars and Orientalists mentioned good number of them in the catalogue of these libraries. I have to mention that a good number of these anaphorae were carefully

studied, criticized and published specially by Odilo Heiming, Alphonsus Raes and H.G. Codrington in *Anaphorae Syriacae* - vol. 11 - Fasc1. Father Matta Konat and his son Father Abraham, both of them published and translated some of these anaphorae into Millialum.

Patriarch Ephrem Rahmani excelled in explaining the liturgy, first in comparing the St. James liturgy with the liturgy of Alexandria, then explaining the origin of the liturgy and the additions that were made to it and differences with the liturgies of other churches. He also explained the structure of the liturgy. Historically speaking, this sacrament, according to the Syrian Fathers, was founded during the Last Supper :

“While they were eating, Jesus took a piece of bread, and gave it to his disciples. ‘Take and eat it’ he said ‘this is my body’. Then he took a cup, gave thanks to God, and gave it to them. ‘Drink, all of you,’ he said; ‘this is my blood which seals God’s covenant, and blood poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins’. Then, they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of olives.” (Matt. 26:20,26-28,30).

Then the commandment of our Lord said: “Do this in memory of me” (Luke 22:19)

2. The Tradition of the Hymns

The Eucharist, in our tradition, is connected to hymnsinging at church. The early Church knew hymnsinging from the first days. The Christians in the early church used to be in the temple every day. They used to recite the Hymn of Mary, the praise of Elizabeth, Zechariah’s Song, the chant of the angels, the song of Simon and Anna the Prophetess. Hymnsinging accompanied worship in the church from the beginning, and it became an important part of our spiritual life. In our Syriac Church, the Psalms of David, the Song of Songs, the Proverbs, Jeremiah’s Lamentations, and some praises and prayers of the prophets, like the prayer of Moses the Prophet, the Supplication of Isaiah, and the praise of the three young men in the fiery furnace in Babylon come to the fore in our liturgical and traditional sources. It is difficult, however, to specify the evolution of tradition that took place in the SOCA from its beginning until the eighth century, since we do not have enough sources about this important stage of church history. St. James of Edessa is considered the first reformer in this matter, because he is the first to attempt a project aimed at the reformation of the liturgy in the SOCA. In the eyes of the reliable historians, he is the only one capable of carrying out this work of reforming the liturgical books; because he was well educated and informed. Therefore, all his writings in history, commentary, canon law, philosophy, a correction of the Old Testament *Pishitta*, and vowelizing the pronunciation of the books of both the Old and New Testaments were all well accepted until now in SOCA. He is the one who left behind a wealth of well-written, rhyming sermons on the Eucharist. He is the one also who abolished the use of unleavened bread. St.

James of Edessa arranged book of *Shemo* (simple) which contains the daily prayers in different Syriac tradition, and much is owed to him in the arrangement of the other church rituals. He was also the first to amend the Greek copy of the liturgy of St. James, and composed his famous anaphora, which begins with the words: “*God, Father of all, the Lord of Lords.*” The SOCA, historically speaking, accepted all the inheritance of St. James of Edessa. Nobody after his era was able to change or add something important on the liturgical books, except for some parts which were amended by Patriarch Michael the great. Therefore, the SOCA is waiting for some new reformation in the future, because many liturgical books which were used in the church are not used today in the same manner.

I will not mention the contemporary Patriarchs like Ephrem I Barsoum and Jacob III, who printed liturgical books; and Archbishop Athanasius Yeshou Samuel of the United States and Canada, who also collected and printed some anaphorae translated into English, because all these new printed liturgical books used in SOCA need critical studies.

The index of composers of anaphorae, and big number of Syriac manuscripts indicate that the western and eastern Syriac traditions used the same anaphorae, except for the part of the commemorations (depticās). In the east Syriac tradition, namely, the Syrian Churches under the jurisdiction of Tikrit, the fifth commemoration which is dedicated for the fathers was recited by two deacons responsively during Lent. This commemoration contains the names of the church Fathers ܐܬܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ, especially those who belong to the See of Tikrit from the days of Mar Ahodeme, the first Catholicos of the East until Catholicos Saliba I (+1231).

I will not indulge in many historical details about the anaphorae, but I would like to point out that SOCA uses today less than ten anaphorae. About fifteen have been translated to other languages such as Latin, English, Italian, German, Swedish, Arabic, and Turkish, as well as Turoyo, the spoken language of the people of Tur Abdin in order to be used by the faithful of the Church especially for those who were immigrated from their original land and scattered all over the world.

3. Structure of Eucharist

The Structure of the Eucharist contains three services.

The first one entails preparation to enter the altar. This service usually takes place during the night prayer, which is composed of the beginning prayer, Psalms 132, 118, 116 with responses; the first qawma ܩܠܡܐ dedicated to St. Mary, the second qawma ܩܠܡܐ dedicated to martyrs and saints, the third one contains prayers of repentance or the departed ܩܠܡܐ, and the fourth starts with Halleluia, then the Magnificat, followed by Psalms 132, 148, 149, 150, 116, and ended by the qawma ܩܠܡܐ for a saint and a

supplication. Meanwhile the celebrant stands before the altar, crosses himself with the words “In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”. Then he recites “Gloria in Excelsis Deo” and another prayer which ends by *frumiun* and *sedro* - that is *husoyo* - which means prayer of repentance; *sedro* means class, and the second part of *husoyo* is about praising the name of God and requesting the intercession of St. Mary, the prophets, the apostles, the evangelists, the martyrs and confessors, the righteous, the saints, the hermits and the monks. Then there are the requests for forgiveness of sins and mercy on the departed believers. If the bishop is present in the Church, his blessing is requested. Then, the celebrant shakes hands with other present priests, asking their forgiveness, as he also asks the congregation for forgiveness and prayers.

The Second Service involves entering the altar and the preparation of the bread and the wine. This service takes place during the morning prayers. On Sunday mornings, the morning prayer starts with the ‘Doxology’, the prelude, Psalm 51, Psalm 63, a song and the Qonoune *قنونة* which means rules; then Psalm 113, other songs, Isaiah 42:10-13, the Beatitudes (Matt. 5:2-12), then the prayer of repentance, composed of the *husoyo* that is *frumiun*/prelude and *sedro*/class, the song of perfume, another song, then the crescent, and a verse, then a verse of song, followed by the first reading from the Gospel. A general service follows, during which the celebrant crosses himself and recites the ‘Doxology’ and the prayer of commencement, *husoyo* (*frumiun* and *sedro*), silently, followed by Psalm 51. Then he puts his special slippers on and the curtains are drawn, as the celebrant circles the altar, kissing its four corners, while reciting Psalm 26. He then ascends to the altar, removing the handkerchief from the instruments and chooses the bread in preparation for the paten as he recites Isaiah 53:7. He mixes the wine with water and recites another prayer, then covers the chalice and the paten. He stretches his arms and recites the *husoyo* (*frumiun* and *sedro*) of repentance. The *husoyo* focuses on the presentation of spiritual sacrifices (I Peter 2:5). They are a broken spirit (Ps. 51:17), a sacrifice of thanksgiving (Ps. 107:52), righteousness (Ps. 4:5), thanksgiving (Jer. 33:11), mercy not sacrifice (Hosea 6:6), sacrifice of faith (Ph. 2:17), praises (Heb. 13:15), fragrant offering (Eph. 5:2), and repentance. Thus ends the second service.

The Third Service opens with the prayer of commencement *husoyo* (*frumiun* and *sedro*), and the ‘Doxology’ and putting on the liturgical garments, washing the hands, and a meditation while the celebrant kneels before the altar. Then he ascends to the last step of the altar, removes the cover from the utensils. He uses his right hand to remove the cover from the paten, and his left to remove the cover from the chalice. The hands intersect in the shape of a cross, with the right hand above the left. He recites the prayer of consecration of the elements. The celebrant then puts the paten before him and the chalice behind it, and covers them with the *shoushefo* *شوشفو* (*mendebyon*). He descends from the altar and takes the censor and starts to cense the ele-

ments, as he recites the *husoyo*. This *husoyo* includes a prayer of supplication for the departed believers and assistance for the living. He ascends the step and censes above the elements, first from the east, mentioning the mother of God, then from the west, mentioning the prophets, apostles and the martyrs. Then he censes from the north, remembering the teachers, priests, the righteous and the upright. Finally he censes from the south, remembering the church and all of its children. He ends the service by censing three times, as he says: “Bow for the kind Father. Bow for the merciful Son. Bow for the Holy Spirit.” He then descends off the step, reciting ‘Lord have mercy’ *kyrieleison*, the Lord’s Prayer and the Creed. Thus the celebrant is completely ready to start the Eucharist.

The church still uses the prelude, which was designed for the unbaptized believers. They were the ones who were of pagan background and had accepted the Christian faith. They were put under observation by mentors appointed by the bishop. They were baptized after a trial period. They were allowed into the church to listen to the holy scriptures and for mentoring. They were also called listeners. In the early church there also used to be a number of those touched by evil spirits, and those burdened by sin. These two groups had been baptized and taken in, but had fallen captive to their sins and thus cut off from the rest of the believers during the service of the sacraments. There also used to be a number of repentants who had spent a long time in acts of penance and others who had spent a short period in penance. Those various groups were all present in the past, and the Apdeacon (sub-deacon) used to close the door on them when they were called to leave the church. Despite the fact that all of these listeners no longer exist, the educational, introductory part of liturgy dedicated to them still exists. It contains the opening, the procession, the censing, the Trisagion, the holy readings from Acts or one of Paul’s epistles, part of the Gospels and the sermon.

The believers’ Eucharist contains five parts:

The first is the preparation, prayer of peace, prayer of laying on of hands, prayer for the iconostasis.

The second is the celebrant’s blessing of the congregation, the celebrant’s invitation to uplift their minds, prayer of thanksgiving, prayer of victory, story of the Last Supper, our Lord’s commandment to remember his death, invocation of the Holy Spirit, and the transformation.

The third is commemorations of the living fathers, brothers, kings, and the Virgin Mary, saints, teachers, hermits, the departed, the common prayer, the giving of the blessing, the breaking and the crossing, and a hymn.

The fourth is the Lord's Prayer, the laying on of the hands, giving of blessing, conditions for taking communion, a prayer in honor of St. Mary and the saints, and the procession.

The fifth is the prayer of thanksgiving, the benediction, and the dismissal of the believers.

As I have mentioned before, all of these parts still exist without any modification or amendment, despite the fact that the church's conditions and circumstances have changed, especially when we know that the different names given to the Eucharist illustrate the meaning for which they were given these names in the first place. For example, the Eucharist is called the meeting **ἄλυσμα**, the participation **ἁγιοῦ**, approaching **ἄλυσμα**, the sacraments **ἁγιοῦ**, *al-Qorban* **ἁγιοῦ**, the sacrifice **ἁγιοῦ**, perfection of perfection **ἁγιοῦ** **ἁγιοῦ**, and the liturgy **ἁγιοῦ**, and the sacrament of the sacraments **ἁγιοῦ**. It was also called the spiritual service **ἁγιοῦ** **ἁγιοῦ**, the divine service **ἁγιοῦ** **ἁγιοῦ**, the mysterious service **ἁγιοῦ** **ἁγιοῦ**, the spiritual table **ἁγιοῦ** **ἁγιοῦ**, and the heavenly table **ἁγιοῦ** **ἁγιοῦ** Ksostos (Xystus) of Rome called the Eucharist the anaphora. St. Severus the Antiochan called it the spiritual gift.

4. The Peak of Perfection

Theologically, the sacrament of the Eucharist is the peak of perfection. Bar Hebraeus said: "it is so for those who serve it with enlightenment and meekness are made perfect in the end." This sacrament completes all the other sacraments in the church, for it is in it that all the symbols and prophetic events that our forefathers in the Old Testament looked forward to. In the New Testament as Jesus Christ has offered his blood on the cross, he offers a sacrament without bloodshed in the Eucharist. The outcome of the sacrifice on the cross and the sacrifice on the altar is the same, since the Eucharist is the continuation of the redemptive work on the cross. Through the stages of the mass - our thanksgiving to God for his intervention, for our salvation, our invocation of the Holy Spirit to bless the bread and wine (epiclesis), the blessing of the Holy Spirit to the believers, our commemoration of the death and resurrection of our Lord, our offering of ourselves with the offering of the sacrifice, our prayers for the living and the dead - we sense the deep theology of the Eucharist. Therefore the mystery of the Eucharist remains the mystery of worship and sanctification. Furthermore, it is the heart of Christian worship and its foundation. True worship happens when we get to know God as the one who loves humankind and is creator of all. Holy mass is the mystery of knowing God through life, faith and eternity. John Chrysostom said: "When I call it the sacrament of thanksgiving, I reveal the treasures of the goodness of God. I invite the mind to marvel at these great gifts. It is the peak of

spirituality for the practice of Christian worship. This sacrament (the bread and wine) called the Eucharist, is a way of showing our gratitude towards God."

5. Common Declarations

Concerning the second aim of my paper, which should show the ecumenical impact of the Sacrament of Eucharist, the only thing I can rely on in the first place is the recent common declarations signed by the Popes of Rome and the Oriental Orthodox Patriarchs and Heads, since the ecumenical dimension for the Sacrament of Eucharist come out clearly in these common declarations. I will elaborate on the declaration of 1984, signed Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Zakka I.

I imagine that the opinions raised by the two churches, and included in this common declaration could be the required key to restore communion between all different churches. Let me first start with other declarations:

Firstly, in the declaration of Pope Paul VI and Catholicos Vaskin I there is no mention of the Eucharist and the two Heads see that "This unity cannot be realized unless everyone, pastors and faithful, really strive to know each other." Coming to this goal, we should bring theologians to sustain study in order to deepen our knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and his revelation.

Secondly, the declaration between Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Jacob III, we find the statement of celebrating the sacraments of the Lord, a chapter that asserts the deep spiritual fellowship found between the two churches. The declaration reads:

"The Pope and the Patriarch have recognized the deep spiritual communion which already exists between their churches. The celebration of the sacraments of the Lord, the common profession of faith in the Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God made man for man's salvation, the apostolic tradition which form part of the common heritage of both churches, the great Fathers and Doctors, including Saint Cyril of Alexandria, who are their common masters in the faith - all these testify to the action of the Holy Spirit who has continued to work in their Churches."

Thirdly, the declaration of Pope Paul VI and Pope Shenouda III, the Eucharist was more prominently featured than in any document preceding it. The two Heads mentioned that

"The divine life is given to us and is nourished in us through the seven sacraments of Christ in His Church: Baptism, Chrism (Confirmation), Holy Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Priesthood".

Mentioning

"the setting up a joint commission representing our Churches, whose function will be to guide common study in the fields of Church tradition, patristics, liturgy, theology, history and practical problems, so that by cooperation in common we may seek to resolve, in a spirit of mutual respect, the differences existing between our Churches"

the Eucharist must be among the subjects studied in the future.

After this document, "Principles for guiding the search for unity between the

Catholic Church and the Coptic orthodox Church signed by H.H. Pope John Paul II and H.H. Pope Shenouda III," there are many points which should be referred to and studied thoroughly. For the first time the sacrament of the Eucharist is given its due importance in restoring the fellowship of faith between two churches divided by differences and which have stayed apart for many long centuries.

In these principles we read

"We possess the same priesthood received from the Apostles and thus celebrate the same Eucharist of the Lord whose members we become through the same baptism".

After this brief overview of the reasons for conflict, the two Heads of the Churches pause at the second point of these principles, which is the Eucharist. They write

"We are two Apostolic Churches in which, by virtue of the Apostolic succession we possess the full sacramental life, particularly the Eucharist, even if Eucharistic communion has not yet been achieved between us in so far as we have not completely resolved the divergences among us."

Finally, the declaration of Pope John Paul II and Mor Zakka I Iwas remains one of the most important declarations on the subject of the Eucharist and its connectedness to restoring the fellowship of faith among churches. This declaration is the first of its kind since the two churches took a courageous step forward in the subject of the place of the sacraments in general and the Eucharist in specific, and connecting them to the subject of the unity of Christians like the unity of the local churches with their legal bishops. I will elaborate a bit on the declaration, which allows to use the Eucharist, as one of the important ecumenical dimensions concerning unity of the church.

First: The understanding of the two churches is one concerning the nature of Christ. The two churches declare :

"We confess also the same conception of His mystery. Incarnate, dead and risen again".

"Through the Word and through the Sacraments the Holy Spirit acts in the Church to call everybody and make them members of this Body of Christ. Those who believe are baptized in the Holy Sacrament of the anointing of confirmation their faith is perfect and strengthened by the same spirit."

Second: The declaration considered

"Sacramental life finds in the Holy Eucharist its fulfillment and its summit, in such a way that it is through the Eucharist that the Church most profoundly realizes and reveals its nature. Through the Holy Eucharist the event of Christ's Pascha expands throughout the Church. Through Holy Baptism and Confirmation, indeed, the members of Christ are anointed by the Holy Spirit, grafted on to Christ; and through the Holy Eucharist the Church becomes what she is destined to be through Baptism and confirmation. By communion with the body and blood of Christ the faithful grow in that mysterious divinization which by the holy Spirit makes them dwell in the Son as children of the Father."

Indeed the members of Christ through their acceptance of the sacrament of baptism and the Chrism *myroon*, they are anointed by the Holy Spirit, they are nurtured in

Christ through the Eucharist. In taking the body and blood of Christ the believers mature in this divine mystery, which renders them children of God the Father through the Son by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Until this point the declaration focuses on the tradition of the two churches on the importance of the sacrament in respect to the one body of the one Christ. However, the eighth section of this declaration explains more clearly than ever before the role of the Holy Eucharist in the unity among Christians. The declaration says

"Since it is the chief expression of Christian unity between the faithful and between Bishops and priest, the Holy Eucharist can not yet be celebrated by us. Such celebration supposes a complete identity of faith such as does not yet exist between us. Certain questions, in fact, still need to be resolved touching the Lord's will for His Church, as also the doctrinal implications can canonical details of the traditions proper to our communities which have been too long separated."

It has never seen in the history of the relations between Christian churches a clearer wording when it comes to the Eucharist as an important element in restoring unity between churches, after the ecumenical movement played a significant role bringing together different points of view. The declaration is very clear that the unity in faith between the two churches is not complete. However, there is nothing to stop the two churches from focusing on cooperation

"in pastoral care, in situations which nowadays are frequent both because of the dispersion of our faithful throughout the world and because of the precarious conditions of these difficult times. It is not rare, in fact, for our faithful to find access to a priest of their own Church materially or morally impossible."

Both the Pope and the Patriarch say:

"Anxious to meet their needs and with their spiritual benefit in mind, we authorize them (faithful from both Churches) in such cases to ask for the Sacrament of penance, Eucharist and Anointing of the Sick from lawful priests of either of our two sister Churches, when they need them".

On the one hand, the declaration forbids bishops and priests to concelebrate the Eucharist because

"the Holy Eucharist can not yet be celebrated by us (two Churches). Such celebration supposes a complete identity of faith such as does not yet exist between us (two Churches)."

On the other hand, the Pope and the Patriarch

"authorize them (faithful from both Churches) in situations which nowadays are frequent faithful from both churches to ask for the Sacrament of penance, Eucharist and Anointing of the Sick from lawful priests of either of our two sister Churches, when they need them."

This indicates clearly that Eucharist is the ultimate goal for full communion between the Churches. Such proposition could be a good way to proceed to the unity of the church.

I would like to end with a suggestion. This step forward, which was taken by the SOCA should not be limited only to one church of the Oriental Orthodox Family and

the Catholic Church. It should be generalized to the rest of the churches as well, not only within the Oriental Orthodox family, but even furthermore, with all other churches. This requires thorough study based on the Apostolic tradition approved by the churches, and guided by the Holy Spirit.

Discussion

Mar Boulos Matar: We have two traditions: Church of the East without consecration words, and that of the other Syriac Churches with consecration words. We see that in the Maronite Church we have both traditions. We do this in memory of Christ. Can we say we do this without saying that in the Eastern Church? What is the place of the *Malika* as benediction before the mass? Has it taken the place of consecration because you say it is “*qurbono*?” Or do you say body of Christ directly, without the consecration?

Mar Bawai Soro: The problem of anaphora of Addai and Mari not having the institution narrative is well understood and appreciated, if one begins seeing the formative history of that anaphora, and as pointed out by Fr. Peter Yousif, outlining the Jewish origins of the anaphora, and the fact that Mesopotamia was inhabited by the largest Jewish population during the first century, in addition to the missionaries who came from Jerusalem preaching Christianity to them. It is well understood that the Jewish roots of the Church of the East gave rise to the basic structure of the anaphora of Addai and Mari. Later on, though, it was dedicated to the memory of the apostles. And as we have seen last year, in our consultation and study of the *Malika*, the whole history of *Malika* and the introduction of *Malika* comes later, many centuries later. It is probably during late first millennium, early second millennium that we see sources mentioning the tradition of *Malika*. So your observation could be correct in the fact that *Malika* and the introduction of *Malika* and the whole theology make a real connection. There is more taken from the Johannine theology, and that could be seen as an attempt by the Church of the East fathers to give a new theological interpretation to their much beloved, by then 1000 years-old anaphora, which does not include the words of institution. So *Malika* can be seen as a way of establishing the material connection with the Last Supper instead of the verbal connection as it was the case with almost all the anaphorae including those of Theodore and Nestorius in the Church of the East.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: As for the Eucharist in our own tradition, it is very clear that we don't use the word “*body and blood*” before the epiclesis. The whole process of preparation until epiclesis, the bread and wine both are called bread and wine, and then after that we call it body and blood.

Prof. Hofrichter: Regarding the words of institution, I only want to remind that also in the West Syrian church, the words of institution are absent, in the anaphora which you quoted here as in the anaphora of Bar Salibi, so this is not a matter of digressions between the Church of the East and the Syrian tradition. Also they have anaphorae without words of institution. And I also want to remind that the very old tradition testified by the apocryphal Acts of John and the apocryphal Acts of St. Thomas reported Eucharistic celebrations without any mentioning of the institution of the Last Supper. The apostle in these Acts breaks the bread and distributes it to the faithful. There are some prayers, but without mentioning anything of institutional words.

Fr. Chediath: I appreciate the paper of Mar Gregorios. In his paper he says: “*The index of composers of anaphorae, and the big number of Syriac manuscripts indicate that the western and eastern Syriac traditions used the same anaphorae.*” Do you mean the East Syrian and West Syrian?

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: The Syrian Orthodox and the Church of the East.

Mar Bawai Soro: Your commentary on the ecumenical implication in your paper is especially helpful. Actually my question is not about the paper, but it is about the prayer service. It is related to the Eucharist and concerns your creed, which I suppose you use in the Eucharist. This question is for my own historical understanding. I know that one of the problems that is becoming less controversial between East and West is the question between Catholics and Orthodox on *filioque*. Keeping that problem in mind, and if I know the various versions of the Nicene creed, I saw here next to “*by whom all things were made, who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit in the virgin Mary Mother of God.*” Is this Mother of God phrase an insertion, when did it happen, whether there are other traditions who use this insertion? For me it is very significant, because it really tells us, and there may be an insertion in my own version, in the Church of the East version of the creed, that one can find. It really tells us that we do sometimes things that although they are correct, but in doing them we should appreciate other Churches in doing them and trying to understand their perspective.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: I know that Bar Salibi is mentioning that in his book commenting on the Eucharist. That is from the 12th century. I am not sure whether it goes back to the earlier centuries. We use it until now in our Church.

Fr. Birnie: I know an argument was made by the Greeks, the Orthodox. I read it in “*The Spirit of the East.*” How widespread is it beyond the Syrian Orthodox, and do the Copts have it too?

Prof. Hofrichter: The Copts have it too.

Prof. Madey: During the controversies, it was said “*in the name of the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit, one God.*” So I think that it is also in the controversies between the

Syro-Orientals and the Syro-Antiochene that the “*Mother of God*” was inserted at that time.

Prof. Winkler: As far as I know, the term *theotokos* first appears on a papyrus with a marian hymn that goes probably back to the 3rd century. This hymn was not universally used in the church. So it is certainly a later insertion because this term became controversial only in the fifth century. Before 428, when the christological controversy began, the term *theotokos* does not appear in the writings of Cyril of Alexandria. So let’s say that most probably it was inserted only after 430.

Mar Bawai Soro: My intervention in this is not on the issue of the Syrian Orthodox using it. I think that’s fine. But my question is on the ecumenical dialogue and the debate between East and West in the problematic of *filioque*. If the West has inserted that, then those who are criticizing the West should look at this venerable apostolic tradition, allowing itself, giving itself a privilege to insert *filioque* as well. So, if they can do it, why can’t the others? I think this is the ecumenical balance that one should be sensitive to in trying to pacify the question and look at it more historically objectively and theologically. That is the reason I ask this question.

Prof. Winkler: Usually the problem is twofold. You have the canonical one in which you insert something later on without the consensus of an ecumenical council, and secondly you have the theological problem. You certainly express something by the term *theotokos*. You certainly express something by *filioque*. So it is not only the canonical problem, but also the theological content.

Fr. George: Some more clarifications. Mar Gregorios has high-lighted the ecumenical significance of the Eucharist. He has devoted half of the paper for that. In his paper he says: “*The common declaration between the Pope and the Patriarch. It is not rare, in fact, for our faithful to find access to a priest of their own Church materially or morally impossible.*” What does the word “morally” imply? Secondly, the Roman Catholic Church is a universal Church. In all the Oriental Catholic Churches, they are literally everywhere in the world. The Syrian Orthodox Church, however, is comparatively a small Church, numerically I mean. Is there any situation in the world where the Roman Catholic faithful have no access to their own priest but a Syrian priest is available?

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: Yes, we have many. Not only in Syria, everywhere.

Fr. George: It seems that this is a new understanding between the Pope and the Patriarch, that this is possible between the two Churches, but has there ever been a silent agreement between these two apostolic churches of the West and East, that in case of extreme pastoral urgency this can be done? Is there an agreement for such practice in the history of the Church?

Prof. Winkler: Not explicitly in the case of pastoral necessity. But there was sometimes a *communicatio in sacris*. It was during the Middle Ages, we know it from the journey of the monk Bar Sauma, a companion of Patriarch Yahballaha III, who went to

Rome and Paris. In Rome Bar Sauma received the eucharist from Pope Nicholas IV. Another example is Isho’yab II of Gdala, he was in diplomatic mission to Aleppo, where he met emperor Heraclius. So they had the *communicatio in sacris*, of course after a theological dispute. So even after 431 we have examples of sharing the Eucharist. I think that this exclusion is a very recent development, mainly from a Western point of view, beginning with the 19th century, not before that.

Mar Severios: I have done one or two things concerning the Nicene creed, in different centuries, in my studies. I could find that there was no insertion of “Mother of God” until the fourth century. And it appears only in the fifth-century translations. Another thing to ask is about the paragraph in your paper where you say: “*He is the one also who abolished the use of unleavened bread.*” I was asking whether there is any evidence to show whether this unleavened bread has been used.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: In some places, yes.

Mar Severios: What was the reason why he wanted to abolish the use of unleavened bread, and can you give any reason for that?

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: First of all, I would like to answer Father George, concerning the meaning of “morally”. I think this means especially for the schools, for the Catholic schools in the Middle East, where we have so many students, and they have the tradition of preparing their students for the first communion. So, “morally” means that we don’t have to break their sensitivity of being a part of this first communion, and also in our private schools we have the same thing, we received students from the Catholic Church. This was practiced, but not “allowed”. It is the same thing in Lebanon. It was not allowed, but practiced, now it is allowed. I can give you an example. Once I was in a city beside Aleppo. I was celebrating there, and there were 100 students receiving communion. 90 out of 100 were Catholic, and 10 were Orthodox. And they were allowed by the Church, and they knew that this was the Archbishop of the Syrian Church. This was after the declaration of course. Now, concerning the second question: even in the diaspora today, for example the Syrian Catholics, the Chaldeans, wherever they see a Syrian Orthodox priest, they go and receive the sacraments, without any problem. And they informed the Catholic Church about this. I can give you the source, but I think this has something to do with the Armenians. So maybe in some Syrian Orthodox churches they used to do it as the Armenians. Mar Jacob of Urhai was the one who said no, it is forbidden. Then, after that, we have a lot of material on the unleavened bread.

Fr. Yousif: Regarding the con-celebration between priests of different Churches, historically we know that in the case of the con-celebration of Isho’yab II celebrating with the Byzantine bishop, he made it with good faith. Regarding the actual present situation about the possibility of celebrating mass with the anaphora of Addai and Mari, that Catholics can participate and receive communion in the Church of the East,

even when the celebration is made with the anaphora of Addai and Mari, as it is historically said, namely without the Institution Narrative. Secondly, regarding the presence of the mystery before the epiclesis that speaks of the body and blood of Christ. This text which is used now and taken as usual is just for the first Sunday of Annunciation. The anthem of mysteries usually celebrates the mystery of the day or liturgical day. *Raze* means either consecrated or unconsecrated elements, and this part of the *qurbana* may be celebrated alone, after the readings, and consists sometimes of the liturgy of pre-sanctified. They position this in order then to bring the water and wine, but also sometimes consecrated bread. It goes to place, and then the priests shift to the preparation of the Communion. There was the “pre-sanctified” mass some days in Lent. So this explains why those expressions like “body and blood of Christ,” and also the other idea that there was no idea of exactly which moment there was the consecration. But for me it is consecrated, or the real moment where the body of Christ is present at the epiclesis which realizes the Resurrection of Christ.

Fr. Nelpuraparambil: In your proposal, you say that the church can share the sacrament of penance, Eucharist, and any thing else with the Orthodox churches. My question is whether Syrian churches can accept the sacraments of the Church of the East?

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: Yes, we accept it. We don't repeat the baptism of the Church of the East. Not only these days, but since the fifth century.

Fr. Nelpuraparambil: And the Eucharist?

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: No.

Fr. Mannoorampampil: I wanted to ask you about the epiclesis in the *qurbono*. The whole anaphora consecrates, that is clearly a belief of the early Church. I think when you speak about this problem it is about the pre-sanctification. This is one of the solutions but not the answer, because this prayer is only once a year.

Prof. Taylor: There has been some suggestion that the problem of non-sharing of communion is fairly recent. I don't think that it is actually sustainable from the evidence. It is a nice idea, but it is recent, and I think that it is slightly over-romantic. Certainly, that is true with the case of Yahballaha III that was pointed out. Before he was allowed to celebrate mass in Rome, he was interrogated fairly thoroughly about his doctrine. Now the fact that they didn't find fault with his creed, that of the Church of the East, was because of their preoccupation with other doctrinal issues, which were contemporary medieval, Western ones, not Eastern ones. From the sixth century, we have very clear documentary evidence of non-Chalcedonians saying that non-Chalcedonians must not accept the sacraments or share the altar with the Chalcedonians. So, it is an old issue. The important thing is to overcome that. But not by romanticizing the history, I think.

Prof. Brock: In late antiquity, in fact it was the authorities of the church of the individual who wanted to take communion from another church who prevented or

wanted to prevent them, rather than the authorities of that other church, so it is actually the reversal of the situation today. The second point goes back to Fr. Yousif's explanation about the body and blood being used in the East Syriac liturgical tradition, before the consecration. I think there is another aspect to the reason behind this. If one reads the commentaries on the Eucharistic liturgy in the East Syriac tradition, one thing that is very prominent is the historical sense that it is Christ entering the sanctuary, entering Jerusalem, so it is following through the Passion Narrative, and that is why the tradition can speak about the body and blood of Christ before the consecration, which is a representation of the Last Supper. It is the whole Passion Narrative that is being included, and that seems to me to explain very well why this term and terminology is used. As so often, you have to look elsewhere, within the tradition itself, to see the explanation for things that appear on the surface to conflict with other traditions.

Elias Khalife-Hachem

THE MARONITE EUCHARISTIC LITURGY*

1. Introduction

The Maronite eucharistic liturgy is a syro-antiochean one with its own characteristics. Until the late eighth century the Maronites were a monastic movement within the patriarchate of Antioch already divided from the early sixth century into two parts: Chalcedonian and nonchalcedonian. This division, I think, did not involve a separation in the field of liturgy, laws or usages though the antiochean tradition has never been uniform. So we cannot say that the middle or the southern parts of the antiochean region like Apamea, Tyrus, Damascus and Bosra have had the same tradition in all its components and details as it was in the north eastern parts like Edessa, Amid and Hierapolis (Mabbug). We all know that the Maronite church was born and developed in the middle and southern parts of the antiochean region where it acquired its own liturgical features in the celebration of the sacraments and other liturgical offices.

After the eighth century, when the Maronite church became independent, it was normal that the process of differentiation accelerated especially during the modern ages when the Maronite church united itself with the holy see of Rome. But, nevertheless, it conserved its syro-antiochean tradition in spite of the several and repeated attempts of latinization especially during the end of the sixteenth century.¹ People and clergy often opposed those attempts by fidelity to the tradition of the Fathers. It was a natural and spontaneous reaction against some undue innovations but ignorance hindered any serious effort to justify the genuine tradition till the second half of the seventeenth century with the great patriarch Estephan Ad-Dūwāihī (+1704) and recently

* General Bibliography:

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Idem, *Al-Qūddās Al-Marūnī*, Beirut 1970.

Ktobō d-Qūrbōnō Ayk 'iydodō d-'ittō d-Antiokiā d-Sūryoyē Morūnoyē or Kitāb Al-Qūddas, Bkerke (Lebanon) 1992, Introduction pp. 9-44.

¹ Cf. my paper „On the Maronite Sacramental Theology“ in: Syriac Dialogue 4 (2001) 54-56.

with the creation of a commission of experts who carried out successfully since 1970 a good liturgical reform on both traditional and pastoral levels.

I shall divide my paper in two unequal parts. In the first I expose the main sources of the Maronite eucharistic liturgy in comparison with the west and east syriac tradition. In the second part I shall try a theological synthesis of the texts.

2. The Sources

We have three main sources for the Maronite eucharistic celebration: the manuscripts before the end of the sixteenth century, the printed books of the mass from the end of this century until the end of the twentieth century; the monumental Dūwāihī's Commentary on the Maronite eucharistic celebration from the end of the seventeenth century. Beside those main sources, we have the offices of the “Thursday of Rosē or of peshā” in the holy week and the offices of the Sunday of the Consecration and Sanctification of the Church in the beginning of the syriac liturgical year in November. Those texts are very important for the understanding of the eucharistic theology and symbolism in the Maronite liturgy.

2.1. The manuscript sources

Before the first edition of the Maronite mass in 1592-1594 in Rome, about thirty manuscripts are registered until now.² The oldest one is the Par. Syr. 71 dated from 1454 A.D. Fortunately, the two manuscripts used for the first edition are yet conserved in the National Library in Florence nos 74 and 79 written in 1566. So we can control the modifications introduced in the printed text, as we shall see. Those thirty manuscripts disagree in many details. We can classify them in four distinct groups.

Group I: Par. Syr. 71 (1454); Maronite Library of Aleppo 619 (1460); Vat. Syr. 31 (XVth cent.); Flor. Laur. 436 (1543); Par. Syr. 85 (XVIth cent.); Vat. Syr. 28 (XVth cent.). Those manuscripts are the oldest of the Maronite mass and they differ from the others in different points: The fore-mass and the preparation of the offerings are shorter and simpler than in the other manuscripts. The two first (Par. Syr. 71 and Alep. 619) use the third anaphora of St. Peter (Šarar) in the ordo communis. This anaphora is very similar to the Addai and Mari used in the east-syriac mass. While in the Addai and Mari the narrative institution is lacking, in the Maronite Šarar it is addressed to the Son that is a unique case between all the other anaphoras.³ Some scholars concluded that the two anaphoras have a common source in a very old edessena one.

² Cf. Gemayel, P., *Avant-messe Maronite...*, pp. 43-88.

³ Cf. *Anaphora Syriaca Sancti Petri Apostoli Tertia, edidit et vertit Josephus-Maria Sauget, Anaphorae Syriacae*, Vol. II, fasc. 3, Roma 1973.

Group II: Bkerke 115 (1501); Par. Syr. 77 (XVIth cent.); Dimane 7 (XVIth cent.). Those manuscripts contain, in the fore-mass and in the anaphoric part, a Syrian-orthodox liturgy adapted to the Maronite usage. This is due to the strain contacts between the two churches in the Mount-Lebanon during the period going from the midst of the fifteenth to the midst of the sixteenth century. In that time some Maronites became Syrian-orthodox, between them the Syrian-orthodox patriarch Nūh Al-Bqūfāwī (+1509). This case provoked a very strong reaction guided by the first Maronite educated in Rome, the Franciscan Gibrael Ibn Al-Qilā'ī (+1516).⁴

Group III: Par. Syr. 73 (1509); Dublin 1510 (1554); Vat. Syr. 434 (1541); Par. Syr. 78 (XVIth cent.); Flor. Laur. 409 (XVIth cent.); Flor. Nat. 74 (1566); Bkerke 117 (XVIth cent.); Bkerke 118 (1580). This group is generally very similar to the printed text: The fore-mass is very developed because of many prayers and hymns borrowed from the Syrian-orthodox liturgy and accumulated to the original Maronite fore-mass. The Flor. Nat. 74 served as base for the printed text.

Group IV: Vat. Syr. 29 (1536); Vat. Syr. 31 (XVIth cent.); Vat. Syr. 32 (XVIth cent.); Par. Syr. 79 (1555); Par. Syr. 80 (1558); Venice 63 (XVIth cent.); Munich 5 (1548); Bkerke 126 (XVIth cent.).

This group is very similar to the third group with some latin influences.

From the study of all those manuscripts, we can conclude that the Maronite eucharistic liturgy, in its old structure and content, reflects some important elements of the old syro-antiochean liturgy which were common to all the liturgies of the syriac churches in the east and in the west. During the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries it came under the influences of the Syrian-orthodox liturgy already developed in its own way. At the same time it came under some latin influences due to the relationships established with the Roman Catholic church since the Middle Ages. But those late influences affected more the external form of the Maronite eucharistic celebration like the sacerdotal clothes, unleavened bread etc.

2.2. The printed books of the Maronite mass

The Maronite eucharistic liturgy has had eleven main printed editions. We shall examine the first two made in Rome 1594 and 1716 and the last one made in Bkerke-Lebanon in 1992. The others reproduced that of 1716.

The first edition was prepared by the first generation of the Maronite students educated in the Maronite college of Rome founded in 1584. We know some of them: John Hasronita who became Dominican in 1591 and Maronite bishop in 1603;

George 'Amira Ehdenensis who became patriarch in 1633; Moussa El-'Anaissi who became bishop of 'Acoura in Mount-Lebanon. The roman censor of this edition was the Dominican Thomas di Terracina. The manuscript used for this edition was written in 1566 by Michael Ar-Rizzi a hermit of Saint Anthony of Qozhaia monastery in the Qadiša Valley. One year after, in 1567, this hermit became patriarch until 1581. His brother Sarkis who was also a hermit with him in the same monastery succeeded him until 1596. In the time of Sarkis, the mass was published under the title: *Missale Chaldaicum juxta Ritum Ecclesiae Nationis Maronitarum 1594*. But when the patriarch Sarkis received a copy, he excommunicated it and all who celebrated in it. The main reason was the modifications introduced in the written text of his brother, mainly those concerning the words of the consecration replaced by those of the roman canon and the words of the epiclesis diverted from their original sense. Dūwāihī wrote about this event saying: "The Dominican monk Touma Tarra (arabisation of Terracina) manipulated the book and changed the prayer of consecration and that of the epiclesis acting on his own authority without the order of the pope or the advice of the patriarch. For this reason when the latter (Sarkis) received a copy of it, he excommunicated the book and all who celebrate in it. The excommunication lasted for four years, but for the lacking of the printing art in the oriental land at that time, he permitted its use later."⁵ In fact, the patriarch permitted its use under the pressure of the roman delegate Jerome Dandini in the Synod of 1596.

This edition, in fact, has no great impact in the Maronite eucharistic celebration because of the small number of its copies which reached Lebanon and because of the opposition against it. For this reason it remained more than a hundred years without reprint.

Comparing the printed mass with the original manuscript (Flor. Nat. 74), we can observe many other modifications, especially in the fore-mass, all due to the latinizing tendency of the students of the Maronite roman college.⁶ The anaphora of the pope Sixtus, used also by the Syrian-orthodox church, was put in the ordo communis. Thirteen other anaphoras were added: John Chrisostom (it was in fact John of Harran from the Syrian-orthodox church), John the evangelist, the first of St. Peter, the twelve Apostles, Dionysios, Cyril, Mathew the pastor, John bar Šušan (a Syrian-orthodox patriarch +1072), Eustathius, Marūta of Takrit (Syrian-orthodox +460), James the brother of the Lord, Marcus, the second of St. Peter, the third of St. Peter (Šašar). This latter, different in many details from the others and being used in the ordo communis in the oldest manuscripts, the printed mass, following the original manuscript, conserved some of those details like, for example, the giving of the peace after the

⁴ Cf. Douayhī, Hector, *Un théologien Maronite Gibrail Ibn Al-Qilā'ī*, USEK, Kaslik, Liban 1993. Jabre-Mouawad, Ray, *Lettres au Mont-Liban d'Ibn Al-Qilā'ī (XV^e siècle)*. Geutner, Paris, 2001.

⁵ Cf. *Manarat Al-Aqdas*, Vol. II., pp. 326 and 300.

⁶ For more details cf. Gemayel, P., *Avant-messe Maronite*, pp. 104-110.

third prayer of the pre-anaphora and the memory of the Virgin Mary between the anamnesis and the epiclesis, a remnant of a longer commemoration of the Fathers, prophets, Apostles, martyrs, all saints with all the living and the dead.⁷

The second edition was also made in Rome after 120 years in 1716 under the title: *Missale syriacum juxta ritum Ecclesiae Antiochenae Nationis Maronitarum*. It was the work of three Maronite priests: Gibrael Hawa Alepensis, head of the Maronite monastery in Rome, Josephus Šem'un Hasronita (the famous Assemani), Andreas Iskandar Al-Kobrosi (Cypriot). This edition introduced more innovations due to the more marked tendency of latinization but it conserved the main structure of the first edition. It retains fourteen anaphoras but it excludes those of St. John Chrisostom, of John bar Šušan and of Marūta of Takrit judged as monophysite and it replaces them by another from the roman canon and called anaphora of the roman church. The third anaphora of St. Peter (Šarar) became a rite of the holy communion during lent (Rūšmō d-kosō). So this old and venerable anaphora which was used in the ordo communis in the oldest manuscripts was emptied of the consecratory words addressed to Christ and was definitely expelled from the eucharistic celebration.

The third edition was also made in Rome in 1763. It reduced the anaphoras to nine: The first of St. Peter in the ordo communis, the twelve Apostles, St. James, St. John the Evangelist, St. Marc, St. Xistus, Roman Church, St. John Marūn and Rušmo d-kosō with the remnant of Šarar. The seven other editions were made in Lebanon and followed the third roman one.

2.3. The new edition: *Ktobō d-qūrbonō ayk 'idō d' 'idtō d-Antiokia d-sūryoyē Morūnoyē. Bkerke, 1992*

For the first time an edition of the Maronite mass, ordered and supervised by the Maronite patriarchate, was officially published. It is a work of a standing liturgical commission composed of expert scholars and pastors. Compared with the ten former editions, it appears a reformed one. The fore-mass is totally restored in its old simple structure and it changes according to the liturgical year of the Maronite church which starts in the first Sunday of November. So we have 45 different fore-masses chosen from the offices of the *phanqitō*. The six anaphoras retained in this edition and cleared of some excrescences are the following: The twelve Apostles, the first of St. Peter, St. James, St. John the evangelist, St. Marc and St. Xystus. The text of the mass is given in two columns, one in syriac and another in a very liberal Arabic translation.

In about thirty pages, the president of the commission, his excellency archbishop of Cyprus Mgr. Boutros Gemayel exposes the history of the Maronite mass, its struc-

ture in its new shape and the criteria adopted in this reformation. The commission is preparing a new edition taking in account the remarks addressed to it from scholars, pastoral workers and faithful people.

2.4. The book of deacon

The deacon holds a very important role in the Maronite eucharistic celebration. He is the collaborator of the celebrant with his own responsibilities which consist essentially in leading and teaching the liturgical assembly in the important moments of the celebration. We can say that the assembly participates in the celebration through the deacon by hearing his biblical hearings and his varied proclamations (*korosūtō*) and by following his admonishings. For this reason we can say in our popular language: "I am going to hear the mass". This does not mean that the assembly has no specific role in the celebration but that he exercises it under the guidance of the deacon. Dūwaihī, explaining the role of the deacon, wrote: "whatever the deacons proclaim it is for the instruction of the people and is related to the mysteries which we know by the mediation of the Old and New Testament, of the angels and the holy Fathers. So they read the prophecies of the prophets, the epistles written by the apostles, the gospel written down by the evangelists...They admonish the people and teach them how to behave and what to ask for in the house of God..." (Manarat...vol. II, p. 158). And in another place he describes the function of the deacons as follows:

"what the deacons utter aim to the instruction and admonishing of the people. They admonish them when to stand up orderly, when to be attentive to the gospel, when to give each other the peace, when to meditate in awe and fear the descent of the Holy Spirit, when to raise up their minds for the glorification of the mysteries, when to implore the mercy of God for them and for the children of the church, when to bow down their heads before the body of the Lord and when to approach and to receive it in purity..." (Manarat, vol. I, pp. 80-81).

The Maronite eucharistic liturgy reserves a special book for the service of the deacon which contains also the responses of the people and the hymns sung by them. This book was printed for the first time at Rome in 1596 by the same John Hasronita under the title: *Liber ministry juxta ritum Ecclesiae Nationis Maronitarum*. The manuscript Flor. Nat. 78 was used for this edition as we can see from the corrections added to it and reproduced in the printed text. The important correction is the suppression from the Trisagion of the formula "who are crucified for us" suspected as theopaschit by the roman censor. It was reprinted three times at Rome and about twelve times in Lebanon. It is worthy to notice that this book reflects, in some of the anaphoric parts, the structure of the *šarar* anaphora and that it is very rich in its variable content according to the liturgical year. In the recent reformed edition of 1992, this book is also

⁷ Cf. *Anaphora Syriaca Sancti Petri Apostoli Tertia...*, pp. 304-308.

reformed and mixed with the book of the mass. The commission justifies this operation in the introduction p. 21. The reasons are practical and pastoral.

2.5. *Dūwaihī's commentary on the Maronite holy mass*

The patriarch Estephan Ad- Dūwaihī (+1704) was a very prominent learned pastor of the Maronite church. Though educated in the Maronite college of Rome, he remained very attached to the genuine syriac tradition of his church. He spent his life in studying this tradition in order to educate his people in the “mysteries of the faith” as they are expressed in their books in which they celebrate those mysteries. This was his aim when he commented on the holy mass as it was celebrated in the Maronite church in his monumental book “The ten lamps” erroneously published after two hundred years (1696-1896) in two volumes under the title of “Candelabra of the Sanctuary: *mnorat qūḏse*”. In this book of about 1100 pages he comments on the syriac text of the mass in each of its parts, its prayers, its symbols and its instruments. He comments, moreover, on the thirty anaphoras used in the Maronite eucharistic celebration which were common to syro-antiochean churches and he called them the “anaphoras of the church of God in Antioch” (vol. II, pp. 144-171) concluding that “all those anaphoras are transmitted to all the syriac churches by oral and written way without interruption from the time of their authors and their copies are the same to us and to the Jacobites (Syrian-orthodox) and others” (vol. II, p. 153). According to him three anaphoras are proper to the Maronite church: the third anaphora of St. Peter (Šarar) and those of St. John Mārūn⁸ and John of Lehfed (patriarch in the 12th century). He explains also the differences between the anaphoras especially the specificities of the Šarar one “which is composed very differently from other anaphoras because it resembles the rite of other churches (allusion to the church of the east?) and because the Apostles celebrated in it only in the dormition of our Lady after they were separated from each other throughout the world. This anaphora (Šarar) was venerated by the ancients as it appears from their copies and they put it above all other anaphoras and they explained it. The commemorations proclaimed after the Epiclesis are placed before the consecration. Some prayers raised up to the Father are raised up to the son” (vol. II, p.161).

It is worthy to notice that Dūwaihī does not follow the printed text of the mass already one hundred years old but he criticises it and he uses in his commentary the old manuscripts preserved in the patriarchate and in the churches of the monasteries and in the villages. He mentioned eight manuscripts dated from 1300 to 1569 (vol. II, p. 301). He often compares the Maronite mass with that of the Syrian-orthodox

church pointing out their similarities and differences. He, moreover, quotes and discusses the great commentators of the Syrian-orthodox liturgy like Jacob of Edessa (+708), Moše bar Kipha (+903) and Dionysios bar Salibi (+1171).⁹

Patriarch Dūwaihī remains a very precious guide for the knowledge of the syro-antiochean liturgy. For him what separates the Maronite church from the Syrian-orthodox church is not the liturgy but only some doctrinal issues. Demonstrating that all the syriac anaphoras have the same consecrating words in spite of some verbal differences he quotes the anaphora of Jacob Baradaeus “to whom is related the Jacobite millet” (vol. II, p. 304). Speaking about the non-accepted anaphoras he lays down a question: “If somebody celebrates in those anaphoras, by ignorance of theological issues, is his mass accepted by God? We answer that the mass is accomplished by the words uttered by our Lord... If those anaphoras contain those words, it is tolerated with the simple clergy of a little knowledge.” (vol.II, pp.170-171) This is a proof that some Maronite priests were yet celebrating in some Syrian-orthodox anaphoras. Dūwaihī himself “by a little knowledge” mentioned at least two Syrian-Orthodox anaphoras (Marūta of Takrit and Jacob of Edessa) in his list of about thirty “orthodox” anaphoras (cf. vol.II, pp.151-152).

In fact the Maronite and Syrian-Orthodox Churches are the heirs of the same old Syro-Antiochean tradition. They drink from the same source. If, afterwards, this water was stirred by theological controversies, this did not break all kinds of communications and relationships especially in the field of liturgy.

3. Theological Synthesis

In this Synthesis I shall focus my attention on two theological dimensions of the eucharistic celebration more clearly developed in the syro-Maronite liturgy: the Trinitarian dimension and the universal or catholic one.

1. Celebrating the Eucharist, the church commemorates and actualises the salvific event of Jesus-Christ. The Triun God is the agent of this event in history and in the eucharistic celebration. In history, the Father sent his Son to become man, the Son “emptied himself being born in the likeness of men” and accomplished our salvation by the power of the Holy Spirit and after his ascension to his Father he sent to us the same Holy Spirit to dwell with us and in us in order to introduce us in the salvation accomplished by the Son.

When the church commemorates this event in the eucharistic celebration, it expresses in the anaphoras this Trinitarian dimension. It gives thanks to the Father for

⁸ Cf. Hayek, Michel, *La Liturgie Maronite...*, pp. 374-383 (French Translation).

⁹ Cf. for example the discussion about the Sign of the Cross in the beginning of the anaphora (*Manarat...* vol. II, pp.174-176).

his merciful goodwill as the source of all goodness towards us in the creation and in the salvation and to the Holy Spirit sent by the Father through his Son to continue and to achieve our salvation. So the Three divine persons are committed in the eucharistic mystery. For this reason the term “Sacrifice” is insufficient to designate the eucharistic mystery as celebrated in the syriac liturgies where the Trinitarian energies are clearly unfolded in the three distinct parts of every anaphora. The whole economy of our salvation is recorded in the Father as its origin, in the Son as its accomplisher by his incarnation, his death and his resurrection and in the Holy Spirit as its achiever by his descent upon the *Qūrbonō* and upon the celebrating community. The Second coming of Christ is often emphasised in the second part of the anaphora because the church, living the eucharistic Kairos as a real presence of Christ, experiments very deeply the intensive waiting of the eschatological fulfilment through the hovering of the Holy Spirit. Likewise the Holy Spirit was acting in the beginning of the economy (cf. Luke 1:35) of the Son and in its achievement in the resurrection (cf. John 20:22), so in the eucharistic celebration and in the eschatological fulfilment.

2. The universal dimension of the eucharistic celebration is clearly underlined in the varied brief or long commemorations and intercessions proclaimed by the deacon or recited by the priest in the different parts of the celebration especially after the epiclesis in the so called great intercession. This means that the eucharistic celebration, though limited locally and temporally to one ecclesial community, has a universal and cosmic effect. Its benefits are extended to the whole world in the past, present and future like the salvific event of Jesus-Christ himself of which the eucharistic celebration is an actualisation. Through those commemorations and intercessions the celebrating community shared in the whole humanity from Adam until now, in the living and the dead, in the angels and the saints in the heavenly Jerusalem, in all the orthodox churches, in nature through intercession for a temperate weather and for abundant fruits and finally for peace between people.

4. Conclusion

The Maronite eucharistic liturgy, in its structure and in its theological content, is an authentic representative of the old syro-antiochean liturgy. It underwent a small development from the ninth till fifteenth century when some late Syrian-orthodox elements began to infiltrate into it. During the end of the sixteenth century, especially since the first edition of the mass in Rome, Latin influences were added in spite of strong oppositions especially from the patriarch Dūwāihī. Those influences were normalised in the synod of Mount Lebanon in 1736. The Maronite liturgical commission is now getting rid of those alien elements in order to restore it in its genuine shape with regard to legitimate pastoral concerns. But, unfortunately, this very serious

work is undertaken without any collaboration with other syro-antiochean churches who share with the Maronite church in the same liturgical tradition. It is of great necessity that the heirs of this tradition come together and unite their scientific and pastoral efforts in exploring their common patrimony for their own benefit and for the benefit of the universal church.

Discussion

Fr. Chediath: What was the original language of the liturgy?

Fr. Khalife: It was Syriac and some Greek. In Antioch itself, in the big cities, Greek was used and people understood Greek in Apamea, too, but in other regions Aramaic dialects were used and in the liturgy the dialect of Edessa was used.

Fr. Chediath: So two languages are used?

Fr. Khalife: Yes, and afterwards Arabic.

Fr. Chediath: Did the non-Chalcedonians use Greek?

Fr. Khalife: The greatest non-Chalcedonian was Severus of Antioch, and he was Greek. He wrote all in Greek, nothing in Syriac. The great founder of the non-Chalcedonian church was Greek.

Fr. Chediath: So there was no division on the basis of language?

Fr. Khalife: No, I don't think so. But most of the people spoke Aramaic.

Fr. Mannooramparampil: About the anaphora of Šarar you say: “*So this old and venerable anaphora which was used in the oldest manuscripts was emptied of the consecratory words addressed to Christ and was definitely expelled from the Eucharistic celebration.*” Was this the only one used?

Fr. Khalife: Not only, but in the oldest manuscripts, this anaphora, called Šarar, third of Peter, was used. But there were other anaphoras, ordinary ones.

Fr. Mannooramparampil: The same liturgical form from the same root developed, the root of Addai and Mari and Šarar. Why was the same liturgy developed by one and accepted and used by the other?

Fr. Khalife: Because this anaphora, Šarar or Addai and Mari, was the oldest in the Antiochene church. And the Syro-Antiochene Orthodox church used it before. But we have no documents, because according to Mar Gregorios, the oldest manuscripts are from the tenth or eleventh century until the edition. It was in Rome. The new students of the Maronite college in Rome thought it was no longer fitting to use it, and they expelled it and put it in the pre-sanctified Mass. It is used now for the *Rusmo d-kešo*.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: Did the Maronite fathers translate anaphoras from Greek into Syriac? Why did you choose this Book of Deacon to hear about Eucharist?

Could you explain exactly the meaning of Šarar? Is the “*Rusmo d-koso*” still used in the Church?

Fr. Khalife: Yes, in holy week, on Good Friday. Before the division of the Patriarch of Antioch, all were the same. When the Maronites began their church, they had their own anaphoras, like others. But from the 14th or 15th century, the Maronite church conserved without developing the heritage. The Book of Deacon existed, we have this until now.

Prof. Feulner: I have a remark on the surprising high number of Maronite anaphoras and a question. Some 80 have come into the Syrian Orthodox and Maronite Church. That is why it is very difficult to give an example of a “pure” Maronite number. But to my knowledge we can indicate only about 70. Also Patriarch Duwaihî uses twenty five. The number of Maronite anaphoras is changing between 6 and 20. I have heard that the third edition of the Maronite missal of 1763 has disappeared. Is that true?

Fr. Khalife: Yes, the third has disappeared. It is in some libraries, but not in Lebanon. The third has disappeared in Lebanon. The book *L’Avant messe Maronite* has a description of this edition. But about anaphoras, we have some manuscripts in Lebanon in our monasteries, all together there are about 72 anaphoras.

Fr. Yousif: I think in the history of the Maronite church, she was not so near to Antioch. There are Maronite Liturgies, rather in the middle between the Eastern and Western Syrian liturgies. You have a structure of the Antiochene liturgy, you have some common text with the Church of the East, and other liturgical pieces which are identical. So, the explanation was given that Maronite liturgies were not composed exactly from the Antiochene world. It is Antiochene, because the Patriarch was in Antioch and so on, but it is between the two rites, although the structure is Antiochene. The texts are proper and independent and less influenced by Greek culture, so it seems. In fact we can find Addai and Mari as a common anaphora in Šarar, with additions, and the question is which one was originally used in Edessa, which was the common milieu where there were also common pieces taken from Nisibis. It is Edessa and Nisibis where the great pieces of liturgy were produced, and where Maronite or Chaldean and East Syrian or Church of the East liturgy took together. So we are not so far from the Church of the East!

Fr. Khalife: Why do you say that the Maronite Church was between the East and West? No, it is not between. Historically speaking the Maronite Church had a common heritage of Antiochene Syriac, and because it had a very small development in four or six centuries, it conserved a very archaic element of the Syro-antiochene one. When it began to develop, it had the influence of Syrian Orthodox and Latin.

Fr. Yousif: Yes, but it is not a branch of West Syrian rite. You have proper rite of baptism, proper rite of marriage, a proper rite of Mass.

Fr. Khalife: In the Antiochene tradition, there was never a uniform tradition of liturgy. We cannot imagine that there was one, from the beginning there were many traditions. In the Southern part of Antioch, the north, in the East, but the same tradition differentiated.

Fr. George: You are discussing the fundamental unity of the Maronite tradition. In the conclusion in your paper you said “*The Maronite liturgical commission is now getting rid of those alien elements in order to restore it in its genuine shape with regard to legitimate pastoral concerns.*” What was the ecclesiastical authority’s role?

Fr. Khalife: The structure of the Maronite mass gave dissent, because Syrian Orthodox elements accumulated. So the commission had written it then in order to have a simple structure of the Mass. Always in the history elements were added to the structure. And now it is more simple.

Fr. George: I was trying to draw a comparison between the Indian, ancient Indian church situation, and the situation of the Maronite church, where ecclesiastical authority from outside of the rite of another church produced the liturgical rite for the daughter church, and then created division and all kinds of confusion. Our tragic history in South India, in Kerala, is very similar to this. It continued, meddling and interrupting with other local churches, and creating division. We need to study this element. It is part of the liturgical experience. It is a crime to meddle, and behind this crime are powers, they assume that they are legitimate powers, and then they can do “corrections” of the liturgical text. Maybe I am alone in saying, but we need to make a study between liturgical corrections and ecclesiastical powers and how they interact to create division.

Mar Bawai Soro: In the service of intellectual benefit, criticism is never an alien factor. I hope we take criticism in a valuable, ecumenical, and open heart and mind so that we can learn more and unite better.

Fr. Thekeparambil: I just wanted to ask how popular is St. James’ anaphora?

Fr. Khalife: It is too long, but we use it. We have in the new book St James, the longer, we use it in solemnities, further: Twelve apostles, Peter and St. James.

Fr. Thekeparambil: I have a question about the people’s part in the anaphora and if it changed. The priestly prayers were changed. For the people’s part, at least in the tradition known in India, it was never changed. The anaphoras don’t change. Did you change as in Europe or outside of India the prayers of the people? There is no “*ammo*” anymore. Is it the same in the Maronite church?

Fr. Khalife: In the Maronite Church, the part of the people is great. There are two books, one of the deacon and one of the priest, and the people know the responses and the hymns very well.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: The role of “*ammo*” of the people of the Church was all the time like that, until the beginning of the last century. Why did they intro-

duce deacons instead of “*ammo*”? Because “*ammo*” was not able to read and participate. But now we started again to return in our books to putting “*ammo*”, instead of deacon. Mar Boulos Matar: Due to the presence of Šarar anaphora in our liturgy, how much can we speak about the common source, liturgical source for the two Syrian, Western and Eastern, traditions?

Fr. Khalife: In the Antiochene era there was a common heritage, our texts, our compositions, our hymns and anaphoras. In every region of Antioch, there were special traditions. The Maronite tradition inherited from the common heritage in the region where it was born. We cannot imagine that there was one liturgy for all. There was never one liturgy, but always several liturgies.

Fr. Mannooramparmpil: Could you explain the role of the deacon in the church and his participation in the liturgy?

Fr. Khalife: This is a problem. Yes, in every mass there is a deacon, there is not an ordained deacon everywhere, but the role of deacon is reserved for one man.

Fr. Mannooramparmpil: For the Antiochene church, the anaphora of St. James is said to be the most original, and is attributed to St. James. My question concerns the Šarar. It seems that after the invasion of Edessa the situation arose after that. Is it possible historically that the Antiochene Church used the anaphora of Addai and Mari in the earliest period, and then after the fourth century borrowed the anaphora of St. James from Jerusalem?

Fr. Khalife: I am not convinced. There were always influences between the communities, but to say that the anaphora of St. James is borrowed from Jerusalem, I don't know.

Prof. Brock: The history of the anaphora of St. James is very complicated, because we've got witnesses from many different languages, in Greek, Syriac and Georgian. The early tradition probably is linked with Jerusalem, but it was developed in many different ways, in the course of time. So, the Jerusalem origin is not actually all that relevant, by the time that we are dealing with. But I thoroughly agree with you that there was great local variation in the whole of the Syro-Antiochene area. And throughout the West Syriac liturgical tradition, there has always been great variation, and I think that is its strength.

Mar Flavianos Melki: As you see with reason, both the Syriac and Maronite churches are drinking from the same source. How do you explain that from the end of the ninth unto sixteenth centuries there were some elements from the Syriac Orthodox liturgy introduced in the Maronite liturgy, when we know the position between these churches? How do you explain this Syrian Orthodox presence?

Fr. Khalife: It is not very clear, from history. But in the 15th and 16th century there were many Syrian Orthodox people in Mount Lebanon. Until this period, the Maronite church was isolated in Mount “*Keba*” with its own institution. And so with new

contacts they went under the influence of those by now very developed Syrian Orthodox after centuries of separation. Syrian Orthodoxy was very developed in liturgy, and so the Maronites accepted from these new Syriac additions to the liturgy.

Mar Boulos Matar: During the beginning of the Ottoman Empire, the political situation gave us relationship with the Syrian Orthodox Church.

Prof. Winkler: We touch such a complex and complicated set of questions with the interaction of the various liturgical rites of the different Syriac Churches. I think it is difficult to explain these relations, and this needs really further study by comparative liturgy. I think you touched it right, after the seventh century all these three churches were in the same geographical area - not only under the Arabs, but also in the Ottoman Empire. From an ecumenical point of view, this is very interesting, because this suggests also peaceful relations between the Churches; otherwise it would not have been possible to have this interaction of rites.

Prof. Brock: The clearest case is one mentioned by Fr. Pierre Yousif, the *Teshbatha* in the East Syriac liturgy, where these attributed to known authors of the late sixth early seventh century, many of these turn up in the Maronite “*Shehimto*.” The movement is certainly from the East to the West in those cases. So it is quite a different situation from the case of Addai and Mari and “Šarar”. That seems to be a common, earlier tradition at least that is how I would view it. One also has links between Syrian Orthodox tradition and Church of the East if you look in the “*Fanqitho*” and “*hudra*”. There is a certain amount of poetic texts which are in common. Some of these definitely are not material that goes back before the great break up in the fifth century. If you go beyond the common material of St. Ephrem and other ancient poets, there is also common material of things which on stylistic grounds must be later compositions, from the sixth or seventh century. How that happened, I have no idea, but it has happened.

Prof. Winkler: What is the conclusion in regard to the interrelations of the Churches? There must have been some sort of ecumenism.

Prof. Brock: These are just two suggestions: One is that people borrowed manuscripts, they went around and saw them, and perhaps even more important, they heard them. And we are so text-oriented today, at least western scholars are, that we forget that for most people's experience of the liturgy, it is through the ears and not the eyes. And I think people's memory was much better then, and people would be able to pick things up. In this way, this could be a very easy way of transfer. That is just a suggestion.

Prof. Hofrichter: I have one question of understanding and a second question of content. In your paper you write that the new edition of 1992 contains six anaphoras but among them, there is not the Šarar and three Peter.

Fr. Khalife: The Šarar is no longer used; because it is complicated.

Mar Boulos Matar: But we use it on Good Friday, for the pre-sanctified.

Prof. Hofrichter: Do you use it without the words of institution? I don't think so.

Fr. Khalife: Every anaphora has a special narrative institution, but it is not the same. But in the new edition I believe in every anaphora there is the same one. It is of St. James.

Prof. Hofrichter: It is inserted?

Fr. Khalife: Yes, it is easier for priests to have only one.

Mar Joseph Powathil: After all liturgy is a celebration about faith, so what would the three speakers say about great Christological questions, on Ecclesiology and the nature of sacraments. What do these liturgies say about these things? That would also be very interesting from the ecumenical perspective.

Mar Bawai Soro: For me, Fr. Khalife's paper definitely stirred some interest in the minds of those present.

Fr. Thekeparambil: Dietmar Winkler was looking for connections and borrowings and contacts between liturgical traditions. When I reflect on the Indian habit of reciting Our Father aloud, in the beginning of each *tesmshotho*, I often think that it comes from the East Syrian tradition, because in the West Syrian tradition, when it comes to the Our Father, they all keep quiet. I am asking myself if it is not an influence from the East Syrian tradition? Secondly, when one says adieu to the altar, in the Syro Malabar church, recently the kissing of the altar 3 times, so that the prayers that accompany this rite is taken from the West Syrian tradition, or Fr. Khalife says it is from the West Syrian tradition. There have been borrowings this way and that way.

Fr. Yousif: The origin of the anaphora should be seen in a large way, because traditions were from different parts of the Antiochene and Mesopotamian area. In Jerusalem, we have not the shape, but same structure. What is given office of Jerusalem, if you compare the descriptions of office is that the structure of morning prayer is exactly the same, except that we don't have readings. The Šarar (virgil) is the same, the order of readings is taken from Jerusalem. There were in antiquity sources and there were Greek and Syriac composition in Edessa, Jerusalem and Nisibis, centers in which individuals composed anaphoras.

Mar Severios: In his paper Fr. Khalife gives a description of the Maronite mass, there were some changes there. For example, in the ablation before the consecrations, do you find reasons for doing that?

Fr. Khalife: It was the fact. He commented on the Šarar anaphora, because in this anaphora, there are specifications that are not the same as the others.

Mar Bawai Soro: We need more ecumenical insights to conclude our Eucharistic presentation. I have offered to add a paper to present an ecumenical perspective, as far as the liturgy of the Church of the East is concerned.

Mar Boulos Matar: My question is how we would handle a mass without words of consecration, for the real presence.

Mar Bawai Soro: The point that His Excellency is raising is legitimate. The topic of the Eucharist is very informative. We could spend more on the Eucharist, despite the fact that the Catholic Church has already presented the instruction on the anaphora of Addai and Mari. But I think that for the sake of our ecumenical discussion, we should follow that. This paper presents another contribution as far as seeing the Eucharist as an ecumenical tool.

(included in that volume as Annex I, pp.189 – 202)

SACRAMENT OF ORDINATION IN THE MALANKARA ORTHODOX-SYRIAN CHURCH

The immediate purpose of this paper is to reflect on the theological, spiritual and ecumenical significance of the sacrament of ordination as it is practised in the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church in India. As in the case of other sacramental liturgies, the Malankara Church follows the service of ordination of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch with appropriate contextual adaptations.

The basic orders are three-fold: bishop, priest and deacon. Within the diaconate, apart from the 'full deacon,' minor orders like sub-deacon, reader and singer are recognized. Ordination of Cor-episcopos is practised in the Malankara Church though the position is totally honorific, usually given to senior married priests.

1. The Eucharistic Context

Ordination of bishops, priests and deacons is always performed in the context of eucharistic celebration amidst the gathered faithful. These are indispensable setting points to two basic theological aspects of ordination.

First, entrusting the office of bishop, priest or deacon to a selected individual is a sacramental act, and not just an appointment or mere election like in a political set up. As a sacramental act it derives its meaning from the eucharistic liturgy in which the model of Jesus Christ the eternal High Priest who offers himself to the Father for the salvation of the whole world is constantly invoked. The ordained bishop, priest or deacon is called to participate in the ministry of Jesus Christ and exercise the charismata of the Holy Spirit in various ways on behalf of the whole church.

Secondly, a person is ordained primarily for the Church, the body of Christ. It is not a personal gift of the Spirit for the spiritual improvement of an individual. Therefore the acclamation and acceptance of the candidate by the people of God is an essential condition for ordination. From diaconate to episcopate, the Church has developed various means and norms to ensure the reception process. For example, every bishop in the Malankara Orthodox Church is literally elected by the representative assembly (Malankara Association) of the whole Church, which has a voting majority of lay people over clergy representing the parishes. If the candidate does not get a separate majority of votes from clergy and laity in the Assembly, he cannot be elected for ordination, however qualified he may be otherwise. This process indicates that the call of the Holy Spirit for the ordained ministry arises from within the Body of Christ and that the ordained person is fully accountable to the totality of the Body of Christ.

2. Royal Priesthood of the Church

The New Testament idea of the people of God as a 'royal priesthood,' and as a 'holy priesthood,' (I Peter 1:9; 2:5) has deeply marked the Church's self-understanding of exercising the priestly ministry as one single body. The Book of Revelation speaks of those saved by Christ as "a kingdom, priests: to his God and Father" (1:6; 5:10; 20:6). Nowhere in the New Testament does one see the term priest (*hiereus*) applied to an individual Christian. "Priests" and "priesthood" are applied collectively except for Christ who is the "high priest" (Heb. 10:21). Other individual applications of the word are to the priests of the Old Testament (Mt. 8:4) and pagan priests (Acts. 14:13).

The Christian concept of the 'royal priesthood' goes back to the Mt. Sinai experience of Moses (Exod. 19:3-6) where God promises that the people of Israel would be made "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" if they kept God's covenant. The Syriac liturgical tradition always connects the priesthood of the whole Church with the self-understanding of Israel thus establishing the continuity of the biblical witness.

The ordination liturgy draws heavily on this foundational and corporate character of the priesthood of the whole Church in order to highlight the special functions and charisms of various ranks within the ordained ministry. It should, however, be pointed out that the Eastern Church's emphasis on the corporate nature of priesthood as underlying the special priesthood never gives way to the Reformation idea of the individualistic "priesthood of the Christian man" (Martin Luther) or "of all believers" in an individual capacity.

A healthy understanding of the corporate priesthood of the whole Church does not legitimize either a wrong kind of laity-clergy dichotomy as we usually experience in some of our Churches, though a balanced distinction between specially ordained persons and the rest of the body of Christ can be rightly maintained. A special "theology of the laity" often arises out of the wrong polarisation between clergy and laity where clerical 'hierarchy' dominates the whole of the Body of Christ. As is well known, some forms of secularization and anti-clerical movements arose from this dichotomy.

3. Hierarchy

Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios of the Malankara Orthodox Church spoke and wrote very often about restoring the true meaning of the word 'hierarchy,' as essential for the renewal of pastoral ministry and the sacrament of ordination.¹

Dionysius the (pseudo) Areopagite, (circa AD 500?) the mysterious author of the *Heavenly Hierarchy* and the *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, is said to be the inventor of the Greek

¹ See Paul Verghese et alii, *Pretres et Pasteurs*, Maison Mame 1968, p.13ff.

word '*hierarchia*.' He influenced both the mediaeval western theologians as well as the eastern teachers. However, it would be distorting the thinking of Dionysius, says Mar Gregorios, if hierarchy is understood as the rule (*arche*) of the priest (*hierous*) when the word really indicates the ordering (*archeia*) of the sanctuary (*hieron*).² The taxis or the arrangement around the throne of God in heaven (heavenly hierarchy) is visibly reflected in the eucharistic gathering around the bishop (ecclesiastical hierarchy).

In the Dionysian image of the heavenly hierarchy, the Holy Trinity as the inaccessible luminous presence is at the core. Around this throne of blinding light are 3 rings of the heavenly hosts, each ring comprising 3 choirs of angels; so altogether there are 9 choirs around the throne of God which is pure and unbearable light. (The Cherubs, the Seraphs, and the Thrones; the Virtues, the Dominions, and the Powers; the Principalities, the Archangels and the Angels).

They are transparent to the source of the unapproachable light at the Centre and radiate the light to the outer ring according to each one's degree of nearness to the source. The whole arrangement is very dynamic. It is like a divine choreography in which the nine choirs sing and dance in a perpetual movement around the throne of light. The main goal is sanctification and divinisation of the whole. Dionysius conceives the ecclesiastical hierarchy on this divine model. Christ, the head of the Church is at the centre as the source of light. Around him, radiating the light and divinising all is the first ring – the three sacraments of baptism, chrismation and eucharist; the second ring consists of the three orders of bishops, priests and deacons; and the outer ring includes monks, lay people and the unbaptized catechumens.

Thus the nine groups reflect on earth the nine orders of heaven. It is to be noted that the three orders of bishops, priests and deacons are not included in the first ring, but the three 'mysteries' or sacraments as divinising elements are closer to Christ, the source. The sacraments are not under the power of the clergy, but transcend them. Both clergy and laity depend on these sacraments for their salvation and deification.

In popular Syriac hymns, St Ignatius of Antioch who lived at the end of the first century, is said to have seen a vision of the nine choirs of angels praising God around the heavenly throne. This is probably a later attribution based on the writings of Dionysius.

Mar Gregorios holds that the deformation of the word *hierarchy* in the west began with the Latin translation of Dionysius by Scotus Eriugena in the 9th century and the subsequent interpretation by the scholastic theologians of the word as meaning the rule of the sacred class of clergy. In the East Maximus the Confessor also made the same error. Thus notions of juridical authority, obedience and subordination took the place of the original conception of a dynamic, communitarian, and transparent reality.

² Ibidem, p. 13

The power (*potestas*) of ordination indicating control of the clergy over the sacraments and over the 'Laity' replaced the sense of a true ecclesia, the Body of Christ. The laity became passive recipients of the power of teaching and administration by the clergy. Hence the later caricature of the people of God (Laos – Laity) as those whose only function in the Church is to kneel before the altar, to sit at the foot of the pulpit and to put the hands to the money purse.³

A fundamental perception of early Christian ecclesiology is that all ordained ministers from episcopos to the deacon primarily belongs to the People of God. All their special charisms are within the totality of the Body of Christ and always exercised on behalf of it. One can perhaps understand in this context the radical criticism of a theologian like Hans Kueng who observes: "The fundamental error of ecclesiologies... was that they failed to realize that all who hold office are primarily (both temporally and factually speaking) not dignitaries but believers, members of the fellowship of believers; and that compared with this fundamental Christian fact an office they may hold is of secondary if not tertiary importance."⁴

Kueng raises a question on the basis of his observations: "Does this mean that the community precedes ecclesiastical office, or that the community rather than the office is the higher authority?"⁵

In the Syrian tradition such a logical question is not usually raised since the ordained ministry is understood as integral to the Body of Christ in a holistic way.

4. Bishop as the Sacramental Presence of Christ

Although the three-fold ministry of bishop, presbyter and deacon is generally accepted in our churches today, it is known to us that during the apostolic period there was no clear distinction between the Episcopos and the Elder, or the bishop and the presbyter. The post-apostolic development was justified by the circumstances when the principle of one episcopos to every eucharistic assembly had to be changed to presbyters representing or in place of the bishop presiding over increasing number of eucharistic congregations. The Syrian liturgical text and practice still remind us of the apostolic tradition when, for example, in a liturgical assembly, a bishop, priest (*kashi-sho*) and deacon are present, only the bishop and the deacon have liturgical roles; the priest has absolutely no role in the liturgy when the bishop is the chief celebrant.⁶

³ Ibid, p. 100 f.

⁴ Ibid, p. 12

⁵ Hans Küng, *The Church*, Image Books, New York 1976, p. 465

⁶ Ibid, p. 465

The episcopos alone is properly called “priest.” Priest in our usual sense, applied to the Presbyter/Elder/*Kashisho* is understood as derived from the episcopate.

It is interesting to note that in the early mediaeval west, episcopate and presbyterate were not always clearly distinguished.⁷ The episcopate was not seen as a separate order different from the presbyterate, but both were distinguished as two dignities in the same priesthood as we see in Hugh of Saint Victor and Peter Lombard. Albert the Great considered the episcopate as merely a power of jurisdiction. For Thomas Aquinas the episcopate is an order in as much as the bishop’s empowerment with respect to the mystical Body, which is the Church, is higher than the priest’s with respect to the Eucharistic Body, the bishop’s order does not rank above that of the priest.⁸ Duns Scotus would assert that the episcopate is a distinct order that can confer all the orders and therefore possesses an eminent value. The Council of Trent clearly defined the hierarchy by stating that “in the Catholic Church there is...instituted a hierarchy by divine ordinance, which consists of bishops, priests and ministers.”⁹ The Council even had to declare anathema on anyone who would maintain that the “bishops are not superior to priests, or that they have not the power to confer and ordain, or that the power which they have is common to them and to priests...”¹⁰

In the East the sacramental position of the bishop is in relation to the orders and his authority as Christ-like good shepherd with respect to the whole body of believers have always been liturgically maintained. The liturgies of ordination have played a significant role in maintaining the theology of the sacramental ministry of Bishops, priests, and deacons.

5. Ministry of the Bishop

The Ordination liturgy in the Syrian Orthodox tradition as used in Malankara contains almost verbatim some of the important phrases in the ordination prayer in the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus of Rome (ca. AD 250).

This is found in the Prayer for the Invocation of the Spirit (*Kroytho d’Rooho*) for the consecration of Bishops. We shall list below some of the gifts granted to the bishop by the Holy Spirit, some of the responsibilities of the bishop and the expectations of the Church from the new Bishop as outlined in the liturgy.

The whole community prays for the:

- “perfect gifts and wholesome endowments of the Spirit” for the episcopos

⁷ Paul Verghese, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p.30

⁸ See Jean Galot, *Theology of the Priesthood*, Ignatius Press, 1985, San Francisco, p.177 f.

⁹ Ibidem, p.178

¹⁰ See for the interesting debate in the Council of Trent on whether the jurisdiction of the bishops came directly from God or through the mediation of the Pope, Ibidem, pp.178 ff.

- gift of being the chief priest
- gift of being the ruler for the Christian community
- gift of being a vigilant leader
- gift of discernment
- gift of being a blameless teacher

The Prayer for the Invocation of the Spirit mentions the special responsibilities of the bishop for which the help of the Holy Spirit is invoked:

- to appoint priests and deacons
 - to consecrate altars and churches
 - to call suitable persons for various ministries
 - to bless houses
 - to heal the sick
 - to sit in judgment
 - to save and restore
 - to bind and loose
 - to vest and divest and set apart
 - to gather the saved
 - to pray for the people
 - to lament for the guilty and to turn them towards the source of help
 - to discern the borders of justice and righteousness
 - to disentangle the knots of difficult situations
 - to loose people from all unjust binding (of evil)
- (from the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus)
- to feed the flock
 - to serve as high priest without blame
 - to minister night and day and to propitiate God’s countenance without ceasing
 - to offer to God the gifts of the Holy Church
 - to have authority to remit sins according to God’s commandment
 - to assign lots according to God’s precept
 - to loose every bond according to the authority given to the Apostles
 - to please God in meekness and purity of heart

6. Laying on of Hands

The prayers on the occasion of ordination clearly show that the ordination as a whole is a gift (charism) of the Holy Spirit. All the elements that are listed above have this charismatic character. In the west as well as the east, baptism and chrismation are sometimes considered as basic orders. Though a popular idea, this is theologically significant since it sets the context of the royal priesthood of the whole Church – the es-

sential setting for the special charisma of ordination. In both baptism and chrismation the role of the Holy Spirit is very clear. The same Spirit is invoked for the special charisms for bishops, priests, deacons and other ministries.

The ritual of laying on of hands in the Syrian tradition assumes a special anointing by the Holy Spirit. The Messiah, the Anointed One, is highlighted as the model for the newly anointed minister of Christ. The Gospel passage Lk. 4:18-24, where the messianic anointing and mission are narrated, is kept open above the head of the candidate when the Patriarch/Catholicos 'anoints' him. In a complex symbolic gesture of both palms, the Patriarch/Catholicos 'draws the blessings' from both the eucharistic cup and the paten and 'pours it out' over the head and body of the candidate. Although no oil of anointing is actually used, the gesture of the Patriarch/Catholicos imitates the use of oil, and the blessings (powers of the Spirit) are powerfully rubbed on to the head, face, neck, shoulders, upper chest and upper back of the candidate. The assumption is that the whole body is being anointed. This is repeatedly done while the candidate kneels before the altar on the side of the chief celebrant; he is covered by the fringes of the outer vestment of the latter. By this complex and repeated symbolic gesture the gifts of the Spirit are believed to be infused in the person of the candidate.

The actual laying on of hands follows in the context of the prayer for the Invocation of the Holy Spirit when not only the chief celebrant but also other bishops present may together lay their hands on the head of the candidate.

The people's intonation of *kyrie-eleison* surrounds the 'anointing' and the laying of hands. Their act of reception by loudly acclaiming the candidate as worthy (*axios*) is also considered essential for the completion of the ordination. In fact, the Church already expresses this acceptance in the election of the candidate. The giving of the episcopal staff and the elevation to the throne also take place towards the end of the ordination service. As the ordination is completed in the middle of the eucharistic liturgy, the chief celebrant steps down after communion and asks the new bishop to continue the rest of the public liturgy.

The custom of keeping the Book of the Gospels over the head of the candidate is already attested in the 4th century work *Apostolic Constitutions*, a work probably influenced by Arian circles.¹¹ Two different traditional interpretations for this practice have been given:

- that it symbolizes the tongues of fire, symbol of the Holy Spirit who descended on the Apostles on the day of Pentecost; this was the ordination of the Apostles by the Spirit.

- that it symbolizes the submission of the new bishop to the Law of God. Though he is being consecrated as the head of all, he is always under obedience to the Word of God.¹²

The continuity of the Old Testament tradition in the Christian priesthood is often mentioned in the prayers and hymnody of the Church: Moses and Aaron who together received priesthood from God transmitted it to Christ through Zachariah the priest and his son John the Baptist. Christ then passed it on to the Apostles and the Apostles to all creation.

This, however, does not mean that Christian priesthood is simply the continuation of Jewish priesthood. Rather the hymn aims at bringing out the idea that Christian priesthood is not simply an appointment to an office, but has its origin in the will of God. The above mentioned hymn of St. Ephrem often sung during the Eucharistic liturgy is sometimes wrongly understood by the people. The element of radical newness of the Christian priesthood beginning with Christ has to counterbalance this emphasis on continuity of the biblical tradition.

7. Conclusion

Priesthood in the Malankara Church as well as the other apostolic churches in India face many challenges in the changing scenario. The socio-economic upheavals, the revival of non-Christian religions, the fast expansion of neo-Pentecostal movements and western cultural globalisation require a new look at the pastoral ministry of traditional priesthood. However, the original idea of a good shepherd modelled on Christ serving the people in humility and interceding for them before God, offering their gifts to God and finally giving one's life to the people is still very much relevant and valid in the changing circumstances. The priest is ultimately called to bear witness (*martyria*) to Christ by his very life.

Discussion

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: In your paper you speak about bishop, priest, and deacon. Where do you put *bar* and *bath qyamo* here? Secondly, why do you speak about the election of the bishops today in the Malankara Orthodox Syrian tradition. You mention the Malankara association, and you said that 4000 people are gathered, and they elect this bishop: when was this tradition introduced in the church? Then you refer to the laying on of hands in your paper. How do you distinguish between this lay-

¹¹ quoted in Galot, Ibidem, p.179

¹² See Joseph Lecuyer, *Le Sacrement de l'Ordination*, Beauchesne, Paris 1983, p.95 f.

ing on of hands during the ordination and during the Eucharist? Because in the Eucharist we have also three times where we use the word *syomido* - the same as it is in the ordination.

Fr. George: In the practice of the election of bishops, there were other ways of electing priests and bishops before. For example, a generation ago every parish priest was elected by the parish general body. Every parish assembly had a candidate, and the candidate was proposed to the bishop. The bishop would thoroughly screen the candidate. If he is found worthy he will be accepted. And then the bishop would ordain the priest before the parish. That was the tradition.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: What is the historical background?

Fr. George: It has been that way since the end of the 19th century. We have the legal entity. And then I think bishops will answer the third question about the laying on of hands and distinguishing this from Eucharist and ordination.

Mar Severios: The laying on of hands, that practice we use in different occasions with different intentions and different contexts of prayers, so it will not be the same everywhere, even if it is laying on of hands.

Fr. Philip: About the election of bishops, does the synod of bishops of the Malankara Orthodox church have a role in the election of bishops?

Fr. George: Yes, legally speaking, when the candidate is elected by the association, the Episcopal synod has to approve that election before the consecration. And generally the Episcopal synod never refuses that election. Because all the bishops, the whole Episcopal synod, is part of the electing body, the association. So, normally there is no reason for them to reject or refuse.

Prof. Winkler: It is not clear to me what “literally elected” means. Could you also say a bit more about the origins of the Malankara association?

Fr. George: It is “literally elected,” because I don’t know of many churches which elect bishops literally, 1000 people coming together and voting by secret ballot, with a majority of both lay and clergy. Normally there is a panel of candidates that is proposed by the people.

Mar Joseph Powathil: Do they have it in other churches?

Fr. George: I am referring to the Malankara Orthodox church. I suppose they also have it in Cyprus.

Mar Bawai Soro: We do elect as well, but the electors are the bishops, the synod, rather than the laity, so you are right, your election is different, in that sense.

Fr. George: It is a very laborious process, and very expensive, also, because you have to bring together so many people for the process of election. The Malankara association, as I told you, in the present practice is a legal entity, since the end of the 19th century. Patriarch Peter III of Antioch was Indian. He initiated and called a synod of our church, where they started creating these practices. Before that, we had a solid tradi-

tion of electing the archdeacon or the head of the community, through what we call “the assemblies”. The remnant of that is what I indicated. An elected parish priest was literally elected by the parish body. So that was a tradition. This is nothing new. The election is not new, but this particular structure that we call the “Malankara association” is rather recent.

Mar Joseph Powathil: When does the election take place, before he goes for his formation as a priest, or after he gets formed as a candidate for priesthood? When does the election take place?

Fr. George: When the candidate is a student in high school, in the late teen years, before training. The parish elects the candidate and proposes the candidate to the bishop, and the bishop does his screening. And then he will decide whether he should be accepted or not. If he is accepted, then he is sent for training, in the seminary. After seminary training, he will be ordained priest for that particular parish. Once that priest is appointed to that parish, the bishop cannot transfer him. The priest is there for life. He is literally a parish priest.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: I would like to go back again to the election of bishops, because I have a question. Traditionally, the election of bishops in the Antiochene church, in recent times and in early times was that the vacant bishopric used to submit three names to the patriarch. And then these three names used to be consulted by the synod, and they would select one of them to be ordained. In recent days, we have something different. The patriarch submits three names to the diocese, and the diocese elects one of them and then the synod approves this one. Here, in both cases, the diocese itself is electing the bishop. But with this procedure, according to your church, the association represents the whole church. It doesn’t represent only the diocese. So where is the role of the diocese in selecting or electing its own bishop?

Fr. George: That is a good question, because legally speaking, they still consider the whole Malankara Church as one single diocese, and that is why we have this title “Malankara Metropolitan”. So other bishops are, legally, his assistants. There is only one diocese. But now, I don’t know what role the diocese has in electing bishops.

Mar Severios: The members elected from the diocese are also present in the election in the “Malankara association”, so they participate as the members of the “Malankara association”. So if they have any objection, they can place it.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: But in this case, the diocese is a minority; it is a minority among the majority, because how many voices do they have?

Mar Severios: The bishops are elected first, not assigning to the diocese. Only afterwards the elected bishop will be appointed to the diocese. At that time, the diocese receives him, and there is another service of “enthronement” of this particular ordained bishop to that diocese. Then, this is the role of the diocese.

Prof. Hofrichter: Are the bishops then only vicars of the Catholicos, or are they bishops of their own right?

Mar Severios: They are bishops of their own right of the diocese, fully independent bishops.

Mar Joseph Powathil: You said at the very beginning, Fr. George, that you have the same service as in the Anglican Church, but with contextual adaptations. Election is one of them, but apart from that, do you have other adaptations? Secondly, you said that election also has a reception. And you said that reception is ascension to the ordination of a person, and without this it cannot be valid. Would you go to that extent?

Fr. George: Throughout my paper, I emphasized the role of the community. Because when I look at the books on the sacrament of ordination, they all consecrate on the liturgical function of the laying on of hands, etc., and nowhere do they speak about this whole process of election by the community and reception by the community. For example, the question of the authority given to the candidate, the confession, the “*homologia*”. The Catholicos ordains a bishop.

Mar Joseph Powathil: That is it?

Fr. George: You have the liturgy, and there are otherwise no changes.

Mar Severios: When a candidate is selected from the parish or even from the congregation to be trained as a priest, and he is sent to the training, even after that the Catholicos will send an order to each individual parish to which this candidate belongs. And he will ask if there are any objections from anybody, so that he will be sent for training.

Mar Joseph Powathil: That tradition of proclaiming it back is already in other churches.

Fr. Thekeparambil: The Chorepiscopos usually is a married priest?

Fr. George: Yes.

Fr. Thekeparambil: And secondly, I don’t know how the formula of ordination goes. Is it not necessary at the time of ordination that they have to specify the “*maritho*” in the west Syrian tradition?

Fr. George: Yes, I would say so.

Mar Severios: The formula used at ordination is “X is ordained as bishop of the church”, of the particular church. And then later there is another service assigning him to one diocese. And there will be said that “X is assigned to *this* metropolitan”.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: In the past days, Chorepiscopos was the vicar of the bishop outside of the city, in the small towns. And he was somehow the head of the priests, the archpriest. Nowadays, the Chorepiscopos should be only one in the diocese, because he is the vicar of the bishop in the diocese, so we should have only one, but there are many exceptions.

Prof. Brock: In the *homologia*, there are a lot of anathemas. Are candidates for the priesthood required to still recite all these anathemas?

Fr. George: Yes, all the heresies and heretics are mentioned in the liturgy, but in actual fact, for example, I remember Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios would never ask the candidates to be ordained priest to mention the heretics like Nestorius, but ask the candidate to renounce heretical teachings.

Fr. Mannoorampampil: My question concerns the reception of the candidate to the priesthood, and the system you referred to.

Fr. George: I was referring to a system which is already obsolete. Now we, for example, (that is the person responsible for recruiting seminarians), when someone applies to the seminary, send a letter from the Catholicos to the parish, mentioning the name of the candidate and his family, asking them if they have any objections to his being taken into the seminary.

Fr. Mannoorampampil: Is the oil of anointing actually used, and what is the meaning of this? Because in the East Syrian liturgy, the Holy Spirit is called. Why do you do it here?

Fr. George: It is anointing of the Holy Spirit. You have the liquid and you rub it very powerfully.

Fr. Bouwen: I would like to raise a general question, for my information. As Fr. George said, in the New Testament the word *hierous* or priest is only used for Christ, and “ministry” is different from priesthood in the Old Testament sense. Do most of the liturgies use the symbols of the priesthood of the Old Testament and apply it the priesthood of the New? Because I think there is a kind of contradiction in the ceremony. On one hand, we say that the priesthood in the New Testament is different from the priesthood in the Old Testament, but on the other hand the ordination prayers very often refer to the priesthood of the Old Testament. There seems to be a lack of logic.

Fr. Thekeparambil: The purpose of priesthood, as Fr. George has mentioned, is to offer the gifts of the Church. I think in the Old Testament the priesthood and incense ministry and offering of incense were very much linked. When I look at the ordination service, the new priest touches the chalice, before he touches actually the food. So the offering of incense and the priesthood were connected. Someone who was not ordained was not supposed to take the food. And also in the deacon’s proclamation in the mass, incense is laid by the hands of the priest or the high priest. So that is an explicit reference, between the priesthood and the offering of incense. The priest is not just to offer the bread and wine but also to offer the incense, especially with regard to the evening prayer and morning prayer, without Eucharist.

Fr. George: The incense is the symbol of the acceptable offering, so it stands for the whole offering.

Prof. Taylor: I think that in looking at it from a historical perspective of the early Syriac Church, the link between the priests of the Old Testament and the New Testament is quite strong and actually much closer than is generally realized. In his commentary on the Gospel, St. Ephrem feels that he has to refute people who say Christ is descended from the tribe of Levi because Mary was a cousin of Elizabeth and Elizabeth was from the tribe of Levi. What he goes on to say is that we can't have Mary actually being from the tribe of Levi, since she is from the tribe of Judah, but he says that the tribes of Judah and Levi intermarried, which leaves open the possibility of levitical descent. Ephrem then goes on to say in the Commentary, and exactly the same thing is repeated in Aphrahaat as well in the East, that the priesthood was passed on to Christ through John the Baptist. In his hymns, Ephrem is even more explicit about it. And the third reference is to Simeon, the old man, who is often considered to be a high priest, who was also thought to have consecrated Christ. So that belief that there is a literal continuity between the priesthood of Old Testament and the New Testament is very strong in the early Syrian tradition. I think it is only with the rise of the Pseudo-Dionysius that you start to get a different understanding, linked to the idea of the order of Melchizedek. So in answer to your question as to whether there is a link, I think that originally there really was thought to be a link, which then the traditions leave behind.

Prof. Hofrichter: Typology of the Christian ecclesial office in the Old Testament priesthood is already present in the first letter of Clement. I don't know how much Clement was known in Syria. It dates to the first century. The letter refers from Rome to Corinth to the situation of the Church. The ecclesial office is put into relation in parallelism to the hierarchy of the temple, the high priest.

Fr. George: As in the letter to the Hebrews, they used to distinguish about Old Testament priesthood with Christ.

Mar Bawai Soro: In the work I saw when preparing my paper, it is the "perfection" of the Old Testament. It cannot be discontinued, but it is perfected with Christ. So the idea is taken, but brought into completion, the whole purpose of Christianity is to bring fulfillment to God's plan of salvation.

Mar Joseph Powathil: Fr. George, you said you know about the relations between priests and bishops and all that, and you are against all *potestas* or power. But in your own rite, the people pray for the gift of being ruler of the Christian community. You also say that the Holy Spirit is involved on this person to sit in judgment. Is this not *potestas* and powers?

Fr. George: In the history of the church, of course, it was confined to juridical power of the sacraments, etc. That was a corruption of the word "power". But of course we accept that the bishop has the ruling power.

Mar Bawai Soro: I wish you had elaborated more, Fr. George, on this subject, because the point that you have alluded to in your paper is a very lively issue in the mind of our people. And in the likes of our churches, particularly in churches that want to undergo reforms, most often reforms and adjustments are opposed not by the faithful of the church, but are opposed by the authority of the Church. And that is why for ecumenism it is so crucial to have a proper understanding of authority, which in my opinion and understanding of Christianity, should be equated to service. Exactly what Jesus said, "I came to serve, not to be served". And out of that context, the question of judgment, that the bishop sits in judgment of the community, comes not according to his own subjective understanding, but to God's rule in the church, through Christ, that the bishop can judge. I think you have touched on an extremely important question. If Syriac dialogue intends to assist our Churches, not only to do ecumenism, because in order to do ecumenism we have to be guaranteed survival given leverage to live, and through guaranteeing reforms, we can do ecumenism.

Fr. Bouwen: In the discussion of holy orders, we see that the vocabulary of ministry and service is also present. Not only orders, but service. Surely, we say that we ordain, but at the same time there is also the tradition in the church that one who is ordained as a minister in view of service, and I think we have to keep that present in mind.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: In the conclusion of your paper, Fr. George, when you are speaking about the challenges which are faced by the Malankara Church as well as the other Apostolic Churches, I don't know if this sentence is enough for all these challenges: "*Require a new look at the pastoral ministry of traditional priesthood*". What do you mean? The churches should cooperate together to find some other new look at the pastoral ministry or have a new agenda for it?

Fr. George: No, already we have some modest ways of collaborating in the pastoral ministry in our churches. And I would say that this is an urgent matter for our churches. Traditionally we have been parish-based, with a priest in a parish, and the faithful in the back, but now the population is mobile. And many people are now attracted by big cities. And then we have all these new movements in society, where our people are not being taken care of. Our pastors are not adequately trained for that ministry. These are the areas that we need to develop, with new forms of pastoral ministry. That way there can be ecumenical development between the churches.

Mar Severios: We have a set of fixed dimensions of our priestly work or ministry, but according to the evolving new situations, we have to find out new dimension of service to the community, other than the traditional one which we follow.

PRIESTHOOD IN THE CHURCH OF THE EAST

1. Origin of Priesthood in the Church of the East

The origins of the priesthood, or *kahnutha*, in the Church of the East are as enigmatic and elusive as the origins of the church itself and intimately connected. With little textual evidence for the early priesthood in the Church of the East we shall need to review historical and theological trends from the time of Christ in the Jewish communities that contributed to the early Church in the East.

1.1. Priesthood in early Syriac communities

Within the context of the transmission of the priesthood as handed down by the Apostles we must give attention to the historical figures of Thomas, Addai, Mari, Aggai, Abris and Bar Tulmay. If indeed Thomas traveled through Mesopotamia and Persia on his way to India, it is likely that he would have made appointments to leadership positions in the communities he converted.

In consideration of the three main offices of the priesthood, bishop, elder and deacon, Moffett states

“No document so far found from eastern Syria or Persia dating to before 200 mentions a bishop. Later historians, however, after the full episcopal hierarchy of the Eastern church was finally organized and recognized in 410, labored with pious earnestness to fill the chronological gaps with reconstructed and unbroken lines of episcopal succession tracing all the way back to the apostles.” Yet he concludes, “It is not at all impossible that these traditional histories with their impressive lists of bishops, particularly in Edessa and Arbela, may preserve genuine material from even before 200, as we have seen.”¹

In the celebrated “Doctrine of Addai”² we find that Addai, an Apostle and member of the Seventy, is said to have preached in Edessa and “appointed” Aggai as his successor. Aggai was martyred before he could appoint his successor, but the “Doctrine of Addai” describes Aggai’s church organization as Aggai being the “Guide and Ruler,” one Palut as elder and Abishlama as deacon. Given the native Syriac terms,

¹ *A History of Christianity in Asia*, Vol 1, S H Moffett, Harper-Collins Pub, New York 1992, p.118.

² *Ancient Syriac Documents, Doctrine of Addai*, W. Cureton, London 1894; reprint, Amsterdam; Oriental Press 1967.

this document preserves the primitive Syriac priesthood in its basic three-tier, hierarchical form. In another document, the *Acts of Mari*,³ we find Mari as a successor to Addai. And lastly, a later tradition from the sixth century historian Mshikha’zkha, states that Addai made one Pqidha the first “bishop” of Adiabene in the year 104.⁴

Odes of Solomon

One document from the late first to the early second century that gives us a hint at the concept of priesthood in the early Syriac church is the celebrated *Odes of Solomon*. Now almost universally accepted as being originally composed in Syriac, the *Odes* are a collection of hymns (whether for private or communal use we cannot be sure) of a very primitive Messianic Jewish nature. J. H. Charlesworth, who translated the *Odes*, has called them “the earliest Christian hymnbook.”⁵

In the Twentieth Ode we read the following:

I am a priest of the Lord,
and Him I serve as a priest;
and to Him I offer the offering of His thought.
For His thought is not like the world,
nor like the flesh,
nor like them who worship according to the flesh.
The offering of the Lord is righteousness,
and purity of heart and lips.
Offer your inward being faultlessly;
and let not your compassion oppress compassion;
and let not yourself oppress a self.

In both the terminology and tone of this Ode the concept of priesthood is most evident. Moreover, the priestly duty to offer to God is clear and the offering made is the one that comes from God, His “thought.” This stanza is also reminiscent of the Peshitta reading of 1 Peter 2:5 “*And you also, like living stones, be built up and become spiritual temples and holy priests for the offering of spiritual sacrifices*,” and also St Paul’s closing lines of his Epistle to the Romans

“Nevertheless on some points I have written to you rather boldly, brethren, in order to remind you, through the grace given to me by God to be a minister of Jesus Christ among the nations and to serve the gospel of God, so that the offering of the nations may be acceptable and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.” (Rom. 15:15-16)

³ *Analecta Bollandiana*, J.B. Abbeloos, ed, Brussels 1885, pp.43-138.

⁴ Moffett, p 70. Cf. *Sources Syriaques*, Vol I A Mingana, Leipzig; Harrasowitz 1907 (*The Chronicle of Adiabene or Arbela*).

⁵ *The Odes of Solomon, The Syriac Texts Edited with Translation and Notes*, J. H. Charlesworth, Oxford 1973.

1.2. Priesthood as Expressed in Peshitta

As the official Biblical Text for the Church of the East, the *Peshitta* remains a faithful witness to the early Christian understanding of the offices the Church would later term “priesthood.” This is accomplished by the use of native Syriac terms and one borrowed from Greek, as we shall see below.

Terminology and Usage

Three words which are frequently found in Syriac Patristics and are also found in the *Peshitta* are *arkona*, meaning “a ruler”, *sa’ura* meaning “an overseer” and sometimes used in reference to the office of bishop and *raya* meaning a shepherd, a pastor. These two latter terms are found together in 1 Peter 2:25, “*For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.*” Another term, borrowed from Greek is seen less frequently and only once in the NT; *epitrupe*, meaning “a legal guardian,” as found in Galatians 4:2.

The three main orders of the priesthood, deacon (*m’shamshana*), presbyter (*qashisha*), and bishop (*apisqopa*), are also found in the *Peshitta*, and in the case of the first two the Christian community adopted existing terms in use in the Jewish communities. The offices and qualifications of presbyters and deacons are demonstrated in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. In these scriptures the *Peshitta* differs from the Greek text in that the term *apisqopa* is not found, but rather *qashisha*. It is possible that at the time of the earliest translation of these epistles into Syriac the terms presbyter and bishop were still interchangeable.

The term *apisqopa* is to be found only once in the *Peshitta*, in Acts 20:28, where Paul is addressing the *qashisha* from Ephesus, another indication of the interchangeability of the two terms at that time: “*Therefore guard yourselves and the flock of Christ, in which the Holy Spirit has established you as bishops.*”

2. Development of Priesthood in the Church of the East

2.1. Nine Orders of the Priesthood

Of the nine orders of the priesthood, which came to be in the East through development, only three are commonly referred to by indigenous Syriac words, the others being borrowed from Greek, which may be indicative of a later development. These three are *Qaruya* (reader), *M’shamshana* (deacon, a minister or servant) and *Qashisha* (presbyter). The other terms taken from Greek are *hupadyaqna* (subdeacon), *Chorapisqopa* (Chorbishop, a priest serving as a representative of the bishop), *Arkidyagon*

(Archdeacon, the priest in charge of the bishop’s cathedral), *Apisqopa* (Bishop), *Metropolit* (Metropolitan) and *Pataryarka* (Patriarch). The title *qatholiqa* has also to be included in this list, as it is usually joined to *pataryarka*, although in theory they are not the same, as there can conceivably be more than one *Qatholiqa* but the very nature of the office of *Pataryarka* (“First Father”) can only be found in one man.

A concise explanation of the nine orders is in order here. These nine orders are broken down into three groups, each having three orders.

2.1.1. Diaconate

Reader: The duties of the reader are to read the OT reading and the Acts of the Apostles, when these seasonally replace the Law or Prophets. It is stated that Jesus exercised this order when he read the prophet Isaiah in Nazareth.⁶

Sub-deacon: The duties of the sub-deacon are to sweep and clean the church, decorate it, light the lamps and to guard the doors. It is stated that Jesus exercised this order when he cleansed the Temple.⁷

Deacon: The duties of the deacon are to preach, call the people to prayer, read the epistles and to help the presbyter by administering the Chalice during the Holy Offering. Their symbol of authority is the wearing of the stole (*Hurara*, although subdeacons also wear the stole, in a different manner) and the belt (*Zunara*). It is stated that Jesus exercised this order when he began to preach the gospel.⁸

2.1.2. Presbyterate

Presbyter: The Presbyter is to administer the Holy Offering, perform baptisms, read the Gospel during the liturgy, solemnize marriages, bury the dead, pray and lay hands on the sick and absolve sinners. In all this he is subject to the bishop. It is stated that Jesus exercised this order when he baptized in Judea, when he blessed the

⁶ “When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written...” (Luke 4:16-17)

⁷ After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples; and they remained there a few days. The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!” (John 2:12-17)

⁸ From that time Jesus began to proclaim, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” (Matthew 4:17)

bread and wine and transformed them into the Holy Offering and when he laid his hand on the woman with rheumatism and healed her.⁹

Chorbishop: The duties of the Chorbishop are to visit the rural parishes on behalf of the bishop and to direct the priests in them. It is stated that Jesus exercised this order when he began to preach the gospel in other areas.¹⁰

Archdeacon: The duties of the archdeacon are to administer and arrange the cathedral services on behalf of the bishop and to direct the priests in serving in it. It is stated that Jesus exercised this order when he arranged the gospel mission.¹¹

2.1.3. Episcopacy

Bishop: The bishop's duties are to ordain all the orders under him, teach the faith and assume the burden of his pastoral ministry. It is stated that Jesus exercised this order when he breathed on his disciples, imparting the Holy Spirit to them.¹²

Metropolitan: The metropolitan's duties are to ordain all the orders under him, including the consecration of bishops for his diocese. It is stated that Jesus exercised this order when he blessed his disciples and when he sent them to convert and baptize the nations.¹³

⁹ After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he spent some time there with them and baptized. (John 3:22) While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you." (Matthew 26:26-27) Then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. (Luke 13:11-13)

¹⁰ But Jesus said to them, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose." So he continued proclaiming the message in the synagogues of Judea. (Luke 4:43-44)

¹¹ These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food. Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. As you enter the house, greet it. If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town." (Matthew 10:5-12)

¹² When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." (John 20:22-23)

¹³ Then he led them out as far as Bethany, and, lifting up his hands, he blessed them. (Luke 24:50) And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son

Patriarch: The patriarch's duties are to govern the affairs of the Church, to consecrate metropolitans and to confirm the appointment of bishops. It is stated that Jesus exercised this order when he entrusted the keys of the Kingdom to Simon Peter.¹⁴

The relationship between the nine orders of angels and these orders is obvious, a typology between the heavenly (upper) church and the earthly (lower) church. Central to the understanding of the priesthood in the Church of the East is, as we have seen, that during his earthly ministry Jesus held all nine orders.¹⁵

All nine orders are found in the *Synodical Canons*, including the first, that of reader. Beginning with the Synod of Mar Isaac, 410, the orders of bishops, "*bishop, metropolitan and patriarch*", are clearly expressed but the title *catholika* is given to Mar Isaac. However, the purpose of this Synod is largely to accept "*the canons and ordinances set forth in the West in the land of the Romans by the bishops there ... which they, on their own, established and defined regarding the orders of bishops and metropolitans and concerning the patriarch and his clerical rank.*" The duties of the various orders are plainly expressed and the relationship between the orders is well defined.¹⁶

2.2. Sons and Daughters of the Covenant

While not an ordained office, yet the semi-monastic ascetic movement known as "*Sons and Daughters of the Covenant*," received an honored place as a movement during the third century within Mesopotamia and Western Persia and eventually led to organized monasticism. Commenting on the Demonstration of Aphrahat and speaking about this movement in the Church of the East, Moffett states the following:

It is in his instructions to them that we are given the first clear picture of the severity of their religious vows. The Christian life of the "Covenantors," or "Solitaires," or "Monks," as they are variously called, must be a life of unrelenting warfare between believers and the devil. Satan will tempt them with all the enticements of the world's luxuries and pleasures. Then it says Aphrahat that they must be ready to flee to the desert.¹⁷

As early as the first quarter of the third century, one can already ascertain annoyance in the Syriac *Didascalia* toward "puritans and sticklers for holiness." Desert saints

and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20)

¹⁴ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. (Matthew 16:19)

¹⁵ *Messianic Teachings*, Syriac ed. Metropolitan Mar Avimalk Thimotheus (of India), English translation by M P Francis, Oriental Printers, Trichur, India, 1957, pp.54-62.

¹⁶ *Synodicon Orientale*, ed. J.B. Chabot, tr. M. J. Birnie, Synod of Mar Isaac (410), Canon 29. Hereafter SO. Pages cited here are from the Aramaic text of Chabot.

¹⁷ Moffett, p.126.

aroused popular reverence for their extraordinary piety, drawing devotees and disciples who wanted to emulate their example. This brought about the practical problem of how those who had left the world could still worship with the “body of Christ,” the church, and still follow literally the command to give up all and follow Christ. Those who followed this rigorous and segregated interpretation of discipleship began to be expressed as an organized movement in the church. This movement became known as *Benai w'Benat Qeyama*, or “Sons and Daughters of the Covenant.” Members were totally committed – celibate, single minded, and separated from the world, not unlike some of the earlier members of the Qumran communities.

“If compared with the covenanters of the Qumran Jewish community, their life-style and spiritual features were so identical one cannot help it but assume that there was a common font of religious thought behind them. And, indeed there was. Vööbus contends that this phenomenon was possible because both religious schools were not under the influence of Hellenism and, at the same time, they were exposed to the larger framework of the Near East Persian, Assyrian and Babylonian religious thought.”¹⁸

It is thought by some that Aphrahat the Persian and Ephrem the Syrian may have been one time Sons of the Covenant. Both taught, in their own expression, virginity, chastity and singleness, *ikhidayuta*¹⁹, as a praiseworthy virtue. “Singleness,” maintains Moffett, “is the word most characteristically used of them...with all its overtones of virginity of body, commitment of the heart and mystic union with the Single One, Christ, the only-begotten.”²⁰

2.2.1. Monks

As stated above, the “Sons and Daughters of the Covenant,” eventually led to organized monasticism. The strength and personal asceticism of the members of *the Sons and Daughters of the Covenant* well served the missionary movement and theological Schools, first at Edessa then at Nisibis, transmitted and defined the Church’s teach-

ings but a common point between these two had yet to be formed by the beginning of the fourth century.

At that time the father of Eastern monasticism arose in the person of one Jacob of Nisibis, at that time part of the Roman Empire. He was an ascetic, likely a Son of the Covenant, who, according to Theodoret, the very young Jacob lived in the woods and mountains around Nisibis, wore no clothes, used no fire and sought shelter only in winter from a cave.²¹ He may have been a presbyter. In about 306 AD he answered a calling from the Church in Nisibis to return to them and be their bishop, supposedly their first, but that seems doubtful.

In his twentieth year of the episcopacy, Jacob attended the Council of Nicaea and his name appears on the list of subscribers to its acts.²² Perhaps during this time in the West, Jacob made contact with a fellow ascetic from the Nile delta, named Augin, who had been a disciple of St Pachomius, the founder of organized monasticism in Egypt about 320. According to a later tradition (no record of the Augin can be traced before the ninth century), Jacob brought Augin to Nisibis to found the first Eastern monastery near Nisibis.

Regardless of the accuracy of this tradition, the Persian side of the Church also saw the rise of organized monasteries throughout the Persian south and into Bahrain by the end of the fourth century. What was “organized” or formal about these monasteries was the controlling authority they lived under, whether a bishop, as was often the case, or an “abbot.” Otherwise, the daily routine and lifestyles seem to have been that already expressed in the Sons and Daughters of the Covenant movement.

Another ascetic-bishop who was a friend of Jacob and whose writings were later attributed to him, was Aphrahat. He, too, seems to have been a Son of the Covenant and was called away from his ascetic life to serve as bishop of Mar Mattai, a monastery on the east side of the upper Tigris River. This would have been around 335 and such an early date gives credence to the rise of Persian monasticism being independent from the Augin–Nisibis tradition.

Another figure in the history of Eastern monks is Isaac of Nineveh. Isaac was a monk and teacher in the area of Beth Qatraye during the Patriarchate of Mar Gewargis, who had the occasion to meet him on a pastoral visit. Mar Gewargis brought Isaac back to Kokhe with him and consecrated him bishop for the monastery of Beth Abbe around 670. He served as bishop only five months, then returned to solitude and eventually joined the monastery of Rabban Shabur, where he died. He is venerated not only by the Church of the East, but by the Eastern Orthodox as well, more notably the Russian and Greek Orthodox.

¹⁸ See, Mar Bawai Soro, *The Church of the East: Historic grounds for apostolic origins & theological Premises for orthodoxy of faith*, doctoral thesis at the Angelicum Pontifical University (Rome: 2002), p. 78. For more extensive discussion on this issue, also see Arthur Vööbus, *History of Asceticism in the Syrian Orient. A Contribution to the History of Culture in the Near East. Early Monasticism in Persia* (Louvain 1958) pp.20-25. A strong tendency featured both groups of Christians and Jews in that they assumed a structural position in respectively molding their theologies, ethics and organizations. Life for both groups was a constant war with the evil powers and even more than that with the physical-natural conditions of the world. They perceived themselves as “warriors of God” who struggled, fought and battled only for a nearer life with God.

¹⁹ Latter, this word became the adjectival form translated as “monastic.” See *Symbols in Church and Kingdom*, R Murray, Cambridge. Cambridge University Press 1975. pp.12-16.

²⁰ *A History*, Moffett, pp.98-99.

²¹ *History of the Monks (Historia Religiosa)*, Theodoret of Cyrus in: K. Gilbert, *Bibliothek der Kirchenväter*, 2nd Ed., 1926, p.50.

²² *History of Asceticism*, Vööbus, 1:142.

The above three examples of monks who became bishop are not unique, for early, and continuously, the Church sought out those who had already made such a profession to the spiritual life to serve as her bishops. At some point, after the rise of Islam in the seventh century, the church increasingly sought out monks to fill the office of the episcopate. The rite of Ordination of Bishops even specifies that it is the presbyter and monk...who is being ordained.

2.2.2. Nuns

The feminine counterpart of the monks were also active in the religious community; nuns formed small groups, sometimes living in houses together, sometimes with relatives, but convents, in the traditional form, are seldom found and only a later development. The typical title for women of "Singleness" is "virgin." Their role in the Church is firmly established and, as in the case of bishops being called from the ranks of the monks, so too the office of deaconess was called from the virgins. The duties of the Virgins primarily centered on liturgical prayer and music for liturgical purposes. This required the knowledge of the Psalms, which would indicate literacy and memorization. In addition to this, virgins were traditionally the ones who ground the wheat flour for the baking of the Eucharistic bread, which could only be performed by a presbyter.

2.3. Deaconess

The office of "deaconess" was not affected by ordination, but rather a blessing. A deaconess should be at least sixty years of age. Her ministry was to aid in the catechetical process and spiritual formation of women and, as an auxiliary to the diaconate, to complete the total anointing by consecrated oil of mature women at their baptism. She also guides the hand of the priest to rest upon the head of the women being baptized, as the priest is behind a curtain and cannot see the one receiving baptism, as baptisms were always performed in the nude. From the Synods we read the following prescriptions for virgins and the deaconess:

Women who once separated themselves to the title of virginity and the chaste garb of standing should be distinct in their form of clothing and cut of hair. Before everything they should learn the recitation of the Psalms, and should attend to the liturgy of the Church and the hours of their own hymns. They may sing hymns following the biers of the departed on the day of burial, as also they may sing hymns on the day of vigil for days designated as memorials for the departed. However, they are not allowed to go to the graveyard in order to sing hymns there. But there should be appropriate prudence concerning these things for the sake of weak (men), and they should gather in one or two places in the cities in their habitations, and one of them who has the status of old age and is attested in life-style of chastity should be en-

trusted with rulership. They should effect their coming and going at her command, and she should bind upon them laws which keep them from chattering and preserve them from the railings and murmuring of outsiders and members of the household. But for the fulfillment of ecclesiastical ministry, let there be separated from them one who among all of them is excellent, and let her be ordained a deaconess. She should anoint with the holy oil those women of mature age who are baptized, and she should arrange the business of Baptism for them in those matters which are deserving of modesty."²³

It becomes more obvious that the role of deaconess also becomes head of the virgins, acting as a type of abbess. We read from the Ordination manual of the Ancient Churches of the East and West:

She does not approach the altar, because she is a woman, but only the oil of chrisam. This is her function, to pray from her heart at the head of the nuns at the time of services and at the end of the prayers to say Amen aloud, and the others with her; to anoint women coming to baptism and to lead them under the hand of the priest, for it is not right for men to anoint women - even if they do it in our day - since a priest should never let his eyes fall on a woman.²⁴

3. Sacramental Theology of the Priesthood in the Church of the East

3.1. Messianic Priesthood and the Old Covenant

But how is it that Christians received the priesthood? In his humanity, the Messiah held no priesthood, as is stated in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "Now if he were on earth, he would not be a priest at all, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law."²⁵ The tradition of the Church of the East explains the acquisition of the priesthood as one of transference from John the Baptist to Jesus at his baptism in the River Jordan, but how this is achieved is not a precise theology. However, the idea has received some recent attention from Gillick: "John the Baptist has prophetically declared himself not to be the Christ and has publicly ordained Jesus in the waters of the Jordan to be what God has called him to be - The Anointed."²⁶

What is expressed liturgically is that Jesus *bowed* his head before John who *laid his hands* upon him, a gesture that would indicate total submersion during the Jewish mikvah, required for the ritual cleansing. Before every Eucharistic Liturgy, as he places the main loaf into the oven during the rite of baking the Eucharistic bread, the Church of

²³ SO, Synod of Mar Gewargis, Canon 9.

²⁴ *Ordination Rites of the Ancient Churches of the East and West*, Paul Bradshaw, Pueblo Pub Co, New York 1990.

²⁵ Heb. 8:4.

²⁶ *Daily Reflection, Second Sunday in Ordinary Time*, Larry Gillick, S.J., Director, Degelman Center for Ignatian Spirituality, <http://www.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/011903.html>.

the East priest prays “*the King of kings came down to be baptized and bowed his head before John that he might be baptized by him.*” From the Liturgy for the memorial of St John the Baptist, we read this exhortation.

“Come, O believers, and behold on this holy day the fearful and perfect Mystery: the sinless Son is baptized in the Jordan, and the Baptist, asking and begging him, says, ‘I have need, O my Lord, to be baptized by you, for the mire does not approach the fountain, nor is the lamp able to give light to the sun; but because it is pleasing to you to bow your head before me, I will make bold to lay my right hand upon you according to your command for the sake of the salvation of the race of men.’”²⁷

The connection with the priesthood is confirmed after the consecration of the Eucharist elements with these words.

“Give thanks, O Church, in every tongue on the glorious Feast of the priest and high priest who was sent before the coming of Christ the King to prepare his way, preaching and baptizing in the River Jordan a Baptism for the pardon of debts; Hallelujah!”²⁸

Whatever can be said of this tradition, either from a hermeneutical or sacramental perspective, it expresses the need to show the connection, the continuance, of the New Covenant priesthood with that of the Old Covenant priesthood. Even as the divine Word of God accepted a fleshly body from the Virgin, clothing himself in our humanity, so too he accepted baptism, and by baptism an ordination, from his forerunner, the one who prepared the way for his ministry. From the view of the Church of the East Jesus’ ministry, in which he fulfilled the duties of the priesthood in all its degrees and orders, could only be accomplished by one who held the priesthood. His priesthood, being other than the hereditary Levitical or Aaronic, yet inclusive of these from a standpoint of fulfillment, has become the very priesthood shared sacramentally by those who receive it in the Church as well as those who are ministered to by way of it.

3.2. Priesthood as a Raza (Sacrament or Mystery)

The priesthood is considered a *Raza*, Sacrament, or Mystery, by the Church of the East. In this sacrament, the Holy Spirit gives His power to effect the fulfillment of the other sacraments, the *Mysteries*. Narsai writes:

The explanation of the phrase with which the people reply to the priest, ‘And with you, and with your spirit.’ ... The people answer the priest lovingly and say, ‘With you, O priest, and with your priestly spirit.’ The ‘spirit’ invoked is not the soul which is in the priest, but the spirit which the priest received at ordination. In the laying-on

of hands the priest received the power of the Spirit that by it he may be enabled to fulfill the divine Mysteries.²⁹

Furthermore, the power of the Spirit in the priesthood is not mitigated by the spiritual condition of the priest. The Spirit

“tolerates patiently the priest who sins, and perfects through him the glorious [and] ineffable Mysteries. In the world which is to come he will judge him greatly, and will take from him the gift which was given to him. And he who did not honor the greatness of his rank accordingly will be held in contempt there, and [will] be made a laughing-stock before all creatures.”³⁰

The priesthood is also the sacrament by which all other sacraments are perfected.

3.3. Priesthood in Liturgical Context

In all liturgies the presbyter is the normative celebrant, though in the Eucharistic liturgy, and to a lesser degree the baptismal, absolution and wedding liturgies, the deacons perform specific duties while readers and subdeacons play a more limited role. The important role the priest plays is mediation between God and the community of faith assembled to receive the Eucharist. On this mediation Mar Narsai tells us:

Therefore the Spirit who raised him (Christ) from the dead descends now and perfects the Mysteries of the resurrection of his body. Thus the Holy Spirit is perfecting by the hands of the priest, and without a priest they are never perfected. The Mysteries of the church are not perfected without a priest, for the Holy Spirit does not allow them to be perfected. The priest receives the power of the Spirit through ordination, and by him all the Mysteries in the church are fulfilled.³¹

On the priest’s role in Baptism, Matrimony and funeral Mar Narsai informs us: The priest sanctifies the womb of the waters of baptism, and the Spirit bestows the adoption of sons upon those who are baptized. Without a priest a woman is not betrothed to a man, and without him their marriage feast is not completed. Without a priest a departed person is not enshrouded, and they do not put him down into his tomb without a priest. ... Unclean water is not sanctified without a priest, and if there is no priest for it, the whole house is unclean. These things the Holy Spirit accomplishes by the hands of a priest, even though he may be utterly in debts and offenses. That which the priests fulfill [and] perfect, even though sinners, those who do not possess the rank cannot perfect, however much they are just.³²

The Synod of Mar Isho-Yahb elaborates on three themes central to the liturgical duty of the priest:

²⁹ Narsai, *Commentary on the Holy Mysteries*, ed. J. Kelaita (Mosil 1928) 33.

³⁰ Ibidem, 27.

³¹ Ibidem, 22.

³² Ibidem, 23.

²⁷ From the *Anthem of the Mysteries*, one of the propers for the Memorial of the Baptist and taken from the Hudra.

²⁸ From the *Anthem of the Bema*, for the Memorial of the Baptist and also taken from the Hudra.

“It is permitted to speak with confidence, through the faculty we have received from the symbols and types of the ecclesiastical ministry. From them it is possible to say confidently, for example, that the priests, the ministers of the Altar, bear the likeness and image of our Lord and that the deacons, the ministers of the Church, bear the likeness and image of the angels on high as servants of the true High Priest. For priests are appointed in the service of their priesthood as propitiators of God, absolvers of the people and obedient teachers, and by these three perfect things they fulfill the law of their priesthood, as was said by the mediator of the Old Covenant concerning the priests who were ministers of shadowy things - but is especially appropriate for the priests who are ministers of what is sure - ‘They shall offer incense according to your wrath and satisfaction upon your Altar. They shall teach your judgments to Jacob and your laws to Israel In these three ways of ministry the Law-giver revealed how great the priestly rank is. When wrath is stirred up, it is abated by the fragrance of their prayers. When the people sin, the people are absolved by the satisfaction of their sacrifices. When teaching is required, their mind overflows and their tongues convey the wisdom of the Giver of laws.’”³³

3.3.1. Eucharistic Context

It is in the context of the Eucharistic liturgy that the priesthood is most fully expressed. The phrase “*power of the Spirit that by it he may be enabled to fulfill the divine Mysteries*,” cited above, is understood to be the ability to consecrate, and in the Eucharistic context, it is the ability to consecrate the bread and wine, thus making them become the very Body and Blood of Christ. In the liturgy we find this cautionary exhortation, given by deacons to the people after the Kiss of Peace

“Let us all purely and mournfully give thanks and beseech and supplicate the LORD. Stand aright and look upon those things, which are done in the fearful Mysteries being hallowed. The priest draws near to pray, that by his mediation peace may be multiplied for you.”

This is accomplished through the Memorial of the Christ, the Holy Offering he made to his Father on our behalf. Readers, subdeacons and deacons with priests celebrating, all participate in this Memorial of the passion death and resurrection of Christ.

3.3.2. Narsai's Treatment of Priesthood

We have quoted extensively the great commentators on the Eucharistic liturgy of the Church of the East, Mar Narsai, the “Harp of the Spirit,” head of the School of Nisibis in the fifth century. His *Commentary on the Eucharist* shows a highly developed theology of the role of the priesthood in the liturgy. Narsai observes that:

“The priest who is set apart to accomplish the sacrifice bears in himself the likeness of our Lord at that time. Our Lord served as mediator between us and his Father, and in outward form the priest is serving as mediator.”

Thus, the priest represents Christ, who is the mediator of the New Covenant, which is offered by his own sacrifice of himself. Narsai then warns the priest:

Hear, O priest, how far you have come because of your rank, and tremble before your Lord, and honor your degree as befits it. Behold, you have been exalted higher than cherubim, higher than seraphim. Be higher than nature in your manners as befits you. Behold, you have been entrusted with the stewardship of the treasures of your Lord. Be without spot and without blame as you are commanded.³⁴

Narsai goes on to describe the spiritual visage of the priest at this time, “In this appearance stands the priest at that time, and there is no equal to the greatness to which he approaches. All the priests who are in the sanctuary bear the image of those apostles who assembled at the sepulcher.”

The deacons, too, have their characterization, “And the deacons who here and there stand waving [the fans] are a type of the angels at his head and feet. And all the deacons who stand ministering before the altar represent a likeness of the angels who surrounded the tomb of our Lord.”³⁵

Regarding the offering that the priest is making, *in persona Christi*, Narsai says, “The priest, then, offers the Mystery of the salvation of our lives, being filled with trembling and clothed with fear and great dread because of his own debts and the debts of all the children of the church. He is the eye of the whole ecclesiastical body, and remembers in his thoughts all the affairs of his fellow-servants. Also he is the tongue of the whole Body of Jesus, a steward supplying advocacy on its behalf.”

Trembling and fear, for himself and for his people, lies upon the priest at the time full of dread. In a dreadful type, in a dreadful order, dreadful to the seraphim, the son of dust stands mediating in great awe—the awe-inspiring King, who is slain and buried mystically, and the fearful angels who stand in awe for the honor of their Lord, the ranks of angels encircling the altar at that time, as Chrysostom, who saw them, bore witness. Thinking on this, the priest stands to exercise priesthood sorrowfully, in great fear and trembling.

3.3.3. Baptismal Context

The function of the priesthood in the baptism rite is closely related to the Eucharistic one, as the two liturgies share much the same structure. Psalms are chanted, Scriptures are read, prayers recited, and consecration also takes place, but this time it is the consecration of oil at the altar and water in the font. It is this consecrated oil that is used to anoint the ones being baptized.

³⁴ Narsai, *Commentary on the Holy Mysteries*, ed. J. Kelaita (Mosil 1928) 35.

³⁵ Ibidem, pp.38 and 40.

³³ SO, Synod of Mar Isho'yahb, Canon 5.

3.3.4. Absolution Context

The priesthood in the Church of the East, in the order of presbyters, is fully gifted to grant forgiveness of sins to those who are repentant and who seek reconciliation through the Rite of Absolution, or *Husaya*. Concerning Absolution, or the Rite of Reconciliation, Mar Narsai wrote,

“Our Lord has committed the Medicine of Repentance to the learned physicians, the priests of the Church. Whosoever, therefore, Satan has cast into the disease of sin, let him come and show his wounds to the disciples of the Wise Physician who will heal him with Spiritual Medicine.”

As a rite, absolution is specifically given for the remission of sins and reconciliation of the sinner to Christ, the Head, and to his body, the Church. Two prayers of the priest illustrate this well; “Let us draw near in sorrow and beg for mercy. Let us request remission of sins from him who is merciful, who opens his door and welcomes those who come to him in repentance.” The other example is the actual prayer of Absolution,

“Have mercy on us, our Lord and our God. Absolve, blot out, and pass over our offenses in the abundant mercies of your grace, for you are merciful and forgive debts and sins, O Lord of all.”

Those receiving Absolution are then anointed with oil on the forehead and addressed by name as the priest pronounces each “signed, renewed, sealed, and purified, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”

3.3.5. Canonical Context

The collection of the historical Synods of the Church of the East provide a valuable resource for the Church’s understanding of the role and application of the priesthood, as we have already noted.

Often the Synods deal with the practical matters of the priesthood, for example, that there should be “but one bishop in each city and its jurisdiction, and when a bishop is dying he is not allowed to consecrate another,” as had been the accepted previous practice. Instead, “a bishop who is made by one or two bishops is invalid - it is only by three” that a bishop may be consecrated.³⁶

Duties of the various orders are elaborated on; again Iskhaq gives the duties of the archdeacon and defines his relationship with the bishop. He is to be in charge of the bishop’s church, the master of ceremonies and conductor of the liturgies and rites.³⁷ Other duties and responsibilities are expanded on, especially those of the pres-

³⁶ SO, see the Synod of Mar Iskhaq (AD 410).

³⁷ SO, Synod of Mar Iskhaq, Canon 15.

byter and bishop, but the role of the catholicos-patriarch is a frequent subject. Priests are authorized to give spiritual instruction and those disobeying such may be given a suspension, thus banning them from participation in Church activities. This authority is recognized as an aspect of the authority given by the Lord to the priesthood to “bind and loose”, and, “whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” is quoted.³⁸

Priests may also suspend deacons and those of lower orders and the suspension must remain intact while the suspended individual must seek out the council of the community before being reinstated.³⁹

4. Conclusion

4.1. Summary

In summary we may conclude that the priesthood in the Church of the East has maintained faithfully the catholic tradition, her bishops have preserved the apostolic succession, her priests have offered a valid and absolving Eucharist and her deacons have ministered to the people of God, the chosen ones. The development of the priesthood in the Church of the East resulted in a nine-order priesthood, complete with the expression of the Apostolic and Catholic doctrine of the Church of Christ.

4.2. Ecumenical Contribution

In both the similarities and the dissimilarities, the witness of the priesthood tradition in the Church of the East has much to contribute to ecumenical dialogue. In the similarities we uncover the common source, the high-priesthood of Jesus, in which we, unworthy participants, share with the Apostles, the Seventy and their successors throughout the world even to this day fulfilling the prophecy of Malachi,

“From the rising of the sun to its setting, my name is great among the nations; in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the Gentiles, says the Lord of Hosts.”⁴⁰

And not only in our source do our similarities add to ecumenical discourse, but the testimony of a shared progression from the early days of the Apostles to a fully developed theology of the priesthood confirms the working of the Holy Spirit, main-

³⁸ SO, Synod of Mar Isho’Yahb, Canon 9, (Letter to Mar Ya’qob of Darrai).

³⁹ SO, Synod of Mar Yosep, Canon 23. Also, see Canons 17 & 18 of the Synod of Mar Isho’yahb, p.587.

⁴⁰ Malachi 1:11.

taining in the Church all things necessary for the propitiation of God, the absolving of the people and the equipping of the saints to testify of God's mercy in thankfulness.

In the gift of the priesthood, the Holy Spirit has given to the Church all things necessary for the ministry. While joined together in similarities, in our dissimilarities we see how the Spirit brings about His will while addressing the needs and expressions of various cultures and historical settings. There is great value in this, for the purpose and end of ecumenism is unity, not homogeny. Let us therefore conclude with the closing words of the Synod of Mar Isaac and his brother in attendance from the West, Mar Marutha, "The peace of Christ the Lord be with those who follow the clear pathway of the true faith of the Catholic Church of the Apostles." Amen.

Discussion

Fr. Chediath: Can you give a distinction between *Kohno'*, *Kumro'* and *Qashisho'*?

Mar Bawai Soro: *Kumro'* is not a word that is equated with the term *Qashisho'* and *Kohno'*. *Qashisho'* is a more scriptural word, *Kohno'* is a more theological word. *Kumro'* has more power than the other two, and *Kumro'* is more related to a prelate position rather than the priestly aspect of the ministry. Bishops, for example, in our tradition are called *Kumro'*, but *Kohno'* or *Qashisho'* are much more common.

Fr. Georges: You mentioned that "At some point, after the rise of Islam in the seventh century, the church increasingly sought out monks to fill the office of the episcopate". Do you think this was due to the heavy burden of the tax applied by Muslim rulers to the Church, whereas the monks were exempt of the tax? So more faithful were going to the monks to escape the burden of the tax?

Mar Bawai Soro: Actually, you have described a social phenomenon that has occurred not only at that time, but this phenomenon occurs in every post-war or during a depression era; when people depressed they are forced spiritually, intellectually, and economically to come closer or be in touch with the transcendence, their God. I don't think the case of our Church, during the Islamic period, is an exception to this rule. So I agree, yes, it could have been a result of that. Of course, another phenomenon took place in the Church of the East one century early to that, when marriage of the bishops was optional. That 5th to 6th century of married Episcopacy gave rise to numerous sociological, ecclesial problems in the Church of the East, and it was during that time that episcopal celibacy was re-instituted with a twist, our Eastern Fathers made sure that they would distinguish their Church from that in the West, which they continued to give option for ordained priests to marry.

Fr. George: Mar Bawai Soro has written in his paper: "Bishop, Metropolitan, and Patriarch". Do you mean that these are three different levels of sacramental order?

Would you say that Metropolitan and Patriarch are of higher sacramental dignity than the Episcopus? Furthermore you quote Mar Narsai: "The Spirit 'tolerates patiently the priest who sins, and perfects through him the glorious [and] ineffable Mysteries. In the world which is to come he will judge him greatly, and he will take from him the gift which was given to him.'" Does it mean that the gift of ordination is maintained in an eschatological sense in the kingdom of God, or is it only related to the Church on earth?

Mar Bawai Soro: Let me answer your second question first. I really don't know, this is something between Mar Narsai and Christ. I can only speculate, yes, I hope to be there to know really what happened. Really my intuition would be that Mar Narsai is cautioning the priest of the seriousness of this whole exercise. If, therefore, you are given this priestly privilege, your accountability to your mistake could be double, when compared to the accountability of those who do not have the same privilege that you do. For us priests, our sin could be more severely judged. I would not think this is something to be removed anytime later, since ordination is of permanent character, and it has its ontological effect, a mark on the soul, using scholastic terms. The first question on the three levels of Episcopacy, I think my brothers from the Ancient Church of the East would agree, that Episcopacy is one, but administratively exercised in three offices.

Fr. Thekeparambil: Actually, *Kumro'* seems to be reserved for priests other than for bishops. But in the liturgical celebration, when the bishop is present, usually the word used for the bishop is *Kumro'*. The priesthood of Christ and the priesthood of Melchizedek, the Melchizedek priesthood is more fitting for the priesthood of Christ, according to Jacob of Sarug'. But the Levitical priesthood is much associated with blood. Is there any liturgical support for this type of distinction of priesthood?

Mar Bawai Soro: Well, if I know my theology correct, I would agree with you that the priesthood of Melchizedek was one based on the offering to God. It involves the whole bit about the bread that he used at that offering, and that symbolizes more and more the Christian practice of Eucharistic offering and the other, the animal or blood offering. That is one of the problems that we encounter with Protestant theology, that they view our priesthood coming from a line of Levite, which would involve more blood. According to Christian theology, there is only one lamb that has been sacrificed once and for all, but that sacrifice is repeated in more Melchizedek methodology through the Eucharist, through the bread rather than repeating every Sunday a bloody sacrifice in the Church. So the two are differently connected and integrated. One is more theologically, the other is more presented through the blood, through the wine, but the other one is more symbolically used because of the elements of bread and its continuity in the Church.

Mar Severios: Mar Bawai Soro explains the nine orders of the priesthood, and writes: "The title *qatholiqa* has also to be included in the this list, as it is usually joined to

pataryarka, although in theory they are not the same, as there can conceivably be more than one *Qatoliqa* but the very nature of the office of *Patryarka* (“First Father”) can only be found in one man”. What would be your explanation to the system in Armenia, catholicos and patriarch are the same?

Mar Bawai Soro: Exactly, we have the total opposite practice between the Syriac and the Armenians on this issue. With us, primacy is always with the Patriarch, and the catholicos is a chronologically earlier, less developed office. Historically, we could have two catholicoi, while the office of Patriarchate connotes the ultimate headship. I think, with the Armenian practice, and I do not want to judge because I really am not familiar with the comparative histories of these two traditions, which one is more original, but they have the titles in reverse. Whether we have them in reverse or they do, definitely the implication or the meaning is reversed. With them the ultimate headship rests with the office of the catholicos and the catholicos can have subordinates, called patriarchs.

Mar Severios: But the terminology does not come from Syriac. For both of them, it comes from Greek.

Mar Bawai Soro: Yes, the terminology is an import.

Mar Severios: One has taken it in their own understanding, the other has taken it in the opposite direction. Concerning your explanation of Episcopacy: “*The metropolitan’s duties are too ordain all the orders under him, including the consecration of bishops for his diocese*”. Does the Metropolitan alone consecrate the bishop for his own diocese?

Mar Bawai Soro: There has to be two more bishops assisting him, symbolizing the concept of inter-church (diocesan) communion.

Mar Boulos Matar: You speak about monks becoming bishops. What is your tradition before the fourth century and after the seventh century and up to the time right now? Is there any evolution in the way how bishops or monks are chosen?

Mar Bawai Soro: After the 13th century, after the Mongolian invasion, the devastation of the Church of the East the monastic life was destroyed, and only maybe 100 or 150 years later was restored among the Chaldeans, the Catholic part of the Church of the East. But the non-Catholic or the Nestorian part remained deprived of monastic life. So, with us, Episcopal hereditary was introduced for six hundred years as a means to guarantee the production of celibate candidates for Episcopacy, because our option was either to introduce marriage into the Episcopacy, or somehow guarantee celibate candidates. Since you don’t have monastic life to produce celibate candidates, our forefathers in the Nestorian or Church of the East line introduced hereditary celibacy. This was highly controversial, because by its very nature was against the canons of the church. In fact, that is one of the perceived reasons why there was a split in the Church of the East itself during the 16th century. Today there are priests who don’t get married, who namely remain celibate. No, we don’t have monastic institutions. In

fact, to become a bishop you do not even have to present a vow for celibacy. It is understood that you don’t get married.

Mar Flavianos Melki: When you speak about priesthood and orders in the Church of the East, you speak about the daughter and the sons of the covenant, monks and nuns. Do you think there is any separation between orders, in the nuns and monks and the sons and daughters of the Covenant?

Mar Bawai Soro: Well, you cannot consider my words with the Latin sense. I am just using the word “monk” and “nun” for convenience. They are not related to any aspect of the Latin tradition or whatever it is used in the Eastern Catholic Churches. Simply I am talking about people who vow to celibacy and chastity of life. They are not orders. The candidates for the deaconesses came from the virgins, and the candidates for the Episcopacy came from monks. That is why I introduced these, because they are highly connected. But they do not have ordination.

Mar Flavianos Melki: You spoke about the chorbishop. In our history it is the same.

Mar Bawai Soro: Yes, that is true. That was the problem that the early Church had to face when it had too many bishops even in small villages. This is one model that we see from the New Testament, that every celebrant of the Eucharist became a bishop after a while. But when you have fifty bishops in a small locality, the Church decided to demote all the bishops in these villages, and have only one bishop among them in the capital city. That is, the Syriac tradition has the chorbishop being the bishop of the village. But later on, after that generation passed away, the new replacement for the chorbishop was a priest.

Fr. Yousif: Regarding the terminology, *Kumro’* and *Kohno’*. For me they have the connotation of *pontifex* in Latin. *Kumro’* was used more frequently to indicate function of the priest and priestly washing. Second point that is also in the tradition was the ministry of Melchizedek. In the poems of St. Ephrem, and in the context of the relations of the Old and New Testaments, Jesus chooses not the “sacraments” of the Old Testament to make his own sacrifice, but rather the offering of Melchizedek: bread and wine. This is exactly what happens in the Christian Church. Regarding the necessity of three bishops for consecration, it happened once at the time of Mar Timothy the Great when the Church was so large and there was no possibility to have three bishops; there were only two. So they went to Mar Timothy and asked what to do. “In the place of the third bishop, you will put the gospel”. This would represent the third one. Regarding the daughters of the covenant, etc.: The daughters of the covenant also have a liturgical role in the Church of the East. They assist the priest in the baptism of women, so they have some kind of ministry in the priesthood, in the conferring of baptism for women.

Mar Bawai Soro: What is the role of the *M’shamshanyta*?

Fr. Yousif: That is what they are.

Mar Bawai Soro: That is what I maintained. I said *M'shamshanyta* is always ordained from the daughters of the covenant.

Fr. Yousif: Yes, of course, but she also had the possibility to take the Eucharist to sick sisters in the monastery where the priest could not, at least in the tradition of the Church of Antioch.

Fr. Nelpuraparambil: Are all the nine orders of the priesthood with ordination?

Mar Bawai Soro: There is no epiclesis for the sub-deacon, but there is epiclesis for the deacon, priest, and bishop. To my own understanding, there is one to the Metropolitan and Patriarch. So it is very interesting, the whole question about the distinction, why there is epiclesis and whether that epiclesis grants that person a higher level. For example, there is one for bishop, one for Metropolitan, one for Patriarch, but if the epiclesis is the criterion of gradual ascent, then there is something to be addressed there, a problem that is not fully understood. But maybe that epiclesis is not understood to be giving a higher rank, but as far as epiclesis and ordination goes, there is no epiclesis for the first two, the reader and sub-deacon, and for the Chorbishop and Archdeacon.

Fr. Georges: As His Grace mentioned, after the Mongolian invasion of Baghdad, the monastic life was destroyed, so that the hereditary part of the hierarchy was introduced in the Church of the East to keep celibacy in the Patriarchal Seat. And then as I understand from the discussion, this hereditary way goes down to the bishops and archbishops. Will this continue?

Mar Bawai Soro: I hope not. I am sure it will not. Many declarations have been made that this practice has already ended. It actually did with our late Patriarch "Mar Eshai Shimun" and our new Patriarch "Mar Dinkha" who was elected to the patriarchate. At the present, we have one bishop, "Mar Sargis" who succeeded to episcopacy through hereditary. But since his family does not have a "*Nazera*", the prepared candidate, we hope that also will eventually be gone.

Mar Joseph Powathil: You said that the power of the priest "is understood to be the ability to consecrate, and in the Eucharistic context, it is the ability to consecrate the bread and wine, thus making them become the very Body and Blood of Christ." That is true. But it is also an offering making present the Paschal Mystery. It is an offering that is being made present. But I think it should be stressed that it is an action of Christ being made present in the offering.

Mar Severios: Mar Bawai Soro writes in his paper that: "*The office of 'deaconess' was not affected by ordination but rather a blessing.*" As far as I know, from the Apostolic Constitutions it reflects the general Syriac tradition. There are prayers for ordination, and if you find a lack of an epiclesis, is it the sole or important criterion of ordination?

Mar Bawai Soro: First we have to define what constitutes a prayer of ordination. We agree that it is epiclesis, which I think is a general consensus. A consecratory prayer

includes epiclesis, asking the descent of the Holy Spirit so that there is an ontological change or transformation. Then, according to my knowledge, the order of ordination of a deaconess in the Church of the East does not include an epiclesis. And really to examine the order of deaconess carefully, it is not a full-fledged Diaconate order, but is a contingent order of the sociological need of baptism at that time. As you know, in early times, baptism for adults was done through immersion just as for infants: the person had to be nude. So in that regard, even today, it would be a social obstacle for a person or a male priest to baptize a convert adult woman, since nudity is involved. So what the Church did was they came up with the office of deaconesses, because of that the practice of deaconess was limited to the practice of baptism.

Mar Severios: The practice is limited, but the fact of ordination?

Mar Bawai Soro: Ordination says that it does not include epiclesis, then I am more leaning towards thinking that it is a special office that happened to be called "deaconess." But the reality of the function and the theology behind it, the prayer and liturgy behind it, continue to show us that this is a dependent or conditional office.

Fr. Yousif: Regarding the formula of the ordination of the deaconess, we can say that she does not receive the Holy Spirit. There are three orders of which we can speak. The first is service on the altar at the *qurbana* as deacons, priesthood is for administering sacraments, more specifically, and the bishop is for the administration of the Church, although the priests have administration too; but these are the three. A comment about the hereditary priesthood and episcopate: Even though now the son is not from the family from which the bishop is elected, normally he could still become bishop.

Mar Bawai Soro: Sure, as long as they follow canon law of the Church.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: It seems that in the Church of the East, you don't have *mzamorono*, the singers?

Mar Bawai Soro: Yes, we do have them, but not as part of the order.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: When you speak about presbytery, you put arch-deacon there?

Mar Bawai Soro: Yes, archdeacon is a position that every diocese has; every bishop has one archdeacon. A priest of the cathedral by virtue of the bishop being busy with other matters, he has an authority on all local priests. He organizes the liturgy, and instructs the deacons. He really does everything on behalf of the bishop. Archdeacon is an honorific title. He is the head of the *teshmeshatha* (the Service).

Fr. George: I had a question concerning the consecration of the holy Myron. You have to have an archdeacon, not a priest?

Mar Bawai Soro: With us it is a priest, but maybe in the beginning it was a deacon.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: When you speak about monks and nuns, how do you say "monk" and "nun" in Syriac?

Mar Bawai Soro: For monk, “dayraya or rabban.” For nun, dayrayla or rabanta.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: And where are the *ihidaye*?

Mar Bawai Soro: We don’t have them, any longer.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: Now, about *qashishto*. First of all I will ask Professor Brock about the word *mettasrhonuto*. I think this is a problem in the Syriac tradition. Because we give this word, that is ordination, to all these different ordinations, and I think how do we distinguish between *mettasrhonuto* of *Qariya*, of readers, of the deaconate, from the *mettasrhonuto*? This is a problem, because in all these ordinations you put *mettasrhonuto* there. *Qashishto* we also have, but I don’t know how old it is, but I have a copy of that. This is only for the wives of priests, who decide to dedicate themselves to serve the church, not each wife of a priest. If they decide to dedicate themselves to serve in a way of *bath qyomo*, or in *Mshamshonitho*, they could have this blessing in the church. It is very short, but I have it. But I think that it is new in the Church. That is why today the wife of the priest is called in the Church *bath qyomo*, because she has this kind of blessing in the church. So it is not ordination of a woman to become a priestess.

Fr. George: Is there laying on of hands?

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: No.

Mar Bawai Soro: In my paper I figured out an important element of the priesthood in the Church of the East: “*The relationship between the nine orders of angels and these orders is obvious, a typology between the heavenly (upper) church and the earthly (lower) church. Central to the understanding of the priesthood in the Church of the East is, as we have seen, that during his earthly ministry Jesus held all nine orders.*” So really the Church is, and this is again Syriac typology, the Church on earth is modeled after the Church in heaven.

Prof. Brock: It seems that the oldest term in the Syriac tradition for, as it were, “appointment” is *mettasrhonuto*, and then the Greek terminology, first through the Greek loan word, *cheirotomia*, and then with the translation of that “*syomido*” came in. In later texts, they are totally mixed up. It is actually very difficult to give a proper answer. It depends on the particular manuscript source. You may have one manuscript saying “*syomido*,” and the other one *mettasrhonuto*. The sense is exactly the same, but how that applies to the western terminology of ordination is another matter. I think it is the case where the Syriac terminology is not exactly coterminous with western terminology.

Thomas Mannooramparampil

HOLY ORDERS AND PRIESTHOOD IN THE SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH

1. Introduction

St. Thomas Christians of India, of whom the Syro-Malabar Church is the mother Church, were following the East Syrian liturgy till the synod of Diamper in 1599. The pre-sixteenth century clerical life of the Thomas Christians was based on the East Syrian canonical discipline. They could not claim an absolutely proper clerical life of their own. From the time when the Church came under the Latin rule till 1960, she was forced to use the Latin pontifical in Latin for the ordination services. No pre-sixteenth century texts of ordinations among the Thomas Christians or any other documents which throw light on the system of their Holy Orders are available. Therefore we have to rely on liturgical texts and other sources which are available in other East Syrian Churches which use the same liturgy.

2. Source

Before the codification of the present pontifical the ordination rites were contained in manuscript documents which have a tradition of only six centuries: Berolinensis syr.codex 38 (A.D.1496), Vat. Syr. Codex 66 (A.D. 1529), Vat. Syr. Codex 45-46 (A.D.1556), Vat. Borg.syr.codex 21 (A.D.1552-1562), Catabrigensis cod.add. 1988 (A.D.1558) Mausiliensis codex 55 (A.D.1568), Amidensis codex 59 (A.D.1569), Vat. Syr. codex 43 (A.D.1701), Vat.Syr.codex 306 (A.D. 1758) etc.¹ Basing on them, printed texts were produced such as the editions of Morin² and Assemani³ and the English edition of Badger.⁴ If we compare the East Syrian ordination rites with those of the Apostolic and Patristic traditions, we find that the East Syrian sacramental formulas have close similarity with them. The part of spiritual preparation with different canons and prayers is a later addition. The Chaldeans were using Ms Mausiliensis 55 or its transcripts for ordinations.⁵ When the Syro-Malabar Church got their own indigenous

¹ I.M. Voste, Pontificale Juxta Ritum Ecclesiae Ecclesiae Syrorum Orientalium id est Chaldaeorum, (Typis Polyglotis Vaticani 1937) 5-7, 81-94.

² J. Morin, Commentarius de sacris Ecclesiae ordinationibus (Paris 1665).

³ J.A. Assemani, Codex Liturgicus Ecclesiae Universae, Vol 13: Syrorum Chalaeorum, Nestorianorum et Malabarum Ordinationes (Romae 1766).

⁴ G.P. Badger, The Nestorians and Their Rituals, 2 Vol. (London 1852).

⁵ I.M. Voste, Pontificale Juxta Ritum Ecclesiae Syrorum Orientalium id est Chaldaeorum, p.89.

bishops, it became very necessary to have a printed official Pontifical. The Chaldeans too felt the same need.

3. Restoration

It was His Holiness Pope Pius XI of happy memory who took the decision in 1934 to restore the original East Syrian pontifical for the use of the Malabar Church⁶ and appointed a five member commission presided by Card. Tisserant succeeded by Fr. Vosté. The Latin version was prepared basing on the two transcripts of Mausilien-sis 55 and was approved by the plenary session of the Oriental Congregation in 1939. Pope Pius XI confirmed it in the same year. It contains the ordination rites of reader (pp.10-12), subdeacon (pp.13-14), deacon (pp.25-29), priest (pp.30-43), chorepiscopa (pp. 44-510), archdeacon (pp.52-56), archdeacon of the patriarch (pp.57-58), bishop (pp.59-71), perfection of bishop (pp.97-101), transfer of bishop (pp.102-106), Metropolitan (pp.107-110) and patriarch (pp.111-152). The Syriac edition of 1957 which was promulgated for the use of the Syro-Malabar Church and the Chaldean Church, was compiled from the Latin version, rearranging the prayers and canons in the order in which they are recited.

A partial Malayalam edition of the first part of the Pontifical which contains ordinations up to and inclusive of the priesthood was approved by the SMBC⁷ in 1959 under the title "The rites and regulations to be observed in the ordinations of Lector, Subdeacon, Deacon and Priest". Later the rites of the consecration of the bishop, perfection of the bishop and transfer of the bishop were translated from the Syriac Pontifical and used. It is a sorrowful fact that other texts of ordinations, the source and author of which are not mentioned are still in use in some dioceses without the approval of the synod and of the Holy See. The synod has recently given a temporary approval to the texts of ordinations of Lector, subdeacon, deacon and priest, consecration of bishop, installations of the Major Archbishop, bishop and Metropolitan. The titles 'perfection of the bishop' and 'transfer of the bishop' are omitted from the respective rites. The ordination rites of chorepiscopa and archdeacon are omitted. The faithfulness of these texts with the Syriac pontifical is yet to be verified after their publication.

At present all the Churches of the East Syrian tradition use the same text of ordination without many differences. Nine orders are presented as nine steps of the clerical hierarchy and are called generally sacrament of orders and orders of priesthood. Only the basic orders of diaconate, presbyterate and episcopacy can be really called

sacrament of orders, out of which only the last two are the orders of priesthood. If so, we may investigate why nine orders are called in this Church sacrament of orders and orders of priesthood. Episcopacy is presented as the fullness of priesthood. The general idea is that presbyterate is the full priesthood and episcopacy and other higher ranks are dignities or jurisdictional powers added to presbyterate. So we try to examine what the text has to say about it. We make also a historical, structural and theological survey of the text of the ordinations to the episcopacy and presbyterate which belong to the concept of priesthood.

4. Nine Orders

The East Syrian tradition divides the ecclesiastical ministry into nine orders. We find such a division of ecclesiastical ministers into nine orders first in Isobokt (8th century) who compares them with nine choirs of angels: patriarch-cherubim, catholicos-seraphim, metropolitan-thrones, bishop-dominations, visitator-virtue, priest-power, deacon-principalities, subdeacon-archangels and lector-angels.⁸ Timothy II who classifies nine choirs of angels into three groups, namely superior, middle and inferior, divides the ministers into three groups in each of which there are three orders:

A Superior - Patriarch, Metropolitan and Bishop;

B Middles - priest, deacon and subdeacon;

C Inferior - lector, singer and exorcists.⁹

Liber Patrum divides the nine orders into three classes, namely high priest, priests and ministers in comparison with the nine choirs of angels in three grades, namely superior, middle and inferior:

High priest: patriarch-cherubim, metropolita-seraphim, bishop-dominations.

Priest: chorepiscopa-dominations, visitator-virtue, priests-power.

Ministers: deacon-principalities, subdeacon-archangel, lector-angels.¹⁰

The present pontifical follows the system of nine orders as given in Liber Patrum, omitting visitator and adding archdeacon. Mar Abdiso who acknowledges nine orders indicates 'archdeacon' instead of 'visitator' in his book 'Ordo Judiciorum'¹¹ and divides the priestly class into priests, periodeute, and archdeacon, and the high priests into bishop, metropolitan and catholicos in 'Collectio canonum'.¹² George of Arbel

⁸ Borg.Syr. 88, f.346.

⁹ Dr. Thomas Mannoorampampil, Commentaries of the Fathers on the Sacraments (Malayalam), Kottayam 1992, p.56.

¹⁰ I.M. Voste, Liber Patrum (Vatican 1949) 11-20.

¹¹ Mar Abdiso, Ordo Judiciorum Ecclesiasticorum (Vatican 1940) 109-110.

¹² Mar Abdiso, Collectio Canonum, in A. Mai, Scriptorum Synodicorum Nova Collection, VI,1 (Rome 1838) 106.

⁶ Cyriac Korolevsky, Living Languages in Catholic Worship (London 1957) 135-138.

⁷ Syro-Malabar Bishop's Conference.

first gives the names of nine orders: reader, subdeacon, deacon, priest, periodeute, chorepiscopa, bishop, metropolitan and catholicos and later he lists deaconesses and women door-keepers also among the orders¹³ but objects their comparison with angels because priests are placed above the angels.¹⁴ Bar Zobi speaks of nine orders of priesthood corresponding to nine choirs of angels but does not mention their number.¹⁵ The synod of 544, canon 24 includes door keepers among the clergy.

5. Not unanimous

Fathers are not unanimous about the number of orders. For example Isobar Nun gives five grades of ecclesiastical hierarchy: deacon, priest, bishop, archbishop and catholicos.¹⁶ For George of Arbel the number nine is not acceptable because Patriarch is not included in it.¹⁷ Timothy II holds that the orders of bishop, metropolitan, and Patriarch are essentially the same and that reader, subdeacon, singer and exorcist cannot be considered as orders of priesthood. Abdiso enumerates ten orders of priesthood: Patriarch, catholicos, metropolitan, bishop, chorepiscopa, periodeute (visitor), priest, deacon, subdeacon¹⁸ and singer.¹⁹ It seems that the Fathers of the Church limited the orders into nine for the sake of comparison with the nine choirs of angels.

6. Order and Ordination

The term *ordo* meant in the secular sense a well organized social body which is distinct from the common people. It was the body of those who governed. In the early Church *ordo* was used for the clergy as a whole and soon it came to mean various hierarchic strata into which the clergy was divided. It meant a collectivity into which one was received.²⁰ For Tertullian *ordo* generally denoted a certain group in the Church. *Ordo* is marked by authority and function. To ordain means to designate someone to some function.

¹³ Anonimi Auctoris Expositio Officiorum Ecclesiae. Georgio Arbelensi Vulgo adscripta, interpretatus est R.H. Connolly, CSCO, Scr.Syri., Series II, Vol I (Romae 1913), 113, 119; Vol II (Romae 1915), 31. Hereafter quoted as Exp. I and Exp. II.

¹⁴ Exp. I, p.113, 119.

¹⁵ Dr. Thomas Mannoorampampil, Explanation of the Divine Mysteries (Kottayam 1992) 78.

¹⁶ Wilhelm de Vries S.J., Sakramententheologie bei den Nestorianern (Roma 1947) 128.

¹⁷ Exp. I, p.116-117.

¹⁸ Abdiso, Ordo Iudiciorum Ecclesiasticorum, p.109.

¹⁹ Abdiso, Collectio Canonum, can 26, 43, 69.

²⁰ A.G. Martimort, The Church at Prayer Vol II: The Sacraments (Minnesota 1988) 139-140.

7. Imposition of hands

Ordination is conferred usually by the imposition of hands. At Rome ordination was the technical term for the appointment of officials. It was taken over unchanged by Christians to signify the appointment of someone to accomplish an ecclesiastical function. The greatest functions are liturgical and therefore need a consecration or blessing. St. Jerome applied it to the imposition of hand on clerics.²¹ In secular Greek an official was 'instituted' (*kathistatai*) in his office. He could be also 'designated' (*cheirotoneitai*). Hippolytus uses the second term to ordinations to the offices that make the chosen person a member of the order of episcopacy, presbyterate and diaconate and for which consecration was needed. The ritual gesture used in this consecration was the imposition of hands. This gesture is not used for the appointment of other officials. For example, the lector is instituted (*kathistatai*) when the bishop gives him the book. The principal difference in the Apostolic Constitutions is that subdeacons and readers receive imposition of hands for their appointment. In the East Syrian Church all orders except chorepiscopa and archdeacon are conferred by the imposition of hands. In the Apostolic Tradition which the Latin tradition follows laying on of hands is understood as a conferring of the Holy Spirit and therefore is epicletic. But imposition of hands has other meanings too.²² It can be a blessing (Mt.15), conferral of power, confirmation of election of the ordinand and reception into the episcopal college. It reminds the enthronement of kings and priests in the Old Testament. It recalls the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost and at Jordan. It is necessary to choose one meaning to the exclusion of other meanings. It is seen as a necessary gesture to establish a person in the ministry.

East Syrian Church holds that priesthood is conferred by the imposition of hands by the bishop together with signing and prayer of the invocation of the Holy Spirit. Narsai would say: "The priest received the power of the Spirit by the laying on of hands; by him are performed all the Mysteries that are in the Church."²³ Ishoyahb III states in his Liber Epistularum that priesthood is conferred through the imposition of hands from the Apostolic times onwards.²⁴ For Abdiso, priesthood is handed down from the Apostles and is imparted in the Church through the imposition of hands.²⁵

²¹ St. Jerome, Commentarius in Isaiam XV, 58,10 (PL 24, col. 591).

²² Joseph Lécuyer, Le sens des rites d'ordination d'après les Pères, in: L'Orient Syrien 5 (1960) 463-475.

²³ R.H. Connolly, Liturgical Homilies of Narsai, Texts and Studies, Vol VIII, No.1 (Cambridge 1909) 21.

²⁴ Isho'yahb Patriarchae III Liber Epistularum, edidit et vertit R. Duval, Paris 1904-5 (CSCO scr.Syri. Series II) 201.

²⁵ The Jewel, in: G.P. Badger, Nestorians and Their Rituals, Vol. II (London 1852) 406.

That the transmission of clerical power occurs through ordination is reflected in the prayer of the imposition of hand.²⁶ An extract from the Hudra for the fourth Sunday of the Dedication of the Church teaches that Christian priesthood is the continuation through Christ, of the same ordination which was first given to man by God: "The Most High descended upon Mount Sinai and laid his hand upon Moses..."²⁷ Timothy II teaches that the imposition of hands confers the grace of the Holy Spirit.²⁸ East Syrian tradition holds that Jesus not only carried out the duties of the orders²⁹ but also instituted them by the imposition of hands.³⁰

8. Orders without the Imposition of hands

All minor orders till subdiaconate can be conferred by chorepiscopa without the imposition of hands.³¹ For Abdiso karoya and subdiaconate are given without the imposition of hands.³² Timothy II says that karoya, subdeacon, exorcist and singer are ordained without the imposition of hands.³³ It is to be remarked that although there is the imposition of hands in the present rite of ordination to karoya and subdiaconate, as the rubrics say, Holy Spirit is not invoked on the candidates and they are not signed on their forehead. Only a prayer of blessing is said on them. George of Arbel says that the orders of chorepiscopa and periodeute are conferred not by the imposition of hands but by the command of the bishop.³⁴ Liber Patrum also states that the prayer of ordination of chorepiscopa and archdeacon are only prayers of blessing. In the ordination of deaconess, as the rubrics illustrate, the imposition of hands and the prayer of invocation of the Holy Spirit constitute a spiritual blessing to carry out her service in the Church.³⁵ The imposition of hands in the installations of metropolitans and patri-

arch are not considered as conferring of the Holy Spirit but as a prayer for enthronement and commenting to the grace of God (Acts.14:26) for the work.³⁶

9. Basic Orders and Ranks

The canon of Ishoyahb, Nr.18 says that deacons, priests and bishops receive one, three and five talents respectively. Patriarch and metropolitan do not claim to have more talents than those which a bishop has. In the same way chorepiscopa and Archdeacon or periodeute do not get more talents than those a priest has. This implies that patriarchate and metropolitanate are additional functions or dignities given to episcopate. In the same way the offices of Archdeacon and chorepiscopa are functions added to presbyterate. Therefore episcopate, presbyterate and diaconate are the basic orders instituted by Christ.³⁷ Already in the Chronicle of Arbela and in 'the Acts of the Persian Martyrs' we find them as basic orders of divine institution.³⁸ All others are of ecclesiastical Institution to carry out particular functions. It is to be noted that already the Synod of 576, canon 12 distinguishes between orders and ranks. Diaconate, presbyterate and episcopacy are orders and all others are only ranks.

The privilege of the patriarch is to consecrate metropolitans and to carry out the perfection of bishops.³⁹ Metropolitan can consecrate the simple bishops of his province.⁴⁰ The additional two talents which a bishop gets through Episcopal ordination are consecration of altar and the conferral of ordinations up to and inclusive of priests.⁴¹ Chorepiscopa is the vicar and the helper of bishop.⁴² His duty is mainly to visit villages. Archdeacon is the right hand of the bishop and leads the divine service.⁴³ Liber Patrum calls him visitor.⁴⁴ He functions also as the secretary of the Patriarch.⁴⁵ Subdeacon is the helper of deacon. He has to decorate the Church, keep the doors

²⁶ Joseph Martos, Doors to the Sacred (London 1981) 481.

²⁷ Ibidem, pp.189-190.

²⁸ IV, 15, f.108v.

²⁹ Orders of lector, subdeacon, deacon, priest, periodeute, chorepiscopa, bishop, metropolitan, catholicos and patriarch. Cfr. Mar Aprem, Sacraments of the Church of the East (Trichur 1978) 31-33; I.M. Voste, Pontificale Juxta Ecclesiae Syrorum Orientalium id est Chaldaeorum (Roma 1938) 153-154; I.M. Voste, Liber Patrum (Roma 1940) 12; Isaac Alencherri, An Eastern Theology of Priesthood (New Delhi 1994) 107; Exp. I, 114-115.

³⁰ I.M. Voste, Pontificale, pp.153-154; Exp. I, p.116.

³¹ Dr. Thomas Mannoorampampil, Commentaries of the Fathers, pp.54-57.

³² Ordo Judiciorum, 110, Collectio canonum can.2.

³³ Commentaries of the Fathers, p.57.

³⁴ Expo.I, p.114.

³⁵ I.M. Voste, Pontificale, pp.158-160; J.S. Assemani, Bibliotheca Orientalis III/2 (Romae 1725) 847-856.

³⁶ Patrick M. Goldrick, Sacrament of Order, Dictionary of Sacramental Worship, ed. by Fink S.J., (Minnesota 1990) 897.

³⁷ Commentaries of the Fathers, pp.54-57; I.M. Voste, Pontificale, pp.321-324; Lattey S.J., Six Sacraments (London 1930) 163-203.

³⁸ Sachau, Die Chronik von Arbela (Berlin 1915) 54; O. Braun, Ausgewählte Akten Persischer Märtyrer (Kempten-München 1914) 41 and 100.

³⁹ Abdiso, Collectio canonum, tract. VI,1, p.107.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, p.107.

⁴¹ Liber Patrum, p.21.

⁴² I.M. Voste, Pontificale, p.28.

⁴³ The Synod of Mar Isaac, canon 15.

⁴⁴ Liber Patrum.

⁴⁵ I.M. Voste, Pontificale, p.29.

and to kindle the candles.⁴⁶ The synod of 410 calls him exorcist and asks to guard the doors.⁴⁷ It is not his duty to read the O.T. in liturgy.⁴⁸ It is the lector who reads it.⁴⁹

10. Permanence

Orders are distinct offices in the Church, fulfilling distinct roles of service. Historically at the time of Hippolytus in the early third century the presupposition was that the various orders were permanent. A person did not move from one order to the other nor was ordained to a lower office before being ordained to a higher office. The Roman custom did not require any passage through the various orders.⁵⁰ The one who was chosen for the diaconate, presbyterate or episcopacy was ordained directly to that rank. An ordinary Christian, or presbyter or deacon could be directly elevated to episcopacy after years of meritorious service to the Church.⁵¹ We know from the liturgical commentaries of the East Syrian Church that ministers of all orders were present in each and every celebration. This presupposes that each community (parish) had sufficient number of those who received different holy orders to serve that particular community. Each order was permanent and had specific duties. That means that the one who received one order remains in it all through life without aspiring to another order.⁵² Each took part according to his grade in the same liturgical service.

11. Steps

Since Christian priesthood is one, there can be only one sacrament of priesthood, even though it can be received in various stages. The common understanding of the past was that the power of priesthood is imparted to persons in various degrees. Orders were considered as these degrees, which are the subdivisions of the complete order of the priesthood. Higher orders include the duties of the lower orders. Lower orders are the regular steps to arrive at the higher orders. By the eleventh century it became obligatory to receive lower order in order to receive the higher order.⁵³ The ad-

vantage of such a succession was that the time spent in the minor offices tested the faith, character and general fitness of the candidate.

Though each order is permanent, in the East Syrian Church ministers of higher order are promoted from those of lower order. Thus Patriarch is chosen from among the bishops and metropolitans.⁵⁴ 18th canon of Mar Isho'yahb should be understood in that sense: "First he is blessed a deacon, and then he is allowed to receive the two talents of the priesthood by which he performs the divine and marvelous service. ...It is not lawful to receive the episcopate when one has not received first the diaconate and presbyterate."⁵⁵ Archdeacon and chorepiscopa and periodeute are chosen from presbyters. Presbyters are chosen from among the deacons. Ancient East Syrians do not say that deacons are to be promoted from subdeacons and subdeacons from *karmya*.⁵⁶

12. Sacrament of orders

Sacrament of orders becomes a technical term by the 12th century. It was generally held that not one order has the fullness of the sacrament, but all the orders together. In the scholastic theology a rite instituted by Christ is a sacrament while a rite instituted by the Church is a sacramental. But oriental terminology for both of these terms is mystery or in Syriac *Raza*. Any rite performed by a priest is a mystery.⁵⁷ Thus all orders are mysteries since they are conferred by the priesthood. If the term sacrament is used by the orientals as the translation of mystery, it is correct. But they are not equivalent terms since mystery includes sacraments and sacramentals. The difference in the number of orders seems to be due to this confusion. It is to be noted that the *motu proprio ministeria quaedam* of Pope Paul VI reserves the term *ordo* to sacrament alone.

13. Ministry

Orders, sacred orders, sacrament of orders etc. are foreign to the New Testament.⁵⁸ It knows only ministry, the source and model of which is Jesus Christ who

⁵⁴ Isho'yahb III, *Liber Epistularum*, p.203.

⁵⁵ M.J. Birnie (Tr), *The Eastern Synods* (An incomplete draft copy) 174.

⁵⁶ Karl Rahner holds that the Church can ordain to various offices without prior ordination to other offices. Cfr. Karl Rahner, *The Theology of the Restoration of the Diaconate*, in: *Theological Investigations*, Vol. V (Baltimore 1966) 272.

⁵⁷ Casimir A. Kucharek, *The Sacramental Mysteries* (Canada 1976) 20, 62-64.

⁵⁸ A.J. Chupungco O.S.B., *Hand Book for Liturgical Studies IV: Sacraments and Sacramentals* (Minnesota 1997) 193-194.

⁴⁶ Abdiso, *Collectio Canonum*, tract.VI, 1, p.106.

⁴⁷ Synod of Mar Isaac, canon 15.

⁴⁸ Voste, *Pontificale*, p.288; B.O, III,1, p.805.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, Synod of Mar Isaac, canon 15.

⁵⁰ *Ordo Romanus XXXIV* (half of the eighth century) asks: "What is his rank?" The answer: "Deacon, presbyter, or whatever else might be the case." How many years has he been a deacon or presbyter? Cfs. Michel Andrieu, *Les Ordines romani du haut moyen age*, *Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense* (Louvain 1931) 2, 560-569.

⁵¹ Susan K. Wood, *Sacramental Orders* (Minnesota 2000) 167.

⁵² Dr. Thomas Mannoorampampil, *Permanent Diaconate*, in: *Christian Orient*, XX/1(1999) 3, 21.

⁵³ Anscar J. Chupungco, *Sacraments and sacramentals*, Minnesota 1997, pp.246-248.

came to serve and not to be served (Heb. 3:1; 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25; Eph. 4:11-41) and gave necessary help to carry out the ministry entrusted to the Apostles. The sacrament of the Apostolic ministry includes three degrees: episcopate, presbyterate and diaconate.⁵⁹ Ordination is the act of integrating a person into them.⁶⁰

In addition to the three basic orders there were many lay ministries in the Church. Subdeacons were helpers of deacons. Lectors were appointed to read the Holy Scripture in the Church. Exorcists assisted at the rites of initiation and penance. Door keepers guarded the doors. Teachers instructed the catechumens. Widows and virgins were appointed to pray for the Church and to take care of the sick and needy.

There arose the tendency in the Church to restrict specific ministries to specific offices or orders. Admission to their office was made through ceremonial induction. The sacred ritual for the initiation to a ministry was known as ordination.⁶¹ Subdeacons⁶² and lectors⁶³ came to be regarded as clerics and only they were allowed to carry out their specific duties. In that sense subdiaconate and lectorate became minor orders and steps to priesthood.

14. Ordained and Instituted ministries

In the Western terminology of *ordo* and ordination, we can distinguish between ordained ministry and instituted ministry.⁶⁴ Episcopate, Presbyterate and diaconate are ordained ministries. All other orders in the East Syrian Church are instituted ministries. They are called instituted ministries in order to distinguish them from several forms of services in the field of worship, catechism, charity etc. Certain functions and services can be carried out by all Christians and they do not imply a greater sacramentality but the exercise of the priestly dignity which is proper to the baptized.⁶⁵ They are ministries and not orders. Service includes everything which the faithful do for others. Ministries are services which exceed occasional services and have a certain stability. Institution bestows a permanent function on the person who receives it. This institution is a juridical and liturgical act performed by bishop or his representatives. It is not only for a limited period of time but for good.

One way of introducing ministers to their office was to dress them in the insignia of their office. Thus *urara* is placed on the extended hand of the lector. It is placed

around the neck of subdeacon. Deacon puts it on the left shoulder. Priest puts it on both shoulders in such a way that both ends equally extend over the chest. Priest wears *paina*. Bishop has *m'apra* and *birona*.

Their difference is reflected in the place where their ordination takes place. *Karoya* stands on the first step before the sanctuary. Subdeacon on the second step, deacon on the third step and priest in the sanctuary.

Another way was to give them symbolic token of responsibilities. *Karoya* is given a part of the lectionary or a portion of the writings of Prophets or one of the two parts of the Book of life.⁶⁶ Deacon is given New Testament epistle, priest is given the Gospel, bishop is given *hutru*. Bishop gives the archdeacon his staff to carry, metropolitan will be given a crozier and patriarch is seated on the throne.

The distinction between the basic orders is also indicated in the gesture of the candidate during the ordination. Deacon kneels upon one knee, the left being bent upwards to signify that he receives one talent and he places his closed hands upon his ears, the forefingers being pointed upwards, and his face bent downwards to signify that he is crucified to his ministry and has become servant to priest and to the heads of priests.⁶⁷ "Priest kneels on both knees with his hands lifted up above his eyes, his head bent downwards. Gospel is placed on the back of the candidate for the Episcopal consecration."

15. Orders of Priesthood

The sacrament of order is not equated with priesthood. Order and priesthood are distinct. Episcopate, presbyterate and diaconate are separate orders within the sacrament of orders. Out of these, episcopate and presbyterate share the common ministerial priesthood and diaconate does not. Deacon is not ordained to priesthood but shares a common ministry.⁶⁸ Diaconate represents and makes visible the service aspect of the Church. He is ordained for service with respect to the liturgy, the Gospel and the works of charity.

16. Fullness of priesthood

We have to distinguish between presbyter and priest. Since presbyter and bishop are ordained to be priests, the term presbyter distinguishes the order of presbyters from the order of bishops. Both orders share ministerial priesthood. Theologians of

⁵⁹ Catechism of the Catholic Church, no 1536.

⁶⁰ Ibidem, 1538.

⁶¹ Joseph Martos, *Doors to the Sacred* (London 1981) 472, 477.

⁶² Dr. Thomas Mannoorampampil, *The Order of Subdiaconate*, in: *Dukrana* (2001, Dec.) 4-10.

⁶³ Ibidem, *The Order of Karoya*, in: *Dukrana* (2001, Oct-Nov.) 9-16.

⁶⁴ A.J. Chupungco, p.205.

⁶⁵ H. Francis Davis, *The Priesthood of the Faithful*, in: *Theology Digest*, Vol. I (1953) 49-52.

⁶⁶ G.P. Badger, p.324.

⁶⁷ G.P. Badger, p.327.

⁶⁸ Susan, p.127.

the past identified presbyterate as the highest degree of order and regarded it as the natural end point and crown of clerical career and so presbyter was called priest in the full sense of the term. Episcopacy was seen as a dignity or office superior in the power of jurisdiction. But in the early Church most references to priesthood were meant to bishop rather than to presbyter. Originally bishop was the ordinary minister of the Eucharist, baptism and penance.⁶⁹

17. Bishop the perfect priest

Bishop is called perfect priest in the prayer of the imposition of hands because he participates in the priesthood of Christ in its fullness: “elect him with a holy election, through the unction of the Holy Spirit, that he may be a perfect priest unto Thee, as a follower of the true high priest, who gave himself up for us.” Bishop’s priesthood is called perfect in contrast to the shadow priesthood of the Law which was not perfect. It is the unction of the Holy Spirit which renders him a perfect priest. Episcopate is the continuation of the Apostolic ministry. All other ministries are participation or extension of these ministries. Vat II sees it as a primary theological point of reference of orders and priesthood. When a person is ordained bishop, he by the very act of consecration is ordained priest and receives the fullness of priesthood and orders.

18. Presbyter

They are the extension of bishops in so far as they are meant to help the bishop in order to fulfill his high priesthood, that is, to teach, govern and sanctify that part of the people which is entrusted to them by the bishop. Since a bishop cannot accomplish his Apostolic ministry alone, God has given them as co-workers. Bishop is the pastor, the guide, the head, the priest and the master in his Church. Presbyters are those who help him in all his tasks and who participate in his mission. They exist in an essential relation with the bishop. The essence of the presbyteral ordination lies in constituting coworkers for the order of bishops to assist him in the threefold offices of governing, sanctifying and teaching. The three degrees of the sacrament of orders should be seen in descending order.

19. Same Roles

How to understand nine orders as orders of priesthood? Church is presented in the liturgy as the mystical body of Christ and the people of God. “People of God” is

not a synonym of the laity but includes lay people, the ordained and religious. Church is the community of people consecrated by baptism and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is priestly, prophetic and kingly. It is priestly because it is the mystical body of Christ who is the high priest. When one becomes the member of the Church through baptism he shares in the priesthood of Christ. The priestly role is interpreted as leadership in worship, kingly role as governance and pastoral leadership and prophetic role as preaching and teaching. Exercise of these roles is specific to the Episcopal office. Presbyters carry out the same roles. They are ordained to preach the Gospel, to shepherd the faithful and celebrate the divine worship as true priest of God (LG 28). The laity also carries out these roles in their own way. They exercise the priestly office by actively participating in the divine worship and by offering spiritual sacrifices. They carry out the prophetic role through evangelization by word and witness of life. They fulfill the kingly role by spreading the kingdom of God by ordering the whole of creation to the adoration of God.

20. Ministerial and common priesthood

Vatican II clearly points out the essential difference between the common priesthood of the people of God and the ministerial priesthood of the ordained. The ministerial priest forms and governs the priestly people, effects the Eucharistic sacrifice and offers it to God in the name of the people. The aim of the ministerial priesthood is to help the common priesthood realize its final goal. In the common priesthood, the members represent Christ in his body as members of the body and in the ordained priesthood priests represent Christ in his headship of the body. The common and ordained priesthood are rooted in the priesthood of Christ. If we regard the priest and assembly with head/body relationship, priest is in the community as its head. There is a mutual interiority between priest and the assembly as head and body. The ordained priest evokes and expresses the priesthood of the Church. The ordained priesthood is not only a ministry for the Church on behalf of Christ, but also a ministry done with the people.

Since deacons and lower ministers are not ordained to ministerial priesthood, their ministry must be seen as an exercise of the common priesthood shared by the people of God through baptism.⁷⁰ It is only in this sense that all the nine orders are called orders of priesthood.

⁶⁹ Susan, p.118.

⁷⁰ Susan, p.15.

21. Ecclesial Life of St. Thomas Christians

The strong sense of the Church which was very visible in the pre-sixteenth century life of St. Thomas Christians and which still exists to a great extent in the non-Catholic St. Thomas Christians is due to the awareness that they are the Church and that they share in her priestly mission. Those in the holy orders were not seen as a separate class but were regarded as the recognized members of the Church.⁷¹ Church assemblies in which laity and clergy were equal members took decision in all matters. Matters of faith were not questioned in these assemblies. Laity was very much dedicated to the Church and was ready for any sacrifice. Church was not seen as a matter of clergy alone. Clericalism and centralized way of Church administration which are the outcome of latinization have brought about in the faithful a strong feeling of self alienation.

22. Rites of Ordinations

We shall now deal with the ordinations to the ministerial priesthood. In the East Syrian Church Priesthood is called the head sacrament because only by means of this sacrament other sacraments can be administered.

22.1. Consecration of Bishop

A) Preliminaries: (1) Divine office and vigil; (2) observance regarding the day of the *syamida*; (3) Reading the Papal bull; (4) Solemn entry.

B) Pre-consecratory part: (5) Our Father; (6) opening prayer; (7) Ps. 89:1-29, 30-37 or (8) Ps. 132:1-18; (9) Prayer; (10) imposition of incense and *onitha*; (11) prayer; (12) first *qanona* – Ps. 118:65-72; (13) prayer; (14) second *qanona* – Ps. 99:5-9; (15) prayer; (16) third *qanona* – Ps. 21:4-14; (17) prayer; (18) fourth *qanona* – Ps. 122:1-4 or (19) Ps. 57:1-18; (20) Reading from the Gospel: for one (Mt 16:13-18; Jo. 21:15-17; Mt 16:19); for many (Lk 10:1-2; Mk 16:15-16; Mt 10:16-17; Jo 13:34-35; Mt 10:8; Mt 18:19-20; Lk 10:19-20, 23-24; Jo 20:22-23; 20:21; Mt 28:19-20).

C) Consecratory part: (21) the prayer “grace of our Lord...”; (22) First imposition of hands; (23) instruction of the deacon; (24) Second imposition of hand;

D) Post consecratory part: (25) prostration; (26) investiture; (27) consignation and declaration of consecration; (27) kiss of peace, (28) seating on the throne and (29) salutation.

⁷¹ Order for Raza of the Syro-Malabar Church, Trivandrum 1986, p.31.

22.2. Explanation

The Chaldeans and the Syro-Malabarians use the rite of consecration of bishop as given in the Syriac pontifical of 1957. The rite used by the Assyrian Church is given in G.P. Badger, *Nestorians and Their Rituals II*, vol. 2, 340-347 and in the Malayalam Taksa of the Church of the East in Trichur.⁷² The Assyrian rite does not give the part from the prayer after the first *qanona* till the end of the third *qanona*. Vattakuzhy indicates the parts of the Divine office to be recited during the vigil which is to be kept by the ordained. Although Badger does not mention the keeping of vigil before the consecration, the Assyrian Church has it before the consecration and prayers are assigned in their Hudra.⁷³

The Syriac Pontifical (188-201) assigns the canonical prayers for the Ramsa, Lelya, Qala d'sahra and sapra before the syamida. The day of syamida is fully dedicated to the syamida. It begins with Ramsa and is crowned by the Episcopal syamida and the sacrifice. Lelya and sapra are celebrated as on Pentecost, indicating the relation between the Pentecost and the Episcopal syamida. The bishop elect must have a particular place in the Bet sahde or in the corner of the haikla and must keep vigil during the whole night. One notable difference between the Episcopal syamida and other ordinations is that divine office precedes the former. Divine office is not an essential part of the Episcopal syamida. It can be considered as remote preparation. The norm regarding the day of consecration and the divine office is not strictly kept in the Syro-Malabar Church.

The ordinand makes the profession of faith before the assembly to make them certain of his orthodoxy in faith. The Assyrian Church does not give in the body of the rite, the hymns of procession to the sanctuary and the praying in the Bet Sahde by the ordinand during the procession. Reading Papal bull and profession of faith are given only in the Catholic rite.

All agree that the syamida should take place on Sundays solemn feast days and important commemorations. The reason given by Assemani is that syamida takes place only on days when the synod is held and synod can be held only on these days.⁷⁴

Ancient documents show only essential elements for ordinations – Gospel on the back of the ordinand, imposition of hand and the consecratory prayers. The first canon of 410 prescribes these essential elements: “When a bishop is made, the bishops shall assemble at the city ... they shall place the Gospel upon his head and together stretch forth the right hand over him, and the chief among them shall recite the

⁷² Taksa Prayer, part IV, Tr. by Raphael Vattakuzhy (Trichur 1984) 232-243.

⁷³ Hudra, III, pp.55-73.

⁷⁴ B.O.III/2, p.690.

consecrating prayer. Afterwards, the bishop who was ordained shall come and be completed by the great metropolitan, the catholicos of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, bringing a letter from the bishops who ordained him". So liturgy of the Word and the pre-consecratory part are of later additions. Except for the initial office and the reading of the Gospel all the three major ordinations have identical structure.

Solemn entry. It signifies an entire dedication of the ordinand to God.⁷⁵ The Syriac pontifical prescribes thus: 'Bishops, priests, deacons and the faithful assemble together before the patriarch. They must have with them the cross, Gospel, lights and the thurible. The ordinand reads the profession of faith before the whole assembly. Then the Fathers vest themselves in another room with birona and M'apra. During the procession to the sanctuary, onyatha are sung. It reaches the bet sahde, and after the prayer there it goes to haikla and from there to the sanctuary.'⁷⁶ But according to the present rite in the Malabar Church the procession enters the haikla and the Papal bull of the appointment is read. Then accompanied by the Archdeacon the ordinand goes to Bet Sahde and prays there in silence. After that, he goes to the sanctuary while the choir sings the last stanza (In the port of...). The ordinand kneeling before the consecrator in the sanctuary and placing the right hand on the Gospel book makes the profession of faith.

23. Preconsecratory Part

Opening prayer which is recited after the 'Our Father' is the glorification of the divine name and is the continuation of the spirit of Our Father which ends with doxology. The following psalm 89 is also in line with the spirit of glorification. Other prayers are repeated requests for Episcopal powers and mission and graces for the just exercise of them. Out of six prayers to be recited by the consecrator, two ('The divine virtue...' and 'your grace') are not found in Vat. Syr. 45 and Cambridge codex and the other four are given in Cambridge codex.

Psalms. In the first qanona ps.89 and in the fourth qanona ps 67:1-8 are omitted in the Assyrian Church. Ps. 89:16-22; 21:2-8 and 122:1-4 are common to all the three major ordinations. The last one has its antiphons also identical in all the major ordinations. Ps. 118:65-72; Ps. 131:9-18 are common to priestly and Episcopal ordinations. Ps. 118:65-72 in priestly and Episcopal ordinations has the identical antiphons except that following the doxology. The messianic nature of the psalms used in the Episcopal syamida as preparation for the imposition of hands by which one is made to represent

Christ is very relevant. The antiphones in each ordination speak of the powers and graces to be granted to the ordinand in each order respectively.

Offering incense and the onitha Offering incense before the *onitha* is not given by Badger and Voste but given in the present rite of the Malabar Church. Vattakuzhy mentions only the last stanza of the *onitha*. The hymn does not seem to indicate the purificatory nature of incensing. They speak of the part played by the Holy Spirit in the Episcopal syamida, the superiority of the Apostles in comparison with the priests of the old Law, the tradition of the Holy Spirit by the hands of the disciples and the destruction of heresies and the unity of the faithful brought about by the Spirit given to the bishop.

The Assyrian rite omits in the text the readings for more than one ordinand.

24. The Consecratory Part

Reading the Gospel and placing of it on the back of the ordinand present a very ancient tradition which shows the fullness of charism conferred on the bishop. The Gospel on the back signifies the fire of tongue and the graces signified by the fiery tongue. Severian of Gabala (4th century) interpreted it as the symbol of the Holy Spirit. The descent of the Holy Spirit was the symbol of their ordination.⁷⁷ Since Holy Spirit is invisible, Gospel which is the symbol of the Holy Spirit is placed on the back of the ordinand. In the Syrian Jacobite rite the Gospel is open to Lk 4:18 ("The Spirit of the Lord is upon me"). In this context this gesture is epictetic. For Chrysostom it is the symbol of the submission of the bishop to the law of God.⁷⁸

His inclined position at the time of the imposition of hand signifies his humility and fear to stand before the altar of God and his unworthiness to receive the episcopacy. The prayer 'may the grace of Our Lord...' is a request of the ordaining bishop for himself that he may duely perform the rite of syamida.

The main themes of the first imposition of hand are the following: The mediation of the bishop in conferring the holy orders, the presentation of the candidate for the divine election and the invitation to pray for the descent of the Holy Spirit. At the end of the prayer the consecrator signs on the head of the ordinand with the sign of the cross. Cross is the divine sign by which we receive all the divine gifts.

The second imposition of hand has the following themes: The foundation and acquisition of the Church and the setting of ministers in it, the constitution of the bishop by the unction of the Holy Spirit, mission and powers conferred on the bishop.

⁷⁵ Dionysius of Areopagita, De Ecclesia Hierarchica, PG III, col 510.

⁷⁶ I.M. Voste, Pontifical, pp.63-64.

⁷⁷ PG 125, col.533.

⁷⁸ PG 56, col.404.

25. The Post Consecratory Part

Removal of the Gospel from the back signifies that he possesses its grace and is made the divine instrument of the Gospel.

The symbolic prostration and rising has two meanings: a. elevation to a higher order, b. the descent and ascent of Christ and in him our exaltation.

Investiture – The Syriac pontifical prescribes that the ordained is dressed with m'apra, birona and hutra. M'apra is the proper vestment of the bishop. Birona is his head dress. The prayers indicate that external vesting is the sign of the heavenly glory, spiritual powers and the sanctity with which he is interiorly clothed corresponding to the order he has received. Pastoral staff is the sign of authority. The antiphon of the second qanona throws light on its message: "O living pastor, make him hold the pastoral rod and stick that he may feed Thy fold with an unspotted mind and a pure heart". The prayer after the qanona says: "Put into his hands shepherd's staff, that he may guide, feed and govern the flocks of Thy pasture all the days of his life." The staff represents the power of Christ, the true pastor: "The rod of power which Jesus Christ, the Lord, sent out of Sion. May He guide thee and through thee, those whom thou shalt feed."

In the present text of the Malabar Church new bishop is vested with pectoral cross, Episcopal ring, pastoral staff and mitre in imitation of the Latin rite. The Episcopal crozier is the sign of rule. It was originally a civil and military sign of honour which began to be associated with episcopate when they became principal citizens and rulers over cities or people in the Roman Empire. Episcopal ring is the expression of priestly powers which allow or deny sacraments, close or open access to the mysteries of the Word and of faith. Ring in marriage is the symbol of conjugal fidelity. When this symbolism was applied to episcopacy, bishop was thought to be espoused to his diocese. Until ninth century transfer of a bishop from one diocese to another was considered a sort of divorce in the Latin Church. Mitre was originally the head dress of the Pope later bestowed on bishops, abbots and lay dignitaries. Seating the bishop seems to be the remnant of the ceremony of enthronement in the Latin Church. Bishop was consecrated in a church other than his cathedral and came to it in procession after the consecration to assume the office. Christ promised the twelve Apostles 12 thrones. The successor of them is seated on it on which the Apostles sat.

Declaration of consecration. The consecrator after the investiture signs on the forehead of the ordained with the sign of the cross saying: "(Name) is set apart..." The bishop ordained is separated from the world, sanctified and perfected for the work of episcopacy. The sign of the cross on the forehead signifies his death to the world and his consecration to live the life of Christ.

Kiss of peace: The consecrator kisses the ordained on his head, signifying that both are made of the same grade.⁷⁹ The ordained kisses the right hand of the consecrator, showing that it is through the hands of the consecrator that he received the order and all the graces accompanying it. The bishop is made to sit in the place due to him and all those present there salute him.

Changes in the Syro-Malabar rite

The SMBC held on Feb. 7, 1968 in the Vadavathoor seminary decided to introduce the following elements:

1. Procession before reaching the sanctuary may go to the Bet Sahde and while the ordained prays there a litany seeking the intercession of martyrs is sung.
2. Besides the Gospel reading reading from the Law, Prophets and St. Paul are added to the text.
3. Episcopal ring and pastoral cross are also given to the ordinatus during the investiture. A hymn is sung during the investiture.
4. A new karozytha composed from scriptural texts about episcopacy is recited.
5. When the new bishop is greeted by other bishops a hymn is sung.
6. When the new bishop blesses the people for the first time the assembly sings the hymn of thanksgiving.

These decisions of the SMBC were integrated into the text of the consecration of Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry. There were four scriptural readings and sermon during the Qurbana which followed.⁸⁰ In the consecration rite of Mar George Valiamattam sermon is placed immediately after the Gospel reading and a hymn to the Holy Spirit before the beginning of the consecratory part. The new draft of the episcopal consecration also has included them. Different texts of consecration which differ very much from the Syriac pontifical and have no official approval have been used for the consecration of certain bishops with additions, omissions and paraphrasing of the original texts.⁸¹

26. The Theology of Episcopacy

The preconsecratory part being of later origin gives the theology of episcopacy in a coordinated form.

⁷⁹ Simon of Thessalonica, PG, col.155, col.423.

⁸⁰ A Souvenir of the Episcopal Consecration of His Excellency Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry (Kottayam 1968).

⁸¹ For example, cfr. Episcopal Ordination of Rt. Rev. Mar Gregory Karotemprel CMI (Rajpot 1983); The Episcopal Consecration of Mar Jacob Thoomkuzhy (Mananthavady, 1-5-1973).

26.1. Trinitarian Aspect

One of the main characteristics is its Trinitarian aspect. The election and consecration of the bishop are attributed to the persons of the Holy Trinity individually. Some texts present God the Father as electing and consecrating the bishop. The prayer after the first qanona says: "May the divine virtue...overshadow us and dwell on Thy servant whom thou hast chosen..." The prayer before the first qanona requests the Father to spread the light of His countenance upon the bishop-elect that he may be a shepherd of His flock. This means that he is constituted bishop to be His representative. He is made the representative by clothing him with his own garment and by giving him the sword of His power.

Some other texts present Christ as electing and consecrating the bishop: "Christ, king of kings, O Lord, who anoints priests and bishops, anoint Thy servant ... with the holiest of oils and make him hold, o living pastor ..." ⁸² The second stanza of the onitha says that the true and eternal priesthood of Christ which was prefigured in the Aaronic priesthood is continued in the Apostles and their successors. The light of God's countenance and His brightness mentioned in the prayer before the first qanona is nothing but Christ. The bishop who receives the priesthood of Christ represents Christ. Several prayers request Christ or the Father to make the bishop elect a true pastor. This is possible because bishop represents Christ or the Father to feed his flock.

There are set of prayers which present the Holy Spirit as consecrating the bishop. Christ was constituted our high priest in the moment of his incarnation by the Holy Spirit. The same priesthood is continued by the bishop through the episcopal syamida. If the bishop participates in the priesthood of Christ, the same Holy Spirit should work to that effect. The prayer before the onitha requests: "Thou living and life-giving Spirit...we pray and beseech to pour forth the gifts of Thy apostolic priesthood into the hearts of Thy pious servant, to crown the head of Thy adorer with the honourable crown of the high priesthood of Christ..." The prayer after the onitha "with the brooding of Thy Spirit spread the light of Thy countenance..." shows that it is the Holy Spirit that constitutes one in the episcopacy.

26.2. Successors of the Apostles

Bishops receive the same Spirit which the Apostles received so that they may continue the same mission entrusted to the Apostles by Christ. They succeed the Apostles as pastors, high priests and teachers: "May Thy grace which dwelt upon the

Apostles as fire ...overshadow, dwell and remain on this Thy servant..." ⁸³ This apostolic succession is due to the apostolic tradition imparted by the imposition of hand: "o good God...made me a mediator of Thy divine gifts in Thy holy Church to give in Thy name the talents of the ministry of the Spirit to the ministers of the holy mysteries. And behold, according to the apostolic tradition handed over to us by the syamida..."

The collegial nature of the episcopacy is found in the expressions of the pontifical such as the twelve, the house of Peter, the company of the Apostles etc. The pontifical sees in the election of Matthias the full expression of the collegiality of the Apostles and of bishops. The election of Matthias was a collegial act. The prayer after the first qanona: "May the divine virtue...overshadow and dwell in Thy servant...that he may be raised in the order of the high priesthood of the Church..." So episcopacy is an order into which one is integrated by the syamida. So Episcopal syamida is a collegial act. This fact is symbolized in the rite of consecration in which at least three bishops are needed. Also for the installation of Metropolitan three bishops are needed. ⁸⁴ Six metropolitans are needed for the installation of Patriarch. ⁸⁵ Each bishop possesses the whole episcopacy. This is evident when the prayers request for the whole Holy Spirit on each bishop in order that he may be a high priest. ⁸⁶

26.3. Relation to the Church

Since the bishops represent Christ and succeed the Apostles, they are to the Church what Christ and the Apostles were to her. In the syamida of bishops the relationship of the bishop to the Church is given under three aspects:

1. He is the high priest of the Church. The prayer after the onitha requests the Holy Spirit to pour forth the Apostolic priesthood on the ordinand to crown his head with the glorious crown of the high priesthood of the Church. The aim of making one the high priest of the Church is to enlighten the souls of the faithful with his doctrine and to banish the power of darkness from his flock. One is made the high priest of the Church by making him participant in the high priesthood of Christ. ⁸⁷

2. He is the shepherd of the Church. The prayer after the second qanona invokes the Holy Spirit upon the bishop elect in order to make him a shepherd to feed his sheep justly and feed his fold rightly. The prayer after the third qanona joins the high priesthood to the shepherdhood: "...pour out, O Lord, the power of Thy grace upon

⁸³ Prayer of the second qanona.

⁸⁴ Abdiso, *Collectio Canonum*, tract. VII.8, p.137.

⁸⁵ I.M. Voste, *Liber Patrum*, p.22.

⁸⁶ Prayer before the onitha, after the first stanza of the onitha.

⁸⁷ Second stanza of the onitha.

⁸² Antiphon of the second qanona.

this Thy servant, and set on his head the beautiful and glorious crown of the high priesthood, and put into his hands the shepherd's staff that he may guide, feed and govern the flocks of Thy pasture..." It is Christ, the living pastor who anoints one as shepherd to feed his flock.

3. He is the head of the Church. The same prayer after the second qanona says: "that he may stand diligently at the head of Thy people in the Church". Christ exercises his headship through the Episcopal college. The grace that makes Christ head of the Church is fully in each bishop. Therefore the bishop can be called the head of the universal Church. Yet the prayer after the first qanona limits the field of his activity to a portion of the Church.

26.4. Powers and Mission

If bishop is the representative of Christ, he is endowed with Christ's power and mission. If he is the successor of the Apostles, he is also the successor in their power and mission. If he is the high priest and pastor of the Church he possesses all the powers and rights of the high priest and pastor. The second prayer of the imposition of hand enumerates the important powers and mission thus: "Vouchsafe, O God, Father of truth, the holy and glorious one, that he may shepherd Thy fold with righteousness of heart while his tongue preaches the word of Truth; be a light to those who sit in darkness, an instructor of those who lack knowledge and a teacher of children and youths. Clothe him, O Lord, with power from on high that he may bind and loose both in heaven and on earth, that he may heal the sick by the laying on of his hand, work miracles in Thy holy name unto the honour of Thy glorious Divinity, make priests, deacons, subdeacons and deaconesses through the power of Thy gift for the ministry of Thy holy Church, gather together and bring up Thy people and the sheep of Thy pasture, perfect the souls of those whom he has received charge in all fear of God and purity..." The missions mentioned in this prayer are to shepherd God's fold, to teach especially those who lack knowledge, children and youth, to bind and loose, to keep unity of God's fold, to perfect them and to be the superintendent of the house of God. His powers are to ordain ministers of the Church and to heal the sick and to work miracles.

Several prayers mention bishop's mission to rule: "May Thy grace... govern Thy fold rightly and stand diligently at the head of the people;"⁸⁸ "Pour it ... that he may guide, feed and govern the flocks of Thy pasture."⁸⁹ His power can be divided into power of the Word and the power over the mysteries.

⁸⁸ Prayer after the second qanona.

⁸⁹ First antiphon of the third qanona.

26.5. The power of the Word

The rays of the doctrine by which the bishop enlightens the souls of his children and destroys the power of darkness for his flock, mentioned in the first qanona affirms that the Apostles were enabled to be preachers by the overshadowing of the Spirit in the form of tongues of fire. The same effect is produced in the bishops. They are made the teachers of true doctrine.⁹⁰

26.6. Power over the mysteries

The *onitha* calls bishops stewards of the mysteries and dispenser of gifts. Sacraments come under these mysteries. There are several references to the holy Eucharist.

26.7. Graces of the Episcopal *syamida*

The graces of the Episcopal *syamida* are those graces and gifts which make the ordinand a representative of God the Father and of Christ and the successor of the Apostles with the actual graces for the execution of the mission bequeathed from Christ through the Apostles. They are:

1. Enlightenment for the perfect and sure knowledge of truth. The Apostles and their successors were sent to teach all nations.⁹¹ This presupposes a sure knowledge of those things which they have to teach.
2. Grace of courage. It is this courage that enables the bishop to resist the adversaries of Christ.
3. Grace of words. The Gospel imposed on the back of the ordinand signifies the tongues of fire which appeared over the Apostles. This fiery tongue shows the gift of words to communicate the teaching of Christ to others.

27. Presbyteral Ordination

27.1. General Structure

27.1.1. Preliminaries:

- 1 Entry of the ordained together with the pontiff in proper vestments
- 2 Profession of faith

⁹⁰ The prayer after the first psalm.

⁹¹ Prayer after the *onitha*.

- 3 The ceremony of cutting the hair
- 4 The Lord's prayer

27.1.2. Spiritual Preparation:

- 5 Opening prayer
 - for many
 - for one
- 6 First qanona - Ps. 84:1-12 with 3 antiphones+doxology
- 7 Prayer
 - for many
 - for one
- 8 Imposition of incense
- 9 onitha
 - for many – 3 stanzas+dox
 - for one – 3 stanzas+dox
- 10 Prayer
 - for many
 - for one
- 11 Second qanona while the ordinand kisses the altar and the baptismal font.
- 12 For many – Ps. 89:16-22, two antiphones+dox or
- 13 Ps. 84:7-12, four antiphones+dox
- 14 For one - Ps. 21:2-7, three antiphones+dox
- 15 Prayer
 - for many
 - for one
- 16 The third qanona - for many Ps. 118:65-722, two antiphons+dox or
- 17 Ps. 36:7-10, two antiphones+dox
- 18 For one, Ps. 131:9-18, six antiphones+dox
- 19 Prayer
 - for many
 - for one
- 20 Fourth qanona, Ps. 122:1-4, three antiphones+dox

27.1.3 Consecratory Part:

- 21 Posture of the ordinand
- 22 Prayer – grace of our Lord...
- 23 First imposition of hands
- 24 Proclamation of the Archdeacon
- 25 31 seconds imposition of hands

27.1.4. Post consecratory part:

- 26 Prostration and rising

- 27 Investiture
- 28 Tradition of Gospel
- 29 Signing and declaration of consecration
- 30 The pontiff kisses the new priest on the head
- 31 The ordinatus kneels down and gets up
- 32 Salutation
- 33 Greeting of other priests and deacons

27.1.5. Concluding ceremonies:

- 40 prayer of the bishop
- 41 *udarana* and
- 42 *huttamma*.

27.2. Comparison of Texts

The prayers, canons etc. which appear in Berlin codex 38 (A.D.1496) and Vat. Syr. Codex 66 are literally identical in their corresponding texts of the Syriac pontifical. This means that the present pontifical has transcribed them from the early documents.

The present pontifical has different prayers, canons, *onyatha* etc. according as the ordination is on one or many while other documents use the same text in singular or plural. The only possible reason for this is that the present pontifical used this method for solemnity.

A comparison with the Mss. *Mossul codex* 55 (A.D.1568) and *Amidensis codex* 59 (A.D.1569) shows that the latter uses the same canons and prayers for one and for many. All these canons and prayers are found in the present pontifical and in Mossul codex. The Mossul codex has different prayers and canons according as the ordination is on one or many. The same prayers and hymns are given in the present pontifical in the same order.

It is a sad fact that the ordination rites used in several dioceses differ from those of the Syriac Pontifical in prayers and rubrics and have no approval from the legitimate authority.

28. Textual Point of View

28.1. Solemn Entrance

In the Assyrian rite hand is bound with zunara and M'apra is put on the left shoulder. In the Malabar rite the vestments are carried on the extended hands. Solemn

entry implies ordinand's approach to God with total submission to and a total consecration of his life to the service of God and His altar.⁹²

28.2. *The Formula of Profession of Faith*

This formula as used in the present pontifical is not found in any of the early documents. Even before the promulgation of the present pontifical, the candidate to presbyterate had to make a profession of faith using a written formula. The main points of this formula are belief in the Old and New Testament books of the Bible, belief in the three persons of the Holy Trinity as taught by the Church, acceptance of the holy councils approved by the Catholic Church, rejection of the heresies which are reprobated by the Church, obedience to the Pope and to all the ecclesiastical authorities and their successors and promise to look after the people who will be entrusted to his pastoral care.

28.3. *Tonsure*

Wearing one's hair short as the mark of authority was a custom which goes back to the beginning of Christianity. In the early days of Christianity it was customary to shave the head of slaves. Persecutors used to shave the head of the Christians in order to ridicule and humiliate them. The ceremony of cutting the hair is a very ancient tradition in the East Syrian Church. It means freedom from sins and being dead to sin. While in many oriental Churches it takes place only once, it is repeated in all ordinations up to and inclusive of priesthood. Thus the ordinand renews the renouncement of the world before the reception of each order. It is also a sign that each order is distinct and permanent.

28.4. *Preconsecratory Part*

The opening prayer calls upon God to strengthen the ordaining bishop. This prayer is used also for the ordination of deacon, subdeacon and lector. Therefore it does not show any special relation to the qanona which follows it.

Imposition of incense and onitha. Incense is a symbol of purification. The incense in the censer symbolizes the purification of the ordained. In the onitha for one the calling down of the Holy Spirit presupposes the purity of the priest: "He stretches forth his hand in purity..." The incensing of the sanctuary and the people is not in the original.

During the second qanona the ordained kisses the altar and the baptismal font. The two talents which he receives in the ordination are the right to celebrate the Eucharist and to baptize. The ordinand before approaching for the imposition of hand kisses the instruments of these mysteries.

The canons and prayers are aimed at proclaiming the sublimity of the gifts of priesthood and request to bestow it and the necessary graces for its administration on the candidate. There is great precision in the internal disposition and arrangement of the canon. The psalms selected to be sung with antiphons illustrate the nature, duty and prerogatives of priesthood.

The following elements which are found in the Syriac pontifical are omitted in the Taksa of Trichur: profession of faith, opening prayer for one, prayer for more than one after the first qanona, prayer for many after the onitha, the prayer for one after the second qanona, in the third qanona ps. 118:65-72 for many, ps. 131:9-18 for one and the prayer for one.

In the Trichur Taksa Ps. 89:15-22 and Ps. 21:2-8 are recited and Ps. 84:7-12 as choice for many is omitted whereas in the Malabar Church Ps. 89:15-22 or Ps. 84:7-12 is said for many and Ps. 21:2-8 is said for one. In the fourth qanona Ps. 122:1 is recited in the Trichur Taksa whereas Ps. 122:1-4 is recited in the Malabar rite. Washing of hands after the first qanona is found only in the Trichur Taksa.

28.5. *Consecratory Part*

The prayer 'grace of Our Lord...' is recited by the ordaining bishop in his own behalf asking for grace to perform worthily the awesome mystery of ordination. In all other oriental rites it is for the ordinand, for calling down on him the grace of election. It is used in all ordination rites of lector, subdeacon, deacon, priest, bishop, metropolitan, sumlaya and sunaya. Proclamation of Archdeacon and the first imposition of hands are common to all the three major ordinations.

The posture of the ordinand during the imposition of hand and the text of the second imposition of hand are proper to the priestly ordination. While the bishop imposes his hand on the ordinand, the ordinand genuflects on both knees, having the hands stretched out above the eyes in the form of supplication, his head being downwards. According to Dionysius of Areopagita different modes of genuflection symbolize the special powers ascribed to the different grades of the ecclesiastical ministers.⁹³ Genuflection signifies adoration, penance and submission. It is a symbol of earnest

⁹² Dionysius of Areopagita, *De Ecclesia Hierarchica*, Ch.4; PG 3, col.510; PSO II, p.263.

⁹³ *De Ecclesia Hierarchica*, chapter V., PG 3, col 510.

supplication. In the pre-consecratory part the texts speak of this gesture.⁹⁴ The opening of hands towards heaven indicates the help of grace from above.

Double imposition of hands is the discipline of the East Syrian Church. Both formulas are considered as one whole which constitute the essence of orders.⁹⁵

The second formula of imposition of hand prays for: the election of the Church and the constitution of the ecclesiastical ministers, the election of the priest through the descent of the Holy Spirit, the election of priests for the ministry of the Word and for the sacraments of anointing of the sick, of the Eucharist, of baptism, of penance, and illumination of the faithful.

28.6. *Post-consecratory Part*

These rites do not confer any power but manifest the power received.

1 The prostration and rising up symbolize the elevation to a higher order.

2 Priestly investiture. Vestition is the sign of the divine glory granted to the ordinatus by the Holy Spirit. Urara is the symbol of angelic nature. The changing of the urara from the left shoulder also to the right symbolizes the exaltation to presbyterate. Paina is the mantle of justice with which the priest is divinely clothed. It is the sign of priestly innocence, purity and sanctity.⁹⁶

3 Conferment of the Gospel. It is the manifestation of the power already received regarding the ministry of the Gospel and reading it in the liturgy.

4 Obeisance to the altar. When qanona is said the archdeacon directs the priests who pay obeisance to the altar first at the right hand and then at the left. It is meaningful because altar is the center of his ministry. In the Syro-Malabar Church the ordinatus kisses the altar, indicating that he receives grace from it.

5 Declaration of the priestly consecration. The bishop declares that the ordination is the work of God while he is only the servant and minister.

6 Final greetings. The new priest kisses the hand of the bishop. He greets the priests and the deacons present in the sanctuary and they in turn kiss his hand. Kiss of peace is the sign of mutual joy and union of mind. Kissing the altar indicates that the ordinatus receives grace from it and he is sanctified in the sanctuary.

The presentation of a big decorated candle to the bishop after the ordination rite is the remnant of the custom of giving present to him as a mark of gratitude for having ordained him.

⁹⁴ Prayer for many after the first qanona, onitha for one, prayer for one after the second qanona.

⁹⁵ Cfr. M. Jugie, *Theologia Dogmatica Christianorum Orientalium*, Vol V (Paris 1935) 329.

⁹⁶ The prayer of the bishop while clothing with gulta.

29. Theology of Priesthood

Since the pre-consecratory part is of later origin, it offers a well developed and evolved theology of priesthood. The text of ordination deals mainly with the priesthood of Christ and the Christian priesthood.

29.1. *Priesthood of Christ*

Christ is the pontiff of our faith⁹⁷ who sanctified us by His pontificate. He is the pontiff of justice⁹⁸ whose priesthood displaced all types, figures, symbols and likeness and has an eternal duration. His priesthood never fails and is eternal.⁹⁹ He is the true priest.¹⁰⁰ This shows the oneness of priesthood. This oneness is set against the multiplicity of the levitical priests in the O.T. Being mortal no one could remain for ever. On the other hand, since Christ remains for ever, his priesthood also remains for ever.

It is spiritual¹⁰¹ because it is not on account of the carnal succession but according to the law of grace (Heb 8:5-10). Another reason is that it is conferred by the Holy Spirit. It is the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The uniqueness of Christ's priesthood is that it can remit sins and debts while the priesthood of Aaron could not. His priesthood takes away sins because he is constituted the propitiatory victim: "O Christ propitiatory victim, who has sanctified us by Thy Body."¹⁰² He is the priest and victim. Second qanona for one, second antiphon says that his priesthood appeases the hidden God incessantly in heaven for the sins of the world. It says that Christ became the perpetual reconciler before God the Father. The following qanona says that he is the cause of peace between heights and depths, implying his mediation between God and man through his ministry of reconciliation. It is the cause of peace between heaven and earth.¹⁰³

29.2. *Christian Priesthood*

It is referred to in the second qanona as the only priesthood which Christ approves of.¹⁰⁴ The uniqueness of the Christian priesthood is evident here. It is the con-

⁹⁷ Third qanona for one, 2nd antiphon.

⁹⁸ Prayer for one after the first qanona.

⁹⁹ Second qanona for one, second antiphon.

¹⁰⁰ Second qanona for many, 2nd antiphon.

¹⁰¹ Prayer after the first qanona.

¹⁰² Third qanona for one, 4th antiphon.

¹⁰³ Second qanona for one, 3rd antiphon.

¹⁰⁴ Second qanona for many, 2nd antiphon.

tinuation of the priesthood of Christ in activity, efficacy and identity.¹⁰⁵ The second qanona says that priest is elected to continue the priesthood of Christ. It is in spiritual succession because its succession is through the reception of the Holy Spirit with special gifts and talents: "O Christ, the Lord of grace, your worshippers have been assigned in a spiritual succession to minister the two-fold talents..."¹⁰⁶

The sacramental grace conferred on the ordinatus is the habitual grace as a permanent source of actual help needed for the life of priesthood. Antiphon of the second qanona for many prays "As in the ark, let Thy grace be collected in their hearts." The idea is the priest's enrichment with the wealth of graces. The ordination brings about an ontological consecration of the priest and consequent conferring of special competence and powers. The clause like "cloth them with the vestment of priesthood",¹⁰⁷ "anoint with the oil of sanctity,"¹⁰⁸ "cloth them with splendour and comeliness",¹⁰⁹ "adorn him with the glory of the queen of kings, the Catholic Church"¹¹⁰ etc. refer to the ontological consecration and the subsequent graces.

Many texts pray for the graces to carry out the priestly functions well: to serve the mysteries, sanctify God at the altar and approach the ministry of the sin-forgiving mysteries. These are the sacramental powers received through ordination. Canon 18 of the synod of 544 says that priest receives two talents. The posture of genuflection on both knees also symbolizes two talents. Talents are the spiritual powers granted to the ordinatus, namely the power to baptize and to offer sacrifice.

29.3. Priestly Prerogatives

Priestly ordination raises the priest to an exalted position. The prerogatives are the outcome of the sacramental graces and character conferred on priest through the ordination. A priest is exalted above the angels,¹¹¹ salt of the earth,¹¹² mediator of peace¹¹³ and superintendent of the house of God.¹¹⁴ He is the light of the world. The prayer for one after the third qanona says: "The light of priesthood illumines secretly the chaste souls and by means of the virginal oil sends out the rays of its brilliancy on

¹⁰⁵ Third qanona for one, 2nd antiphon: "O Christ...elect him to thy priesthood".

¹⁰⁶ Second qanona for many, Ps. 84: 7-12, 2nd antiphon.

¹⁰⁷ Prayer for many after the first qanona.

¹⁰⁸ Prayer for many after the onitha.

¹⁰⁹ Second antiphon of the second qanona.

¹¹⁰ Prayer for one after the second qanona.

¹¹¹ First antiphon of the first qnona.

¹¹² Second antiphon of the first qanona.

¹¹³ Second antiphon of the second qanona for one.

¹¹⁴ Third antiphon of the second qanona for one.

the lamps prepared in the open". Its connotation is that priest should remain a source of light for the whole world.

29.4. Priestly Ministry

The functional aspects stressed in the text concern mainly the ministry of the Word and the ministry of the sacraments.

29.5. Ministry of the Word

The prayer for one after the onitha prays that he may exalt Thy truth among the faithful by his teaching. Second antiphon of the second qanona for one prays that he may splendidly announce Thy Gospel to the people from the pulpit. The prayer for many after the third qanona says: "They may announce thy glory to thy people who are redeemed by thy cross and proclaim thy wonders to the folk sealed by the living and life-giving sign. The text contains similar prayers: "Give him the word of truth when he opens his mouth."¹¹⁵ "Bestow on this thy servant a fiery tongue and spiritual talents."¹¹⁶ Here by fiery tongue we mean the ministry of the Word.

29.6. The ministry of the Sacraments

Sacraments are the works of God. For their righteous administration God elects his priests. There are four references in the pre-consecratory part to baptism.¹¹⁷ In all these places it is mentioned together with the Eucharist. It seems to be because these are the two talents which are conferred through ordination. The second antiphon of the second qanona speaks of the mission of priest to confer baptism to every age.

The holy Eucharist is the center of Christian worship. Several aspects of the Eucharist are shown forth in the text.

A. Propitiatory sacrifice. The clause "that they may offer up sacrifices right and day unto reconciliation of sinners with Divine Majesty,"¹¹⁸ the prayer "accomplish the ministry of Thy propitiatory mysteries unto the edification of the souls"¹¹⁹ elucidates this idea. The first antiphon of the third qanona for one calls the Eucharist the propi-

¹¹⁵ Second imposition of hand.

¹¹⁶ Third qanona for one, 5th antiphon.

¹¹⁷ First antiphon of the second qanona, second antiphon of the second qanona for many (No 17), second antiphon of the second qanona for one (No 16), prayer after the second qanona.

¹¹⁸ Prayer for many after the first qanona.

¹¹⁹ Prayer for many after the onitha.

tiatory mysteries. The prayer for many after the second qanona refers to it as sin-forgiving mysteries.

A. Oblation of the Body and Blood.¹²⁰

B. Glorifying God in the Holy of Holies “minister at God’s altar”¹²¹ and “sanctify God at the holy altar”¹²² signify the Eucharistic sacrifice. “To serve in the holy of Holies”¹²³ means to offer sacrifice.

C. Oblations of prayers and sacrifices of praise mentioned in the second imposition of hands allude to the spiritual nature of the Eucharist.

D. Spiritual Talent. The text speaks of the Eucharist as one of the talents received through the ordination. Its purpose is explained thus: “negotiating for spiritual emolument.”¹²⁴

E. Epiclesis. Priest’s power to invoke the Holy Spirit in the Eucharist receives special attention in the text. Two stanzas of the onitha explains what priest does at the altar in the Eucharistic sacrifice: “When the priest comes before the altar he stretches forth his hands unto heaven in purity, and he invokes the Spirit who descends from on high and consecrates the body and blood of Christ”. “The priest secretly invokes the Spirit who descends from on high...”

Chrismation and anointing of the sick. The glorious light of priesthood of which the prayer for one after the third qanona speaks is interpreted as revealing the priestly power to administer the sacrament of chrismation. But this text is of later origin and appears only in the sixteenth century manuscripts. The power of the priests to lay hands on the sick to heal the people is indicative of the existence of the sacrament of the sick.¹²⁵

Sacrament of reconciliation. The formula of imposition of hand prays: “elect him through the descent of the Holy Spirit that he may absolve thy people”. The prayer after the first qanona alludes to the power of the Christian priesthood as the continuation of the priesthood of Christ to absolve sins. The third antiphon of the second qanona for one says that Christ instituted the ranks of priest after the Apostle that they may absolve the people.

Matrimony. Second antiphon of the second qanona for one says: “he may assist at betrothals and crown the spouses according to the statute with incomparable solemnity”. The text throws light on the two elements of the sacrament of matrimony namely betrothal and crowning.

¹²⁰ Second antiphon of the second qanona for one.

¹²¹ Second imposition of hands.

¹²² Prayer for one after the first qanona.

¹²³ Fourth antiphon of the second qanona for many.

¹²⁴ Second antiphon of the second qanona for one.

¹²⁵ Second imposition of hands.

30. Threefold Functions

The Second Vatican Council sees the ministry of priest as the continuation of the ministry of Jesus, namely teaching, sanctifying and governing.¹²⁶

1. The text points out the teaching and preaching functions: “so that by his teaching he may exalt thy truth among the legions of thy faithful;”¹²⁷ “he may splendidly announce thy gospel to the people from the pulpit.”¹²⁸ He is set apart for the service of the Aaronic priesthood.¹²⁹ Aaron spoke to the people for God. We cannot minimize preaching or proclamation through mouth or speaking what our Lord did. He should proclaim the Word by living.

2. Second imposition of hands says that Christ appointed ministers in the Church “for the perfecting of saints”. Ministry of the mysteries is nothing but the sanctifying function of the priest.

3. Priestly ministry is an office of service and leadership. He is asked authoritatively to shed light on others.¹³⁰ The huttama prayer says that God made him worthy to govern righteously and give food to the people in time according to the glorious will of his majesty.

Priest is consecrated for the service of Aaron. Aaron is pictured as a shepherd. The three priestly functions are the expressions of shepherd’s love. They are closely related. One cannot do one function by avoiding the other two.

The text explains how to perform the ministry: with a sound mind,¹³¹ blamelessly,¹³² diligently,¹³³ in all purity,¹³⁴ spotlessly,¹³⁵ worthily,¹³⁶ with joy and gladness.¹³⁷

31. The Message of the Ministry

The ministers of the Church, whether Episcopal or presbyteral, are reminded of the following facts: Christ is the historical origin of the ministry and therefore should

¹²⁶ PO, I; Ad Gentes 39; PL 28.

¹²⁷ Prayer for one after the onitha.

¹²⁸ Second antiphon of the second qanona.

¹²⁹ Second antiphon of the third qanona for many.

¹³⁰ Prayer for many after the third qanona.

¹³¹ Second antiphon of the second qanona.

¹³² Third antiphon of the second qanona.

¹³³ Third antiphon of the second qanona for many.

¹³⁴ First antiphon of the second qanona for many.

¹³⁵ Prayer for one after the third qanona.

¹³⁶ Prayer for one after the second qanona.

¹³⁷ Prayer for one after the first qanona.

be related to Him. They serve him and should be faithful to His Gospel. The adjective 'Apostolic' qualifying ministry shows that they continue the same ministry of the Apostles and should be faithful to the Apostolic tradition. They should be guided by the Spirit because it is He who constitutes them ministers. They are ministers of the Church and represent her. They are the leaders of the Church. The personal dimension of their call is that they need commitment to their ministry and to the holiness of life in imitation of Christ.

32. Life of the Clergy

Since the life of the clergy is closely connected with their ministry, we make a short survey of it on the basis of the available testimonies and sources.

Celibacy. There was no special law concerning the marriage of priests in the universal Church in the first centuries, except the Pauline law (1 Tim.3:2ff). Canon 17 of the Apostolic canons which formed the principal factor of the East Syrian canon law says: "He who shall marry a widow or one who had been divorced, or a harlot or a maid servant, or one of those in the scenes of the theatre cannot be a bishop or priest or a deacon or be numbered as anyone in the ranks of the clergy." From the fifth century onwards the East Syrian discipline on celibacy underwent changes. Priests, bishops and even patriarch were allowed to marry, but not monks. They could marry a second time.¹³⁸ The synod of Mar Babai allowed even monks to marry.¹³⁹ The synod of Mar Aba I in 544 made marriage an impediment to become bishop, metropolitan or patriarch, but priests and deacons were encouraged to marry on account of suspicion of the people on celibate clergy.

There are many sources which say that priests were usually married in Malabar.¹⁴⁰ Second Marriage was not allowed to them.¹⁴¹ We know from the history of the clerical celibacy practiced in Malabar and from the history of the East Syrian discipline that priests were marrying even after the ordination. It was the synod of Diamper which prohibited the marriage of the clergy in sacred orders.

Divine Office. From several testimonies we know that the practice of reciting divine office followed in Malabar was exactly that of the East Syrian Church. In the East Syrian Church there had been the obligation to recite the Divine office in public. The synod of Mar Isaac in 410 decreed that every priest, deacon and subdeacon should attend the public recitation. The synod of Mar Gregory I recommended the participa-

tion of the faithful also in the divine office. In the early period it was recited on feast days and Sundays. But towards the seventh century they introduced the practice of daily recitation. We find nowhere the obligation of recitation of the divine office in private and under mortal sin.

Melchior Carneiro found in 1557 that the Malabar clergy were reciting the divine office in the church publicly in the morning and evening.¹⁴² Monserrate says: "The priests considered it to be recited only in choir, for they were not seen to say the office outside the choir."¹⁴³ The synod of Diamper imposed it on the Malabar clergy under mortal sin. If they could not recite it in public in the church, they had to recite it in private.

Formation and Administration. The aspirants to priesthood were educated under malpans (teachers). It seems that there was the practice of ordaining young people of 17 or 18 to priesthood,¹⁴⁴ although it was against the prescriptions of the East Syrian canons which prescribe 25 years of age for the priestly ordination.¹⁴⁵ The orders of karoya, subdiaconate and diaconate could be conferred on the same day on the same person.¹⁴⁶ Priests were ordained for the parish. The parish assembly had to give certificate (desakuri) for anyone to get ordained. The oldest priest was always in charge of the parish and the parochial clergy. The priests under the oldest priest administered the church affairs in an excellent manner. The synod of Diamper abolished this custom and introduced in its place the Latin custom of having a vicar to every church.

Dress. From the testimonies of the Portuguese writers of the 16th and 17th century we understand that the clergy had some kind of dress prescribed for them. According to Barbosa "they wear shirts and turban on their heads, they go barefoot and wear long beard."¹⁴⁷ The Carmelite Father Vincenzo Maria says: "In the house they were wearing only a shirt over the linen pants. In public they wore the long vestments of white linen. A few use the same of black color made tight at the waist with a leather belt and so long as to reach almost the ground. On the head they wear a kind of birretta, which, as it rises upwards, is larger in size, and on the finger, very big rings, outside the house all were carrying a kind of stick painted and twisted up at the upper part."¹⁴⁸ They grew beard. But the synod prohibited the young clergy to grow beard.

¹⁴² Documenta Indica, Vol.III, p.804.

¹⁴³ Archivium Romanum Societatis Jesu, Vol. 33, f.149.

¹⁴⁴ Placid J. Podipa, Our Rite (Malayalam, Mannan 1951) p.37.

¹⁴⁵ Abdiso, Collectio canonum, p.112.

¹⁴⁶ H. Denzinger, Ritus Orientalium, tom. II (Würzburg 1864) 144.

¹⁴⁷ Barbosa Duarte, An Account of the Countries bounding on the Indian Ocean and their inhabitants, English edition by Mansel, Vol. II (London 1918) 101.

¹⁴⁸ Codex Borgiano Indiano 18, f.96.

¹³⁸ The synod of Mar Acacius, canon 3.

¹³⁹ The synod of Mar Babai, canon 1.

¹⁴⁰ Documenta Indica, Vol III, 806, Id. Vol.XI, 518, Id. Vol IX, 949, 971; J.F. Raulin, Historia Ecclesiae Malabaricae cum Diamperitana synodo (Romae 1725) 391.

¹⁴¹ J.F. Paulin, p.389.

Tonsure. At least before the 15th century the East Syrian clerics and monks had a kind of tonsure. They made a tonsure at the bottom part of the head making a crown of hairs on the upper part.¹⁴⁹ It is certain that the Malabar clergy too had the same kind of tonsure.¹⁵⁰ The Statutes of Roz describes the tonsure worn by the clergy in Malabar: “The Malabar clergy, following the custom of the Chaldeans, instead of shaving the tonsure, keep a tuft of hairs in the place of the tonsure, shaving off the rest of the hairs, as prescribed in their Syriac books”.¹⁵¹ Goes says that priests have their tonsure in the form of the cross.¹⁵²

Military service. In the East Syrian Church the military service was prohibited to the clerics.¹⁵³ The synod of Mar Aba (A.D. 544) decided that priests should not have recourse to the protection of seculars. It seems that the same norm was observed in Malabar. Before the 17th century priests were in the habit of carrying weapons with them always for self protection.

33. Conclusion

The Churches of the East Syrian tradition have the same system of holy orders, same texts of ordinations with minor differences and have the same theology of priesthood. This is a matter of great importance in the field of ecumenism. Syro-Malabar Church should still try to translate this theology into her life. Although the present life style of the Syro Malabar clergy is different, it may be useful to attend to certain aspects of the genuine East Syrian clerical life.

Discussion

Mar Bawai Soro: Fr. Thomas, in your paper you speak of the apostolic succession: “*This apostolic succession is due to the apostolic tradition and imparted by the imposition of hand.*” In your opinion are there other elements that according to East Syrian and Syro-Malabar tradition, would constitute the apostolic succession in our churches or in other churches, in addition to the imposition of hands? Are there other elements that one can conditionally provide in a community, as the question of apostolic succession now is a question between the Protestant/Catholic or Protestant/Orthodox dialogue?

¹⁴⁹ J.S. Assemani, B.O. tom.III/2, p.899.

¹⁵⁰ Statute of Roz, Codex Borgiano Indiano 18, f.95-96; D. Barbosa, Vol II, p.101.

¹⁵¹ Codex Borgiano Indiano 18, ff.95-96.

¹⁵² Goes Damiano De, Cronica do Felicissimo Rei D. Manuel, ed: J.M. Raxeira de Carvalho e D. Lopes, Coimbra 1926, Vol. I, p.215.

¹⁵³ Apostolic canon 81.

How would we benefit ecumenically, we the Syriac churches, and do you feel that there are other elements in addition to the imposition of hands, that need to be provided in a certain community in order for us to recognize its apostolic succession?

Fr. Mannoorampampil: According to the text, all that is needed is the imposition of hands, otherwise all other requirements depend on the canon law, the qualities of the candidate, the way of electing the candidate etc. There are so many ways.

Mar Bawai Soro: Is the faith of the candidate and/or the faith of the community an integral part of apostolic succession?

Fr. Mannoorampampil: Faith of the community and candidate, both are needed.

Mar Bawai Soro: Would you call it Christian faith or apostolic faith?

Fr. Mannoorampampil: Christian faith is apostolic faith. There cannot be a difference between Christian faith and apostolic faith.

Mar Boulos Matar: You are talking about two impositions of hands, the first and the second. In the Maronite Church we have three impositions. Is there any other Church that has three impositions?

Fr. Mannoorampampil: We have two. That means that two constitute one. They are the parts of one imposition, separated by the archdeacon's proclamation. Apostolic tradition should be imparted by the imposition of hands. Then, true authorities should confer it. Canon law dictates the conditions for conferring the holy orders. He was raised to be a bishop without having first ordained a priest. That cannot be objected because in the tradition of the Church it was quite normal. It is not allowed now.

Fr. Yousif: Apostolicity comes from the ordained bishop, and he should be in apostolic communion. This is stressed in the first part of the imposition of hands. So the first part is common, and it is about the tradition in the orders, and in the second part is proper to conferring the powers of different orders.

Fr. Chediath: Regarding apostolic succession, the faith of the community and the recipient is important, not simply the imposition of hands.

Fr. Mannoorampampil: The imposition of hands has so many meanings, that is very important. Even with the invocation of the Holy Spirit, there cannot be consecration. For example I would not say that in the ordination of deacon in our Church, even though there are imposition of hands and invocation of the Spirit in it, it is taken to be both in the Assyrian Church and in the Syro-Malabar Church as a blessing. The validity depends on the intention of the Church.

Fr. Thekeparambil: I think that the purpose of *homologia* was also to assure the continuity. The criterion was not just the profession of the faith of the candidate, but traditionally *homologia* also has a foundation of function. How is the profession of faith practiced in your Church?

Fr. Mannooramparampil: We have a profession of faith, and I think that in the Assyrian Church there is no profession of faith. Just before the beginning of the ordination service we have the profession of faith.

Mar Bawai Soro: There is a profession of faith before every ordination. The cutting of hair and the profession of faith are the first two steps that we do.

Fr. Khalife: I believe that in Maronite Ordination we consider the prayer “Grace of our Lord” as the imposition of hands. “Grace of our Lord” is a declaration of the deacon.

Mar Boulos Matar: After that we have two more.

Fr. Khalife: When we say “Grace of the Lord” we also give the hands.

Mar Boulos Matar: So there are four.

Fr. Mannooramparampil: In the East Syrian Church “Grace of our Lord” is a prayer for the ordaining bishop, but in our Church as far as I know it is for the one who is going to be ordained.

Fr. Bouwen: Father Thomas, when you say that “*the bishop is a perfect priest ... in contrast to the shadow priesthood of the Law*”, is there anything in the ordination prayers about the fullness of priesthood, as we conceive in the West?

Fr. Mannooramparampil: I took this expression “perfect priest” from the text of the ordination. And the expression “full priesthood” is not given, but perhaps it has the same meaning. Bishop is a perfect priest because he participates in the priesthood of Christ in fullness.

Fr. Bouwen: Yes, but is it perfect in comparison with Old Testament?

Fr. Mannooramparampil: Not exactly.

Fr. Bouwen: Or perfect in comparison with the priesthood?

Fr. Mannooramparampil: Both can be taken.

Fr. Bouwen: You say also that “*Vatican II clearly points out the essential difference between the common priesthood of the people of God and ministerial priesthood of the ordained*.” Is there anything in the prayers about this distinction?

Fr. Mannooramparampil: No, I was just explaining why nine orders are called the orders of the priesthood. It is my commentary.

Fr. Bouwen: You say that “*Since the preconsecratory part is of later origin*” and you base your theology on that prayer. From which time does the prayer date?

Fr. Mannooramparampil: We have manuscripts from the 12th century onwards. We don’t know what happened before that period.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: Father Thomas, why do you use this term “she was forced” to use the Latin pontifical in Latin for the ordination services.

Fr. Mannooramparampil: She was “forced” because it was imposed by the Latin rule.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: Do you think that the installation of a major archbishop is a part of the ordination?

Fr. Mannooramparampil: We have the installation of patriarch.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: It is part of the text of the ordination?

Fr. Mannooramparampil: No, instead of patriarch we have major archbishop.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: When you speak about the married priests, and then you say that “*in Malabar from the history of the East Syrian discipline that priests were marrying even after the ordination*.” Was it practiced in the Church?

Fr. Mannooramparampil: Yes, it was practiced, but not now.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: What was the justification of being married after having become priest?

Fr. Mannooramparampil: As Mar Bawai said, there were so many disciplines in the East Syrian Church in this matter. There was a time when Patriarchs were allowed to marry. And monks were allowed to marry.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: But here the sense is different. You say that of the East Syrian discipline the priests were marrying, not in just one case, even after the ordination.

Fr. Mannooramparampil: It was practiced.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: Theologically speaking is it forbidden, to be married after ordination?

Fr. Mannooramparampil: I don’t think so.

Fr. Birnie: Specifically, canonical provision is given for marriage after ordination, and not only marriage after ordination, but a 2nd marriage if the first wife dies.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: It is allowed in the Church now?

Fr. Birnie: Yes, it was allowed, and still is even now.

Mar Severios: Father Thomas, in your paper you said that the priesthood of Christ “*is spiritual, because it is not on account of the carnal succession but according to the law of grace*.”

Fr. Mannooramparampil: The priesthood is spiritual because it is conferred by the Holy Spirit. The idea of “carnal succession” is from the Old Testament. The expression “law of grace”, I am quoting from the letter to the Hebrews.

Fr. Yousif: In the Old Testament, the priest is the son of a priest, so John the Baptist, for example, is also considered a priest, because Zachary was a priest.

Archbishop Yacub Daniel Hurmizd

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS IN THE CHURCH OF THE EAST

1. The concept of Penance

The prophet Joel says: "Therefore now, says the Lord, return to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping and with mourning; and rend your hearts and not your garments".¹ Therefore penance is revocation and exchange of the thought accompanied by regret and rue on committing evil, departure from the sin, and hating it, making every effort, on reliance on the God's Grace with assistance of the Holy Ghost, to depart from the sin and obedience to God's will with submission to his Holy orders, as it is said in Matthew: "Bring forth therefore fruits which are worthy of repentance."² As it is mentioned in the Paul's second epistle to Corinthians: "For sorrow over the things of God causes enduring repentance of the soul, and brings one to life."³ And this is the penance that gains forgiveness of sins with worthiness of Jesus Christ.

2. The degrees of Penance

Mar Isaac of Niniveh⁴ said: "We have to know that, we need penance always, at night, and through twenty four hours". So if penance is attached to man in his way towards God, this means penance has degrees that the person should advance through until he reaches its higher ranks. Mar Isaac divides the way towards God into three stages as follows:

1. Corporal Phase: The strife in this stage is against the evil inclinations which are centred in the body, the monk "faithful"⁵ accomplishes this work through corporal practices, as fasting, vigil, and reciting psalms, with prostration. And all these are adherent, that there is no vigil without fasting, and no reciting psalms without fasting

¹ Joel 2:12-13.

² Matthew 3:8.

³ 2 Corinthians 7:10.

⁴ Book of (penance yesterday and today) published by the fourth Syriac conference. Antelias 1997. The article of Fr. Elias Khalife (The penance in the teaching of Isaac of Niniveh).

⁵ These teachings were directed to his novice monastic students.

and night vigils. This is also the way that the monk Yousif Busnaya was guiding those novice students in the monastic order.⁶

2. Psychological Phase: The strife in this phase is against thoughts created by corporal inclinations in the soul which prevents it moving towards God as natural. But introduce to it strange movements which confuse, and scatter it, in earthly matters. The duty of the monk in this stage is to purify his soul from these strange thoughts in order to return it to its original, perfect nature. The penance in this phase takes the form of painful prayers, contrition begging, screaming, tears, and mourning on the sins. Prayer without tiredness is one of the criteria of the Psychological phase, in which the tears are poured, as Mar Isaac says "as the man who presents a great gift to the king receives a smiling face from; so is the man who raises his prayer with tears to God the Great King, will receive forgiveness of all types of sins, with a smiling face".

3. Spiritual Phase: As in this phase there is no more penance. It is anticipating (dealing with in advance) of life after resurrection in complete union with God. Only very small minority reach this phase. If they reach it, it is in a unique way. In the course of this phase, the person is ecstatic from this earth, he is dead.

3. Penance in the Message of the Prophets

While reading the books of the Prophets we observe that all of them reject the sin in clear cut statements, but they insist on the value of penance. For example Amos although he intensifies on justly punishment, he is calling people to seek the name of God, and live.⁷ And Hosea points above all to the mercy of God, and applies delicate calls to return to God with promises of forgiveness and blessing.⁸ By this he is in agreement with Jeremiah who in his solid warnings about the irresistible end, calls and declares yielding and affection of God.⁹ Isaiah declares "For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy, to the meek and the distressed in spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of those who are in pain."¹⁰ But above all declares great mercy awaiting the repentant.¹¹ Ezekiel confirms that God has no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should return from his evil ways and live.¹² So the teaching of the prophets is all awareness for the

⁶ Yousif Busnaya, a saint monk born in the village of Bozan at the foot of Alqoush mountain/Niniveh on 869 A.D. died on 4th Sept. 979 A.D. He became monk in Rabban Hurmizd Monastery.

⁷ Amos 5:4.

⁸ Hosea 14-end.

⁹ Jeremiah 12-end.

¹⁰ Isaiah 57:15.

¹¹ Isaiah 55:7.

¹² Ezekiel 18:23.

people for perception of their numerous sins against God, confession, return to Him, and fulfil His rules, laws, instructions, warning from punishment. Here prophet David says: "O Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endures for ever."¹³

4. Penance and Forgiveness of Sins in the Message of Christ

What is new in the message of Christ is that, it is not only calling for repentance, but He goes further to forgive the sins, declaring fulfilment of times promised by the prophets. So He started His glad tidings realisation of the kingdom in His personality saying: "The time has come to an end, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."¹⁴ And the kingdom is the presence of the forgiving love of God among men that comes ahead anything done by man. And the penance that he is called to is the result and not precondition to this love. So the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ was first to believe the coming kingdom, and then repentance. When man perceived the love of God he will realise the meaning of sin, and the meaning of repentance. And this is what we see in the story of the adulterous woman who was brought to be stoned.¹⁵ So the forgiveness which was granted to her by Jesus was accompanied by a call to change her life.

Repentance in Christianity is not to come back to the rules of canonical laws, rites, and ordinances to complete, but to return to the living God, who is calling us always to come out and die of our essence, and be open to Him. By this death to our essence and opening to God, He will reveal to us our real presence. As if He is creating us in a love relation which is emerged between us, recreates us in His shape and image.

It (repentance) is also participation in the saving Lord's supper. Reconciliation between God and men can not be achieved through Mosaic rites and laws, but through Jesus as Apostle Paul is saying in his 2nd Epistle to Corinthians "For God was in Christ, who has reconciled the world with his majesty."¹⁶ Through Jesus we were delivered from the slavery of law to the freedom of faith, and deliverance to righteousness and freedom was fulfilled by the Lord's supper.

Therefore Christian repentance is to share the saving Jesus' supper, return to the love that Jesus loved us and generously gave His life for the sake of humanity. Through giving His life He passed to the eternal life, which is the fruit of love, and with Him all men passed to eternal life.

¹³ Psalm 135:1.

¹⁴ Mark 1:15.

¹⁵ John 8:3-11.

¹⁶ 2 Corinthians 5:19.

5. The Sacrament of Penance in the History of the Church

5.1. In the Period of Apostles

According to the order of Christ: "And that repentance should be preached in his name for the forgiveness of sins among all nations."¹⁷ The apostles went out preaching repentance and offering forgiveness of sins, through baptism. Here the apostle Peter is saying: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins."¹⁸ So everybody who believed in Christ should be far from paganism, evil deeds, adultery, and confess in God and His son Jesus Christ the saviour, and then he gains baptism. And he will be counted with saints.

5.2. In the Period of Early Fathers

While human kind is inclined to evil and falls frequently in the snares of satan, so those who fall can find the way of salvation through penance which is after the pattern of baptism. It was offered once, and the penitent shall enter the grades repentant and confess his sins. The bishop was to put for the penitent a time limit in which he should meet his obligations in ascetic life, sexual abstinence, and from eating meat, and they are deprived of public duties. They were allowed to attend the mass, but not allowed to receive the Holy communion.¹⁹ At the end of this time limit the penitent approaches for acceptance, reconciliation, and receives communion. Which was performed by the bishop, on Passover Thursday, even after approval of repentance, the penitent was subjugated to strict laws. This leads majority of people to delay confession of their sins, and entrance into the ranks of penitents.²⁰

5.3. Penance in the Ascetic Life

Since the 4th century, when the monastic life started to spread in the East, the church experienced a new method to practice the sacrament of penance, which started in the monasteries, as the monastic life in general is regular union with God, in prayer

¹⁷ Luke 24:47.

¹⁸ Acts 2:38.

¹⁹ In the liturgy book of the church of the East, there is an anthem said after litany in which the deacon says: "He who is not baptized let him depart, he who had not received the sign of life let him depart, he who can not have the Holy communion because of any prohibition imposed by the church let him depart". See the anaphora of Addai and Mari of the church of the East. Homily 17 of Mar Narsai on the interpretation of the sacraments, published by Rev. Alphonse Mangana 1905. Mosul Imprimerie Des Pères Dominicains.

²⁰ Salim Bestres (Christian theology and modern man) vol. 3, part 5, chapter 2.

and freedom from the world. To attain this goal, the novice should become apprentice to one of saint monks initiating his line of conduct, to guide him to the right way to fulfil his monastic goal. In this sphere the novice has to reveal to him his experience, difficulties, and confess to him his sins, then he will get absolution from him. The saint counsellor was to impose upon him prayers and monastic practices to complete, to grant remission of his sins. To express his repentance and his will to advance in spiritual life.²¹

6. The Steps of Penance Sacrament

The sacrament of penance is not limited only to the confession of sins, on the part of the penitent, and absolution on the part of the priest. But there are other important elements which must be on the lookout, to resume respect to the sacrament of penance. And bring its full fruits in the life of the faithful, among these elements are:

1. The readiness: The man should be ready in mind and heart to give up the sin. He who had been put to a test by devil, should not be ashamed to confess his unawareness, depart from it, and seek for himself remedy of penance, because God did not cast off the penitent, as mentioned in Ezekiel "For I have no pleasure in the death of any one who dies, says the Lord God; wherefore repent and live."²²

2. Listening to the word of God and examining of conscience: God talks to us through His orders in both the Old and New testament. He talks to us through the voice of conscience which speaks to each person in the depth of his essence. As Chrysostom says: "Let us allow our conscience, debate, and ask about sayings, deeds, and thoughts, and examine what is our benefit and loss in all these conditions."²³

3. Regret: Regret is not only superficial rueful feeling to what happened or we did or think of sins, but it is fallback of the heart, or decision taken by the penitent to return to the bosom of the Holy Trinity, as the prodigal son did.²⁴ As Mar Aprahat the wise Persian says: "We throw and leave of our selves all impurity, and put on the wedding garments" (Mat 22:12). The penitent shed tears expressing his rue and regret to what he had done of evil things which loathe God. As prophet David was doing when he watered his bed and washed his mattress with his tears.²⁵

²¹ History of Yousif Bosnaya written by his student Youkhanna Bin Kaldoun, 10th century translation and commentary of Fr. Youhanna Cholahg, chap.8 which deals with the method of Rabban guiding the novice.

²² Ezekiel 18:32.

²³ The book of the great church preacher John Chrysostom. By Fr. Elias Oueter El Mukhlisi, chap. 3.

²⁴ Luke 15:11-to end.

²⁵ Psalm 6:6.

4. Confession and prayer: The penance itself is a prayer, and the topic of this prayer is the admission of the God's love, and praise for the forgiveness that God always pours upon us through His great mercy. About this Aprahat the wise Persian says: "We should be in continuous prayer, to pass the place of fear. Pure our hearts from iniquity, so we can see the Exalted One in His Glory." John Chrysostom is saying: "Let us put the prayer in the place of the non-composed talking, and fasting and alms instead of furtively glance. So prayers and fasting are the stronger weapons that the faithful can armament with." And St. Aprem is saying: "Prayer is the key of creation, and it opens for us the treasures of Your mercies (mercies of God)."²⁶

5. Forgiveness and reconciliation with others: The sacrament of penance and reconciliation did not end at absolution that the penitent received from God by means of the priest. Reconciliation with God should appear in his reconciliation with others (forgive us our offences, as we have forgiven our offenders). The forgiveness that we receive from God does not work unless we respond to it, and according to the degree of our response and readiness to forgive our offenders.

6. Going to the Church: The sin departs the person from Jesus and from God, and at the same time departs him from the Church, which is the body of Christ. Penance returns him to God and the Church. Therefore it is inevitable to come to the Church, yielding in front of the priest, who conveys the love of Jesus to the penitent, and the mercy which He pours on him (on the penitent). Because neither the priest nor the church can forgive the sins, but only God. The priest is not but a witness and conveyer of the God's love.

7. The Sayings of the Eastern Fathers on Penance and Forgiveness

1. Sin is malady, Penance and forgiveness are remedy: Most of the fathers of the church of the East assimilate the sin with a disease, and penance and forgiveness with the remedy that cures the person from this disease, that affects his soul, through the spiritual physicians who are the clergy.

So we observe St. Aprem saying: "The Lord had granted the remedy of penance to the skilled physicians who are the church clergy. So whosoever is knocked by Satan with an offend suffering. Let him come forward and show his wounds to the students of the skilled physician. And they will cure him with a spiritual remedy."²⁷

²⁶ Book of Hudra printed in Mar Narsai press India, Vol. 1, page 389.

²⁷ Hymn said during preparation of Eucharistic bread in the order of the church of the East. See the book of liturgy of the church of the East, printed by Fr. Joseph De Kelaita, Assyrian press Mosul 1928. – Hymns of Monday of Rogation of Nineveh in the book of Hudra, Mar Narsai press, India, Vol. I, 1960. Printed by late Mar Toma Darmo, Metropolitan of India (then elected as Patriarch in 1968). He was the first elected Patriarch to mount the throne of the church of the East through elections since the reign of Mar Shimun V (1476-1501).

Aprahat the wise Persian is saying: "Jesus alone is not wounded by the sin, and the remedy of the sin wound is penance."²⁸ And Mar Odisho Metropolitan of Nisibis says: "The human race is apt to err and easily inclined to sin, and it is hardly possible that all should not be tried with the spiritual diseases; and on this account the healing priesthood was given to heal freely."²⁹ Mar Theodorus Bishop of Mopsuestia.³⁰ says: "Although baptism offers forgiveness of sins, but it does not protect us to sin, so all of us have minor or major falls. For this God granted physician for the weakness and diseases of our souls. They are doing wisely to discipline us and find the proper remedies that fit our case, and help us continue our way to our fate.

From the hymns of the church of the East:

* Oh Christ the hope of the penitents; and refuge of the sinners, accept by your mercy, the request of your worshipers, do not miss out your creatures; Oh who have tenderness on the sinners by His word. Because you are our supporter, and good hope for our souls. Heal our faults and sufferings by your tenderness, clean our wounds by your mercy.³¹

* Oh saviour open your treasures, to overflow the needy, reply to the demands of your servants, relying on you. Forgive and sponge out their sins. Heal their sufferings by your mercy, so that they can submit their thanks to your name every time.³²

2. Penance is happiness in the heavens: Our Lord Jesus Christ says at the end of the lost lamb parable: "I say to you that such will be the joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, more than over ninety and nine righteous who need no repentance"³³. Mar Narsai the Malphan in his interpretation to this parable says: "We see here the secret of sin and the secret of repentance, he went to demonstrate relinquishing God, and he returned to demonstrate his repentance. He teaches us God's joy on return of a penitent..." In another hymn he is saying: "Praise to Him who in His Goodness hath made our race Free from the slavery of the evil one and of death. And Hath made peace between us and the companies of those on the High. Who were angry because of our iniquity. Blessed is the compassionate One, who, when we sought Him not, came forth to seek us, and rejoiced in (giving) us life; and showed a type of our being lost, and returning again."³⁴

3. Repentance is Contenting God: Among the Fathers there are some who consider repentance joined with fasting and prayer, as a gift by which our creator is

²⁸ The book of Aprahat the wise Persian. Dar Al Mashraq Press / Beirut. By Fr. Paulus Al Ghfali, first edition 1992.

²⁹ Book of Marganeethe (Pearl), by Mar Odisho of Nisibis. Assyrian press, Mosul 1928.

³⁰ The book of Theodorus of Mopsuestia the commentator of the divine books, by Fr. Dr. Paulus Ghafali Dar Al Mashraq/Beirut, first edition 1993.

³¹ The book of Hudra, page 7, printed by Mar Toma Darmo, Mar Narsai press India 1961.

³² Ibidem, p.4.

³³ Luke 15:7.

³⁴ A prayer said on Monday morning before Psalms according to the order of the church of the East.

contented. So He keeps away misfortune and catastrophes from us. Youkhanna Al Mosulli the monk (1245 A.D.) is saying in his book *"The praised conduct"*:³⁵ "Through fasting, prayers, and deeds of repentance we content the Lord of creatures, to keep away misfortunes from us." Mar Temothaus the Great in his epistle to Sargis of the teacher of Mar Abraham monastery of merv is saying: "Lift your mind and thought to the great chief of priests Jesus Christ and beseech him always to forgive our sins and the sins of everybody."³⁶

4. Repentance is fire: Among the Fathers there are some who consider repentance as fire, its burning substance is the sin. Mar Timotheos the Great in his epistle to Sargis of Elam is saying: "You teach and rebuke always, advice and educate, condole and provoke, and let them rely on the hope repentance. And yourself be fire against the sin."

5. Repentance is a chance: Isaac of Nineveh describes repentance as a chance for the person before he departs from this transient world, and he says: "As far as you have eyes, let them be full of prayer tears, weeping for your sins. Before the time comes when the dust will cover their blackness."³⁷

8. Prayer and Forgiveness in the Orders of the Church of the East

According to the Orders of the Church of the East, there are two degrees of repentance and forgiveness. The first is for those who enter the realm of Christ and obtain baptism. The second is for the offenders and sinners of the church faithful.

1. The order of admission of penitents: Mar Eshu-Ayab Khdayawayaya³⁸ defined that those who return to the realm of Christ should be baptized on the evening of the great Saturday (before Easter). Because baptism is a symbol of death and resurrection of Christ. So from Monday of the fourth week of lent, they should come to the church and report their names to the priest, which resembles the yielding of Abraham the father who promises to God. Abraham believed in the promise of God, he left his people and went with God to the land he was shown. Likewise those who return to Christ have to record their names as an indication of their yielding to God.³⁹ On the

³⁵ Printed in Rome 1868.

³⁶ Morceaux Choisis, Fr. Jacques Eugene Manna. Vol. 2, Chapter 3. Imprimerie des Pères Dominicains 1901.

³⁷ Chapter 13 of the same source as above.

³⁸ Eshu-Ayab Khdayawayaya, He is the third Patriarch by this name to reign of the church of the East, for the period 649-659 he paid a great attention to the liturgy of the church and organised it and put it in its final form.

³⁹ Patriarch Eshu-Ayab Khdayawayaya was always connecting Old and New testaments to organise the church liturgy.

mid-lent Wednesday⁴⁰ the priest will come out of the altar with two deacons⁴¹ and recite on them the blessing morning and evening. In the beginning he will teach them to relinquish paganism, and confess in one God the Creator.⁴² On the early morning of the last Monday of the lent (after Palm Sunday), they will enter in the Baptistry⁴³. The priest and the deacons will come out from the altar holding the cross, bible, candles, and essence⁴⁴ without opening of the veil⁴⁵ and he stands in front of Baptistry and he teaches, guides them, and recites blessing on them. On Saturday they will receive Baptism.⁴⁶ And they receive the Holy Communion so they can share the faithful on Easter.

2. The order of forgiveness of sins:⁴⁷ (special for the faithful). If one of the faithful commits an offence. He is excommunicated from the Christian lives. And if he came rueful for his sin, the deeds of repentance, fasting, praying and giving alms, are imposed upon him, as a spiritual remedy. And to prove he is really following the right way, these should be completed in a limited time. After finishing the deeds of repentance he is offered the order of forgiveness (ܠܚܝܬܐ) of sins and absolution from his sins. The order of forgiveness as it indicates, is recited on persons who relinquish their faith, and return again. And those who eat meat in lent or on Friday and Wednesday, or commit any sin. The penitent is let to stand in front of the altar, and the order of forgiveness is recited on him, which consists in psalms and hymns to urge the penitent to relinquish sin and prayer of blessing which is a beseech for the compassionate and righteous Lord who overflows his grace on all, to overflow his grace on the penitent and renew in him His Holy Spirit, to seal him for the day of salvation and purify his body from all corporal and spiritual sins, to strengthen his faith and straighten paths, to grant and glorify His Holy name. Then the priest will mark him on his forehead with the sign of the cross. He will ask him if he has sinned with his will without a reason, then will mark him by the (sign of the cross) with the holy oil. Saying "So and so is marked, sealed, renewed in the name of the Father, the Son and the

⁴⁰ The priest did not give the blessing immediately after registering their name, symbolising the period between Abraham and Moses to whom God was revealed.

⁴¹ The two deacons symbolise the two angels Gabriel and Michael.

⁴² The blessing is recited on them morning and evening to symbolise the two lambs of sacrifice which were presented morning and evening in the tent of covenant.

⁴³ The church of the East is still keeping this order, and there are hymns, prayers, and psalms, name (of baptism) to be said after the dawn prayers every day from Monday after Palm Sunday to the passion Friday.

⁴⁴ This symbolises that the witness of John the Baptist was true and confirmed by the Holy Spirit.

⁴⁵ To symbolise that the darkness still reigned.

⁴⁶ Interpretation of the church liturgy of Abraham Bar Levy Qatraya, Chapter seven, which interprets the order of Baptism. Manuscript written by Deacon Hurmizd Son of Qasha Toma son of Qasha Hurmizd Beth Rabban of Asheetha 1919.

⁴⁷ Order of Clergy, Assyrian press, Fr. Joseph Kelaita, 1928.

Holy Spirit". If he had sinned out of his will he does not need to be anointed with the holy oil. Then he is offered the Holy Communion. The order of forgiveness is done during the Holy Mass celebration on Light Saturday.⁴⁸ There is another prayer of forgiveness, which is only recited on penitents from other faiths, who are willing to embrace the orthodox doctrine.⁴⁹ After the prayer of forgiveness, the penitent is marked with the sign of the cross on his forehead. If he had sinned with his will, and returned from other faiths, the priest signs him with the holy oil, by the sign of the cross by his thumb from above to below and from right to left, while saying "So and So is marked, sanctified, and renewed, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit". If he is from other faith⁵⁰ who confesses the Holy Trinity, and confesses that Christ is perfect Man and perfect God, another mark is added saying "So and So is marked, renewed, and completed, in orthodox doctrine in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit". If he has blasphemed without his will, and without his knowledge and participated in the sacraments of heretics, he is not signed with holy oil. But only the priest will kiss him on forehead and say "Christ completes with you this renewal forever". Then he is allowed to have communion with the congregation.

3. Confession in the presence of God: The church of the East does not urge the faithful to stand in the presence of repentance pulpit, and confess their sins in front of the priest, as other churches command. But they have to confess their sins privately in front of One God Granter of forgiveness. Following Christ's Saying: "Pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret, shall himself reward you openly" (Mat 6:6). Because the priest as we said before is not but a mean through whom the God's Love is conveyed to the penitent. As Chrysostom is saying: "Now you are not obligated to confess your sins to people to hear in public, but search for your sins in the depth of your conscience. Let the judgement on them be without witnesses, and let only God hear your confession, God who shall not rebuke you for your sins, but cleanse them after confession."⁵¹ Mar Aprem is saying "O sinners come forward, and take remedy of grace. Apply to the wounds and ulcers of sin, show and make clear you aches to our wise righteous physician. Who knows the chances of healing that cures fractures of sin."⁵² Maybe there were reasons for our Fathers, according to my opinion they were:

⁴⁸ For the first time the expression of Light Saturday is seen in the liturgy of the church of the East, it is always referred to as Great Saturday.

⁴⁹ Those who confess in Christ ast wo Qnumai (Hypostoses), two natures and one person.

⁵⁰ But now we have left behind these thoughts.

⁵¹ The Great church preacher St. John Chrysostom. Fr. Elias Quarter El Mukhlisi. Published by Pauline Library. First edition 1988.

⁵² See the same source as in footnote 30, p.293.

1. They want the sinner to turn over from the status of sin to the status of living in the bosom of Holy Spirit, without practising particular orders, so not to change this sacrament to only rules and orders.

2. Maybe the sinner had committed a sin against the priest, in front of whom he is to confess, or against one of his family, and he can not divulge them to him. Or the priest can not keep the secrets of the faithful. And this will cause some kind of disorder.

3. As all are affected by the malady of sin, so there is no need to mention its type because the remedy of the sin whatsoever it is the same and only one namely repentance, and return to God.

This is the opinion of our Church on the sacrament of repentance and forgiveness.

The Grace of our Lord be with us forever; Amen.⁵³

Mar Julius Mikhael Al-Jamil

THE SACRAMENT OF PENITENCE

TEKSO DHOUSOYO

“For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven; for those whose sins you retain, they are retained” (John 20:23). It is on the basis of these words that Jesus established the sacrament of penitence.

The concept of penitence already existed in the Old Testament as a rite of expiation and pardon. The Christ made it a sacrament that confers a sanctifying grace through the force of his blood, his death and resurrection. His orders to his disciples were as follows: “For those to whom you forgive their sins, they are forgiven; for those to whom you retain them, they are retained”. This confirms the reality and it was put into practice for centuries within his Church.

1. Penitence and Pardon in the Old Testament

How did the Syriac Church of Antioch live this sacrament all through its history and traditions? This is what we are trying to illustrate based on the Old and New Testament, writings by the founders of the Syriac Church, the Syriac Liturgy as well as Ea-

⁵³ Translated from Arabic original by: Archdeacon Dr. Khoshaba Georges.

stern traditions that survived through centuries, and with a slight comparison with Western traditions.

The old Syriac tradition is very rich in suggestive images. Thus, in the context of sin, penitence, and pardon, we find many models, among which is the most important and significant model is that of *Hussoyo*¹ which gave its name to the liturgical rite of penitence (*TEKSO DHOUSOYO*), i.e. the liturgy of pardon and purification (*HASSI= Purify*).

According to the practice in the old traditions of the Syriac Church, this liturgy was closely tied to the propitiatory rite already in practice in the Old Testament. In this practice, sin was not considered as one's violation of canon law since law and divine rules were not given separately to persons or individuals, but rather to one people as a whole, as if these people were only one single person or one single body. When one person would infringe this law, all the people would bear the consequences, and the whole people would ask God for pardon in order to be purified (*Hossoyo=purification*). In fact, God had made alliance with the people he chose for himself. “They will become mine with all their hearts. Thus, they will be my people, and I will be their God” (Jeremiah 24:7). With the aim of defending its honor and demonstrating its fidelity towards God, the people would play the guardian of one's self, and consequently of all persons who might gravely defy one of the law's commandments. This explains the orders given to the people, to those who might fail to respect one of the law's prescriptions (Numbers 15:22-31). Among Hebrews, people who sinned by ignorance or unconsciously, had their sins pardoned through sacrifices, prayers, and confession (Lev.5:1-5; II King 17: 12-13; Numbers 5: 6-7 and 15:27-29); while death was left for those who sinned on purpose (Numbers 15:30). If the people itself would commit one of the common sins, all people had to gather and ask for pardon, through collective prayer and exhortation (Numbers 15:22-26), or through prayer and exhorting its representative, such as Moses (Ex. 24:160), (Esdras 9:5-15), see also Daniel 9:10-20.

For pardon, purification and re-admission within the community, law imposed an expiatory sanction: fasting, prayers, sackcloth and ashes, followed by sacrifices and holocaust on the altar (*MADBHO DHOUSOYO* or *BEYTH HOUSOYO*)

2. Penitence and Pardon in the New Testament

In the New Testament, the propitiatory sacrifice is no more animal blood, but the Blood of Christ, the Son of God. In Saint Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, the Christ is the high priest in the new sanctuary, according to the order of Melchizedek (and not

¹ BROCK Sebastian, Background of the word HOUSOYO, p.161 in the Records of the Fourth Colloquium on Syriac Heritage, Antelias-Lebanon, 1997.

the Levites' order). "He enters once and for all, not with the blood of goats and bulls, but with his own blood", that would give us "eternal Redemption" (Hebrews 9:12). The Christ himself is henceforth the *HOUSOYO* (purification) for his own people.

Afrahāt uses the word *HOUSOYO* one time in his Second Demonstration on Love "He was sent like a lamb to the slaughterhouse" (Is.53:7) to replace the expiation lamb. We find the same idea with Saint Ephrem who explicitly calls the Christ "the lamb that gives propitiation"² (*EMRO DHOUSOYO*) and elsewhere he mentions the "shepherd who became lamb for our *HOUSOYO*,"³ or "the lamb who was slaughtered for our *HOUSOYO*"⁴. In these excerpts, Saint Ephrem grants the Christ the most significant elements of these two major Jewish feasts: Christ has once and for all played the role of the Savior of the Paschal Lamb; and in the same time, the propitiatory role played by the high priest on the day of Expiations (*YOUM HOUSOYO*).

Dr. S. Brock adequately analyzed "the background of the term *HOUSOYO*" in his lecture delivered at the Fourth Syriac Colloquium, held in Beirut in 1997. The lecture proved to be extremely useful for the first part of my intervention.

3. Penitence in the Syriac Church

The Syriac Church, through its practice of the Sacrament of Penitence, elaborated a special rite inspired by the Jewish liturgy. It named it the rite of purification or *HOUSOYO*. This rite, accomplished through giving absolution, achieves reconciliation between the sinner and God, on the one hand, and between the sinner and the believers' community, on the other. Hence, the sinner could be able to participate again in the Eucharist and community life.

Thus, the word *HOUSOYO*, from the existentialist perspective, means propitiation, purification, pardon, pity and mercy. It is also a synonym of pardon, and more, the preparation for pardon⁵. Therefore, in the liturgy of penitence that starts with the prayer (*MHLASSIONO HOKHIL*) in the beginning of the Syriac mass, acts of penitence such as prayers, fasting, ashes, sackcloth ... and others would occur simultaneously or previously.

In the early centuries of the Church existence, the prevailing idea was that a Christian can be holy since he or she is participating, through baptism, to the holiness of the Christ. Saint Paul uses the term "my brothers the holy ones" to call Christians. Saint Peter (1.Ep. 1:16) states "You will be holy because I am a holy". In (2:9) "but

you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the darkness..." After being washed from all sins, through baptism, the baptized cannot go back to sin⁶. Saint Paul explicitly underlines in his Epistle to the Romans, which the Syriac Church recites in the baptism rite. "We have been taught that when we were baptized in Christ Jesus we were baptized in his death ... We must realize that our former selves have been crucified with him to destroy this sinful body and to free us from the slavery of sin" (Romans 6:3-7).

If a Christian has just committed one of the three mortal sins: apostasy, homicide or adultery, this means that he lost his status of son of God, and in order to win it back, he or she should go through many steps of expiation. These phases constitute the ritual process or the liturgy of pardon (*Shoubqono*) during which penitents can be fully reintegrated in the ecclesiastical community and then readmitted to the Eucharist. Just like one person's infringement was seen as public injury inflicted to the whole community of saints, the sinner should go through steps that were publicly celebrated in order to be reintegrated in the community of saints. There are four steps:

The first step is that of the bishop, or his delegate, who would make public the name of the person who infringed the law, the type of infringement, while separating the sinner from the community he used to belong to, as if he were being expelled.

The second step is dedicated to the sinner's confession, i.e. confessing all his faults to the bishop and asking for reincorporation. The bishop would impose sanctions on the sinner (fasting, charity, prayers ... and others). They would last as long as the bishop deems it necessary. These sanctions were not perceived as penalties but rather as a remedy to the situation.

The third step consists of a period of time, imposed by the bishop, and during which the penitent would have to apply sanctions or respect canons.

The fourth is nothing but the public and formal gathering on a specific day, usually on a Saturday or on Easter's eve, where the community gathers to celebrate the Eucharist. The sinner would come forward and get the absolution in public on the bishop's hands.⁷

As for pardon with regard to small failures due to human weaknesses, it was enough to practice charity, prayers, and communion. Origen lists various ways to get one's sins forgiven, such as charity, love of the other, communion,...etc. The following is mentioned in Saint Peter's first Epistle, and in James's Epistle 5:20: "If one of you strays away from the truth, and another brings him back to it, he may be sure that

² Letter to Publius ; published in the Muséon (1976, p.261-305), quoted by S. Brock

³ Hymns to the Nativity, 3:15

⁴ Hymn to Faith, 62:3

⁵ Georges RAHME, p.280 of the Records of the Fourth Colloquium on Syriac Heritage, Antelias-Lebanon, 1997.

⁶ ENCICLOPEDIA CATTOLICA, Città del Vaticano 1952, vol. IX, Col. 1107-1114. See also the conference of Mgr. Jacques ISAAC in 1971 at Mossul on the "TAKSA DHOUSSAYA".

⁷ Rit Antioch, Syr., tit. 20 Absolutio poenitentis postquam peccata sua confessus est (Ms. Vat. Siro 58) ff.149-152. Denys bar-Salibi (+1171) Can. Pénit. (Ms. Alep 212) - Mgr. Jacques ISAAC, Ph D Thesis in 1964 on the rite of penitence "Teksa dhoussoya"

anyone who can bring back a sinner from the wrong way that he has taken will be saving a soul from death and covering up a great number of sins". It is noteworthy to mention that penitence as an individual practice did not exist or was not even known at all.

In the beginning of the fourth century, in particular after the conversion of Constantine, the sacrament of penitence as a rite of reconciliation (*tekso dhoussoyo*) underwent some scientific and theological impoverishment during the early days of Christianization in the Roman Empire. The massive conversion of pagan nonbelievers into Christianity shook off the framework of a Christian discipline. It was unable to absorb these huge numbers of people requiring an initiation to this new religion, and then an introduction to a pure and refined spirituality that the Church knew in its early days. Only after this event did the idea of one single sacrament of penitence in life emanate. Once in a lifetime, just before death, the sacrament of penitence is possible in order to avoid a new fall⁸. For the first Christians, the sacrament of penitence in itself was considered similar to baptism. It can be done only once in a lifetime. Let us not forget the difficulties a penitent had to face in order to apply the various sanctions such as lifelong abstention, matrimonial relations, or pilgrimage to the holy land or even to stand barefoot in front of the church for months and even years.

This demographic, theological and cultural change transformed the rite of sacrament of penitence to become, starting from the 5th century onwards, a mere preparation to death.⁹

4. Medieval Age and the Private Confession

Since the early days of its Christianization by Eastern priests (Seventh Century), the Church of Ireland enjoyed a special religious dynamism. It was not affected by customs of other European countries and continued to practice the sacrament of penitence. It even introduced the private individual confession. As for the practice of penitence, it occurred as follows: confession to the bishop of serious sins, acceptance of sanctions imposed by the bishop, then after applying sanctions, return of the sinner to get absolution.

By and by, this practice led to an increase in the number of sins to be considered during confession, and consequently, the types of sanctions to be applied. Therefore, an indicative list was invented with all sins and their corresponding sanctions.

In the Seventh Century, this practice spread all over the European countries. However, a new problem arose: how many times was a Christian supposed to con-

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ ENCICLOPEDIA CATTOLICA. Città del Vaticano 1952, vol. IX, Col. 1110-1111.

fess? Theologians considered that it was necessary to confess big sins in order to get communion. In 760, the bishop Metz Grodicang imposed on believers in his diocese to confess twice a year. In 900, confession was imposed in France, three times a year. The Fourth Council of Lateran, held in 1215, stipulated that it is imperative to confess, at least once a year. Therefore, it was almost natural that the sacrament of penitence became an act of piety practiced whenever the need was felt. Already in the year 1000, the three or four steps of penitence, above-mentioned, were reduced to one single step. This meant that the penitent would confess to the priest who would impose a sanction then give absolution as soon as the sanction would be applied by the confessor right after confession.¹⁰

All divisions, troubles, invasions, tyrannies, persecutions and genocide witnessed in the Christian East from the Fourth to the Twelfth century affected the beauty of the rite of penitence practiced by the Eastern Church. This rite did not lose the whole of its liturgical structure, however it underwent some omissions or alterations that weakened its community and ecclesiastic and even sometimes its liturgical spirit.

Michael the Great (Syriac Patriarch + 1199) wrote about a Coptic monk priest called Mark Ibn-al-Kanbar: "He started preaching on confession of sins. This practice has become obsolete by Egyptians due to negligence, just as our Patriarch Mar Marcus was forbidding it in the past."¹¹

In a Fifteenth Century-manuscript preserved in the Syriac Section N.57 of the Library of the Vatican, a ritual text on penitence and absolution is found. It is attributed to the bishop Diarbaker Denis bar Salibi who lived in the twelfth Century. The rite resembles to the one in the Western Church at that time. According to the manuscript, the various parts of the rite are the following: the penitent kneels in front of the altar, the priest exhorts him to repent and never sin again; he then gives him absolution that was composed of a number of prayers¹². After these prayers, the penitent gets the penance according to type and number of sins. He then retires to carry out the penance, and finally receives communion with the Eucharist and the Christian life¹³.

It is obvious that Denis bar Salibi is not the one who elaborated all these prayers. However, it is clear that he did organize what was in practice since he puts the absolution immediately after the recital of sins and leaves the accomplishment of the penance till the end, unlike what was usually common at that time. Bar Salibi's rite of

¹⁰ Article on *Teksa dhoussaya* written by Mgr. ISAAC at Mosul in 1971.

¹¹ Michael the Syriac, Chronicle, III, p.379.

¹² Introduction prayers + some verses of Hymns + Psalm 50 + Promeon and Sedro + Qolo + Etro + Epistle to the Ephesians 4:17-24 + Matthew 17:12-13 + Absolution adapted to the type of sin + Supplication of Saint James + Our Father

¹³ Syriac Manuscript No 57, Library of the Vatican.

penitence was vanishing with time. What is in practice nowadays is a very simple version of the old rituals.

Some Eastern Churches, that were initiating their union with Rome at the end of the Sixteenth Century, followed the method already imposed by the Council of Trent (1545-1563) which decreed matters related to the “confessional”. The Eastern Catholics chose to follow the Western method in the practice of penitence for two reasons: first, they wanted to prove their catholicity and second, the rite of penitence as practiced was not fulfilling their aspirations. These changes in the discipline of penitence, in the West and East, were introduced in order to reduce the ecclesiastic significance of the *HOUSOYO* reconciliation, compared to practice in the early days. The sacrament of penitence was continuously reduced and ended up in having a mere relation with the renewed baptism.

I would like here to add two brief and personal observations:

1. The Second Vatican Council invited the Church to seek in confession a sacrament of reconciliation, rather than an exercise of piety. This is an invitation to Christians so that they regain the richness of the old reconciliation rite. Some started doing so, but they went beyond the spirit and the authentic practice of this sacrament, justifying their method, though without serious grounds, by what they call adaptation to the current needs.

2. I guess that the Eastern Orthodox Churches also encounter similar problems in the practice of the sacrament of penitence.

Would our Eastern Churches, of Syriac tradition, manage one day, and hopefully in the near future, to meet in a team work with the purpose of liturgical renewal, not only in the sacrament of penitence but also in all sacraments?

Louis Sako

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

1. Introduction

I was asked to expose the sacrament of Penance as it is taught and practiced in the Catholic Church, mainly according to Latin tradition, which our Catholic Church took from.

Penance: The Latin word *poenitentia* (from *punire* or *poenire* the archaic form) means *sorrow*, it answers to the Greek *metanoia*, change of Mind and Heart. As theological term, penance is a virtue, which inclines sinners to detest their sins, because they are an offence against God. Then penance came to mean the outward acts by which sorrow for sin is shown.¹

After the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church prefers using the term “**reconciliation**” than penance or repentance. The terms of *confession* and “sacrament of penance” have historically served as synonyms for reconciliation, but have usually been understood in a more restricted way. Reconciliation has usually reflected the pastoral practice and theological understanding of the sacraments of initiation. Through initiation, the Christian receives forgiveness of sin and is incorporated into Christ, into the Church and its mission. It is within this context that the Vatican II description of penance is to be understood: “By Baptism men are brought into the People of God. By the sacrament of penance sinners are reconciled to God and the Church.”² Reconciliation to God and the church, it worked out in human situation. This situation includes both pastoral practice and particular social context in which Christians find themselves. Like the sacraments of initiation, penance also carries with it certain assumptions about the nature of sin and redemption, about models of the church and its mission.

2. Historic Background

The beginning of the Christian preaching is marked by a call to conversion, which is one of the central themes found in the Holy Scripture. The term is linked to the promise of the forgiveness and the assurance of the mercy of God. The term *Shub* in Hebrew and *Tab* in Syriac mean “to turn about” and is frequently used to demand that one must turn away from evil and go back to God. In the Gospel the first recorded word was “The time has come, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and be-

¹ Cf. Addis & Arnold’s Catholic Dictionary, 6th edition, London 1957, p.632.

² Decree on the Life & Ministry of Priests, p.5.

lieve in this good news" (Mark, 1/15). A typical example of this early Kerygma is found in the post resurrection words of Jesus to the disciples: "Thus is written that the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead on the third day. In his name, penance for the remission of sins is to be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of this." (Luke 24:46-48) The repentance that Jesus preached was good news to be received with joy. So the turning about expresses a total radical reorientation of one's whole being, and not only to demand pardon for some sins. Such a conversion implies an interior repentance: to take off the old conviction, mentality, behavior (old man) and begin a new life (new man) through believing, accepting and living out the Gospel. This work was rendered by the Greek term *metanoia*.

Jesus did require baptism for forgiveness of sins and for faith in his Gospel that would reconcile humanity with God.

It is risky to speak properly on the sacrament of penance in the early Church. What we find between 2nd – 4th century does not correspond to what the Church is demanding today. The uses of penance are varied. The faith on the resurrection and the baptism received for the forgiveness of sins (ac 10, 43), in this climate there is no question about a *poenitentia secunda*!

In the first three centuries there was keen debate whether a baptized person who committed capital sins of apostasy, impurity or bloodshed was admissible to reconciliation in this life? Almost all the great Christian writers of the second and early third centuries except the book of *pastor of Hermas* refused, e.g. Hippolytus, Tertullian and Origen. However after the Decian persecution (250 AD) the ban against reconciliation was removed for the apostates and other offenders, later at the Nicene Council it was decreed that every kind of offense should find the door of reconciliation.

It did not take long time for the early Christian communities to develop for its members penitential practices to mediate publicly the call to repentance. In the first three centuries the procedure comprised:

1. Confession of sin to the bishop or priest, who fixed the length and the modality of the expiation. Then the sinner is integrated to the group of patients' *ordo poenitentium*.
2. A public course of penance which takes several months or years.
3. A reconciliation or absolution, usually public in the church by the imposition of hands of the bishop.³

Such a rite was allowed only once in lifetime after baptism, (Hermas, vision 2:2-4, and commandment 4:1-7). And because of the unrepeatable character and the harsh nature of the penance most Christians delay its reception until the moment of death. The fourth and fifth centuries were confronted with different situations, and as a re-

³ The new Dictionary of Theology, Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins, Dermot A. Lane, Gill and Macmillan, printed in Malaysia, 1990, p.876.

sult new practices were initiated in various parts of the Christian world concerning how to prepare the patients to a true Christian life. After Constantine period the Church was not able to form the candidates of Baptism, because of the numbers and also the lack of educated clergy to perform it, therefore the church took care of cure of the sinners and to educate them!

By the seventh century, sacramental reconciliation was permitted more than once after baptism. And the rite itself shifted more to private penance by the influx of the British and Irish (monks) practices into Europe. Gradually, penitential books were written (e.g. Finian of Clonard and Columbanus), which listed the penalties that were appropriate for each offense. These books made their way to the continent and formed the standard sacramental practice of the church.

In 1215, at the fourth Lateran Council, it was decided that all the faithful who had reached the age of discretion must confess their sins to the priest once in the year. Finally, at the Council of Trent in sixteenth century, the sacrament of penance was defined for the Catholic Church, and the proper elements of sacramental confession included the aspects of sorrow, confession of sins to a priest and atonement.

In the contemporary era the practice and the celebration of penance has been viewed more developmentally. In the Synod of 1983 in Rome which was held to discuss penance and reconciliation in the mission of the church, many bishops called for a return to the order of penitents that was practiced in the penitential discipline of the ancient Church.

So understood, penance is defined as a "sacrament of mercy, instituted by Christ in the form of a judgement for the remission of sin done after baptism. This remission being effected, by the absolution of the priest, joined to true supernatural sorrow, true purpose of amendment, and sincere confession on the part of the sinner."⁴

In this sense the sacrament is necessary for the salvation of those who have fallen into mortal sin after baptism. With the formalization of penance as one of the seven sacraments, its particular theology was developed in more systematic fashion within the larger medieval sacramental system of matter and form. The council of Trent speaks of sins as the "quasi materia" for though Thomists and other theologians hold that sorrowful confession of sins is the matter of the sacrament. The form consists in the words of the absolution given by the priest.

3. The Sin

In order to avoid sin, to eliminate it, Christian should be able to know its nature and to surround it. Weakened by a will of power broken, he should be humble and

⁴ Catholic Dictionary, p.632.

prudent to begin a procedure of pardon and reconciliation, knowing that the grace of God, would support his wish to be reconciled and to live a pardon that helps him to be stand!

Is the sin a simple transgression of law? In this case the idea of justice that we have, could be resolved with repairing what such a transgression requires, and the problem of the culpability disappears. But it is not the case. If the sin exists, there must be a conscience of a personal privileged relation of the sinner with God and his will to destroy it, or at least, to forget God deliberately, in order to be independent, and to stay away from Him. The sin is definitely the decision of taking distance from God (cf. Luke. Chapter 15, the prodigious son), and refusing his love that makes us alive. So the sin is more a matter of Faith than a transgression of certain law. The procedure of **reconciliation to God and to the Church** is to set up or to create a new relation which permits to accept, to welcome, to better understand, to begin a radical coming back, and to be able to answer to the initiative of God. The sin of an individual Christian also affects the life and the work of the church (e.g. 1 Cor 5:6; 2 Cor 2:50).

Venial sin is a disease of the soul, not its death, and grace is still left by which the sin may be repaired. Mortal sin is, on the contrary, irreparable, and a man who is guilty of it, has lost every principle of vitality, so that he is as unable to recover life as one who has suffered bodily death. Renewal cannot come from within, but only from the Almighty power of God (St. Thomas, 1a 2ae, q.78.a.1).

It is very hard to decide in particular what is or is not mortal sin. We know that we cannot fall away from God without a deliberate act of the will. The distinction, St. Augustine tells us, between grave and light sin is to be determined by the judgement of God, not of man (Enchiridion, cap. 24). Mortal and venial sins are terms that have quite a different meaning from the modern pastoral and from the Oriental Church tradition. Prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and the reception of the Eucharist seem to have been the normal remedies for the daily sins of Christians.

As a matter for examination of conscience there are the ten commandments of God, the seven duties of Catholic Christians and the seven capital sins: pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth.

4. Who Can Forgive?

The Council of Trent (sess.14) defines that priests have real power to remit and retain sins, that persons are bound by the law of God to confess before every mortal sin committed after baptism. So the minister, and the only possible minister, of the sacrament is a priest with ordinary or delegated power to absolve. Priests have received power from Christ to forgive sins, in His name and according to His law.

Two terms summarize the role of the minister of penance: healer and later judge began to assume prominence with Irish tax penance.

In contemporary theology the role of the minister of reconciliation has been re-valued within the traditional context of sharing God's word with penitents, praying with them, and imaging Christ in their respectful care and concern for them. So the minister of reconciliation is invited to assume, not the role of a functionary, but of sharer in the penance that heals.

5. Conditions

Confession, contrition, absolution, and satisfaction are the four parts of penance. This sacrament of life, sacrament of knowledge and the reconciliation finds its value in the confession that resets a personal history in the Economy of salvation. Human being is never alone; he is created in image of God Trinity. He receives the absolution in a family; the church community, who prays for him, encourages him and supports him in his conversion.

1. The necessity of confessing all mortal sins follows from the very nature of the absolving power. The priests cannot exercise the discretion till the sins, as they are in the conscience of the penitent, have been submitted to the judgement. It is only in the case of mortal sins that this necessity arises, though, as a rule, it is expedient to confess venial sins likewise.

2. Sorrow for sin should be true. Contrition and the resolution to change are the main part of reconciliation. Therefore the penitent should say before the priest the Act of Contrition as an expression of his deep sorrow.

3. Satisfaction. The penitential discipline of the early Church witnesses to the belief that satisfaction by penitential works is necessary in itself, and is required as a part of the sacrament of Penance. The early Christians did consider satisfaction merely as means of deepening repentance, repairing scandal, and awakening salutary sorrow. St. Cyprian says: "To be forward in good works by which sins are purged, to give frequent alms by which souls are freed from death. To induce the Lord pardon sin by perseverance in good deeds." (De Laps, 35:36) In the early Church, part at least of the penance, was usually performed before absolution. Today the priest in most cases imposes the penance, which is a prayer (one our Father and one Hail Mary or more), and, if he judges that the penitent is well disposed gives absolution.

4. Absolution. Absolution is the conclusion of the Sacrament. Absolution is not given even now unless there is sorrow, confession and the resolution on the part of the sinner to perform the penance imposed upon him.

6. Liturgical Celebration

The liturgy normally is celebrated in a church. The priest should keep the secret.

First, the penitent says:

"I confess to Almighty God, to blessed Mary ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly, in thought, word and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore, I beseech blessed Mary ever Virgin, blessed Michael the archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and all the saints, to pray for me to the Lord our God."⁵

Secondly, the penitent expresses his sins; the priest gives him some orientations, suggestions, and imposes a penance. Thirdly, the penitent says the act of contrition:

"O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended you, and I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of heaven and the pains of hell, but most of all because they offend you, my God, who are all-good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of your grace to confess my sins, to do penance, and to amend my life. Amen."

Finally, the priest gives him the absolution. The actual form is:

"God, the Father of mercies, through the death and resurrection of his Son has reconciled the world to himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit".

The priest dismisses the penitent with this or any of the alternative formulae:

"May the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and of all the saints, whatever good you do and suffering you endure, heal your sins, help you to grow in holiness, and reward you with eternal life. Go in peace."

The post – conciliar ritual says: "The celebration of this sacrament is thus always an act in which the Church proclaims its faith, gives thanks to God for the freedom with which Christ has made free, and offers its life as a spiritual sacrifice in praise of God's glory as it hastens to meet the Lord Jesus" (no 7).

7. The Reforms of Vatican II

Vatican II's call for a renewal of penance (s.C. 72) and the post-conciliar attempts to implement this renewal provide an excellent starting point for examining the historical and theological developments of the sacrament. Seen within the large conciliar concerns about the church as sacrament and people of God and its mission to the

⁵ The prayers have been taken from the Daily Roman Missal, English version, published by Studium Theologicae Foundation, Inc. and Helm publications 1989.

world, the council asked for more than ritual revision. Comparing Vatican language with juridical language of Trent, the difference is apparent. Vatican says: "Those who approach the sacrament of penance obtain pardon from the mercy of God for offenses committed against Him. They are at the same time reconciled with the Church, which they have wounded by their sins, and which by charity, example, and prayer seeks their conversion" (L.G.11). In 1973, when the new Rite of Penance was promulgated, this theme of conversion was reasserted. In ritualizing this theology, the new Rite provides for the proclamation of the word of God and prayerful dialogue between the priest and penitent, for communal celebrations with individual confession and absolution, and in certain situation, with general confession and absolution. Penitential celebrations without absolution were also encouraged to deepen the spirit of penance within the Christian community and to assist children in praying for the sacrament.

Despite this renewal, two pastoral phenomena emerged in the next decade: a decline in individual confession and a widespread of communal penance, especially when general absolution was given. In 1983, the canons on penance (959-997) in the new code of Canon Law and the discussion at the synod of Bishops represented responses to this pastoral situation. Concluding, I would say, the practice and theory of penance should be mutually corrective and clarifying.

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Discussion

Prof. Brock: It seems to me that all the papers are agreed on penance that there was very considerable development over the course of time, and that the actual practice of the rite of penance depended very much on the social conditions of the Church at a particular moment in time. So the course of history suggests that one should make adaptations to the rite in order to adapt to the changes in society, and that seems to have happened over the course of time in the history of the Church, and it has adapted on the whole very satisfactorily. One can see it happening today as a result of Vatican II, and in the renewal of the rite in the different Churches. So I would say that all the different Syriac traditions, although they developed in separate ways, had the same problems. I particularly like the suggestion at the end of Monsignor Al-Jamil's paper, about the idea of getting together and discussing amongst the different churches of the Syriac tradition the practical side of what would be the most helpful way of developing these rites in modern society. That, I thought, would be an extremely good idea, and I hope people will take that up.

Prof. Madey: They treated as a very difficult subject and from different points of view. We had a curriculum of dogmatic theology today. But also, what Dr. Brock has just said, is of much importance. We need to see how the different churches practice penance, the sacrament of reconciliation, in their pastoral and spiritual life, and how the communities are animated to see the problems of today. Formulas must be found that are faithful to the tradition and correspond to the needs of the faithful. It is not simply by imitation that one can make a global rite of penance, but the rites *should* be different because this also underlines the catholicity of the Church of Christ.

Sr. Monica Brosteanu: I don't know whether we should think so much about rites in the sacrament, because now the crisis affects the contents more than the form and exterior of the sacrament. People no longer have a vigilant conscience. Maybe it would be a very good idea to start in the ecumenical relations between Churches to reflect together upon how to reinvigorate this sacrament in catechesis and in pastoral care. It is much more important here than in liturgical work. Every Church has a good tradition, but these rites can remain lifeless and meaningless if people are not conscious that they are sinners and that they have to return to a loving Father. In his paper Mar Yakub Daniel speaks of the kingdom as it is with the penance and forgiveness of sins in the message of Christ. "The penance that he is called to, is the result and not the precondition to this love". So Penance is a result of the love of God that we feel, not that we do any effort to gain this love. This love is unconditional. This is an idea worth developing in pastoral care, because generally people think we have to impress God with our good deeds, with our great acts of asceticism, especially in the Oriental churches. I think, for example, of the Orthodox in my country, who are fasting a lot,

but then they say, "I still cannot go to confession and communion because I am not perfect enough". They need to be told that these sacraments are meant to perfect them, not that they have to be perfect for the sacraments. So it would be a good idea to talk about these things in another context, rather than only liturgically.

Fr. Bonny: I never heard of a formula of forgiveness as it was mentioned in the paper of Mar Yakub. The formula he speaks of was very new for me: "X is marked, sealed, renewed in the name of Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit". You do not use the same words as the Latin tradition: "I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit." The only other formula that I heard was the one in the paper of Fr. Sako, which is the same as in the Latin tradition. I don't know whether more formulas are used in the Syriac tradition.

I am from Belgium, which belongs to that part of the world where the regular practice of Penance has nearly disappeared. Bishops and priests try to find ways for celebrating Penance in a larger context of forgiveness. During Lent or on particular occasions during the liturgical year they celebrate a penitential service, part of which is the sacramental rite of Penance. General absolution is not much practiced anymore; the tendency is clearly to avoid it. More common is the celebration of a liturgy of prayer, including a biblical reading, some hymns, a homily and an invitation to forgiveness; towards the end of this liturgy, people are invited to go to a priest for personal confession and absolution. These liturgies are helpful in our part of the world. Going for confession and absolution to a priest whom you don't know personally, became rather difficult. Confession is easier for those who know a priest personally, sometimes in a context of frequent spiritual counselling.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: To Mar Yacub: I appreciate very much your paper, but you did not tell us when the sacrament of Penance was accepted as one of the sacraments in the Church of the East. To Mar Al-Jamil: where do you put *tekso d-shubqono* in your paper?

Mar Yacub Daniel: As a sacrament of penance as forgiveness of sins, I don't know when it started in the Church of the East, in our tradition and our liturgy, but from the time of Mar Abdisho, it starts to be regarded as one of the sacraments, in the sixth century.

Mar Jules M. Al-Jamil: In my paper I speak of the celebration of the condition for the pardon of the sinner.

Mar Bawai Soro: I have one comment to make on Mar Al-Jamil's proposal to bring the Syriac churches together and to pick up on what Sister Monica has commented on. I think that one of the deficiencies that the Oriental and Orthodox Churches suffer from is the lack of liturgical reforms in today's church, reforms that bring a sense of urgency to a social, psychological, and cultural relevance, without really destroying its essence and the archaic format that have been preserved. And definitely your pro-

posol, in my opinion, is a wonderful thing, but it starts with each church, Eastern and Orthodox both, to look at its own sacraments and see how they can be improved. We really should not be satisfied with the way our situation is. The pastoral situation has to be improved first by liturgical reforms. *Hussoyo* is needed very much, literally in my church, the whole idea of *Hussoyo* is ambiguous, it is not clear, although we preach about the Eucharistic being the main vehicle of bringing the *Hussoyo* to the people, but I think that there is a lot of room to improve. After respective improvements, I agree that we should come together and try to harmonize our practices.

Fr. Khalife: I would like to ask His Grace Mar Gregorios, to say to us something about *Hussoyo* in the Syrian Orthodox church. Do you have a special text for *Hussoyo*? When the penitent comes to the Church, asking for forgiveness, what is the proper rite and prayers?

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: First of all, we have the sacrament of penitence in the church. In this way, the faithful comes to the priest and he reads a piece of prayer which is part of *tekso d-hussoyo*. Then, he is asked by the priest whether he wants to say any of his sins. And there is another prayer, it is also part of this text of *Hussoyo*, it is after the confession, then there is the absolution by the priest. Then the faithful could say another prayer, and that is another part of the text of *Hussoyo*. But I am not sure whether this is very ancient in the Church. Public penitence is very recent. We only started it twenty years ago in the Church.

Fr. Thekeparambil: There is a ritual of absolution that we should revive in the Church. The moment of the offering of incense is solemnly introduced by the deacon and the priest says: "Let us ask for forgiveness and the blessing of God". That is considered a very solemn ritual, and it is separate and should be revived, I think, in the western Church. Very often people are not aware of that, and the offering of incense is a primarily propitiatory rite where we ask for forgiveness of sins. We say the blessing asking the Holy Spirit to come and forgive our sins. That is actually the moment of absolution and the ritual of absolution. It is accompanied by the prayers. Also in our manuscript tradition, I have analyzed a few manuscripts, and there are 16 to 22 beautiful prayers of repentance, beautiful prayers which simply bring in the names of God, "joy, kindness, mercy, love," and they give a list of quotations where God does not take pleasure in the destruction of the sinners.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: But this is not *tekso*. We have prayers.

Mar Jules M. Al-Jamil: Penitence begins with the prayer *Mhassyono hokhil*. There is a rite in the beginning of the Mass which asks for forgiveness of sins, and this was originally a rite of penance.

Sr. Brosteanu: In the Byzantine rite, especially the Orthodox, when the penitents come for confession, they never go directly to confession, but by groups. The priest recites several prayers upon them, inspired by scriptural texts that have the aim to

make them repent and teach them something about confession. Is this practice present in other Oriental Churches other than the Byzantine? It is a very good idea. And then, only then, one by one, they go and confess individually. But first it is a common service for one group. Then another group comes and the priest recites the prayers again, because it is outside any service.

Mar Boulos Matar: We started having that in penitential ceremonies. We make the prayers, then there is reflection, and during that each one goes to the priest for confession.

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: I think we are talking about two different things. We have the sacrament of *d-maudyonutho* and then *tekso d-hussoyo*. I think that these are two different things. *Tekso d-hussoyo* is everywhere in our text, in the liturgy, in the morning prayer, in the vigil prayer. And *Raza d-maudyonutho* is one of the seven sacraments of the church.

Prof. Brock: This takes us back to our last meeting and the problem of the enumeration of the sacraments and the need to find a specific number of sacraments, when the idea of having a number was totally alien to the Syrian tradition. It must have come about in the thirteenth century, through contact with the Mendicant and Franciscan missionaries in the East. It suits the western sacramental theology, but it does not really suit the Oriental approach with *raza*. I think the idea of having *d-maudyonutho* as its understanding of *raza* is a result of this contact, and probably a totally new development. It is a later development. I think the various references to *hussoyo*, which are, as you say, all over the place in the liturgical texts genuinely belongs to the earlier tradition. There is a special *tekso d-hussoyo* which is really reconciliation.

Mar Flavianos Melki: In the beginning of the mass, we have this prayer when the priest asks of God forgiveness of his sins and the sins of the people, but at the end of the mass, he asks God for a general absolution

Fr. George: What is the current situation today for the practice of penance? I think that it is almost extinct in most of the churches.

Fr. Yousif: Regarding the question of whether penance is one of the seven sacraments and the enumeration: It is one of the seven sacraments in the *Marganitha*, the Jewel, it is the thirteenth century manual of the Faith of the Church of the East. Secondly, I wanted to say that in the spirit of the Oriental Churches, the power of God is not only given to a special sacrament, but permeates the prayers in the Church. Either with other sacraments, even with the Eucharist, it is said that it pardons sins and sinners. So in the mind of Christians and in all the church liturgies the remission of sins is not limited to this special rite, although this special rite is made particularly for the remission of sins.

Fr. Thekeparambil: We need not limit the forgiveness of sins to confession or that particular sacrament. In the West Syrian Church there is offering of incense and that is

a ritual of forgiveness of sins. That has been stressed through the prayers and through the ritual in the Church, with the number of *Hussoyo* prayers that you would do and had to recite the orders. Actually the beginning of the Mass is meant for that, and when the priest is asking for the forgiveness of soul and forgiveness of sins, and for the people.

Mar Bawai Soro: We had mentioned venial and mortal sins. I think that throughout the sacramental celebration like Eucharist, Baptism, anointing of the sick, and with us sign of the cross, there is an action of the Spirit forgiving sins, but in cases of mortal sins, there is a special attention that the Church pays to, there is a special liturgy assigned to that.

Mar Boulos Matar: It is normal that the church proclaims the compassion of God, it is normal that when we come together as community we express our gratitude to God. But there is a special reconciliation coming from the person himself and if not, the reconciliation cannot be made.

Mar Bawai Soro: I think that as we come to conclude our discussions on the sacraments of the Church, now that we have discussed really in a way all sacramental life, enumerating nine sacraments, two of which are uniquely recognized by the Church of the East. I think that the Church of the East's Eucharistic theology has a contribution to make here. The Church of the East views the sacrament of the Eucharist as a sacrament that really belongs to Christ. We the believers, use that sacrament from a Christological perspective, that is why in the Church of the East, whether this practice could be attributed to historical reasons, or to a theological stance, we don't stop any baptized person who approaches the sacrament supposedly believing in Christ's real presence to receive the Holy Qurbana. This is not a twentieth century innovation, but is a custom that has been since the earliest times. In fact, we are amazed that there are people who can attend at church, non Church-of-the-East-faithful, who do not come and receive the sacraments. We are even more amazed at other churches which refuse to communicate our people the sacraments. To sum up this insight, according to the practice and theology of the Church of the East we can say that the Eucharist in the Church of the East is not only a symbol that expresses the unity that we have achieved together, but also the Eucharist could be viewed as the means or medicine that is going to heal gradually our wounds, our communal thinking, and more so strengthen the Church which is the body of Christ, which is the bride of Christ, strengthen her in her historic pilgrimage towards realizing the Kingdom of God.

Mar Boulos Matar: We have discussed the problem among Maronite Catholics and the Orthodox, because it is the biggest community in Lebanon. And if you go back to the Canon law, we have restriction in the Latin Church, and they have it too. Unless you have full communion, there is a problem of receiving others. But we and also the Orthodox say that if a Greek Orthodox is traveling in a village, where there are only Ma-

ronites, he can go to communion. Do we accept each other for communion, all of us here, according to what we heard about the sacrament of Eucharist?

Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim: Any decision of this kind should go back to the respective Churches, and then be decided through the heads of the Churches. In the Common Declaration of 1984 the Pope and the Patriarch allowed Catholics and Syrian Orthodox to receive sacraments from all Churches. This was received by the Church, and the reception of all these decisions was very important.

Mar Severios: There are still things that are concerns of our Churches. There are points of divergence still we have to study and promote our studies in those aspects. We do not consider Eucharist as a means for unity. We want to do it in the end.

Fr. Yousif: Regarding the reception of communion between the two churches, the Chaldean and the Church of the East - as you know, the validity of the anaphora of Addai and Mari was recognized, although the institution narrative is not given in it explicitly. It is also given an appendix that considered the admission of the Chaldean and the Assyrians to receive communion, one from the other's Church. It is something that is already recognized officially by the Church.

Mar Joseph Powathil: We have a desire for penance, to ask the Lord for pardon, in the liturgy. But at the same time, we need a separate sacrament. We have said that today it has come into disuse, almost dysfunctional. Do you consider this separate sacrament as right development and do you want to promote in the present context or simply to bring it into the other sacraments? In the other sacraments, when you come together, for any rite of sanctification, you certainly ask pardon for your sins. You have it in all the liturgies. Secondly, concerning the discussion of the *communicatio*, I think you perceive this sacrament in a very limited matter. The Eucharist is the most solemn celebration of our faith, because the whole Eucharist is a proclamation and celebration of our full faith. If you can't join in the fullness of faith, how can you share in the Eucharist? It is the celebration of the faith that it is the most important.

Fr. Bouwen: Would it not be possible at least to recommend that it would be good if the Churches of the same tradition could work together in publishing the liturgical books where new publications are needed, instead of having always two different series of books? I think it would be a way of bringing the Churches together, having them work together, and looking for greater unity among them. Secondly, I would like to respond to the question of participation in communion. It is sure that the Eucharist is not only the end of unity, because I think in all our Eucharistic liturgies the unity is the fruit of communion; we all pray: "May the one body and blood of Christ make us one in the Spirit". However, we pray inside our own tradition. It is the source of our unity inside, within our community. Our unity does not belong to us, it is a gift we receive. We receive it by partaking in the one body and blood of Christ, in the one paschal mystery. Now, to enter into these dynamics of unity building, a minimum of

communion in the Church is certainly necessary. At present we live, we all agree, in an abnormal situation. We all celebrate the Eucharist as the source of the unity within our community, but we don't celebrate it together. This should remain a question for us. We have no final answer to that. It remains a challenge. Nevertheless, I want to provoke you, if you allow me for a moment. The Catholics have officially an agreement on participation in the Eucharist between the Chaldeans and the Assyrians, between the Catholics and the Syrian Orthodox. Now, such an agreement in itself does not create the conditions for such a participation. Such an agreement is only possible if the conditions already exist, at least the basic conditions. We can even go further, because the Syrian Orthodox have an agreement with the Greek Orthodox in the Patriarchate of Antioch. As you see, the basic conditions for participation in the Eucharist between the Greek Orthodox, the Syrian Orthodox, the Assyrian, and the Catholics are in a certain sense recognized by the different churches. The basic conditions are there. However we do not act accordingly in normal circumstances, but only in certain cases of necessity. Why? If we recognize that the basic conditions are given, why can we not act accordingly in a larger sense? It should remain a question for us. We cannot say that it is entirely normal. We do not know how to handle it. At least it should remain an open question. It is something on which we have to reflect.

Mar Bawai Soro: I really think that the small agreements we are forging, in my opinion, are beginnings of recognizing the Eucharist also as a medicine of healing that would help the Church. Otherwise, why do we give certain conditions for pastoral provision? There is not that yearning towards one another, that love that *koinonia* already existing on some level? The second thing, regarding Monsignor Jamil's proposal, if and when this proposal takes some serious consideration, would it not be useful for the East Syriac tradition to get together and for the West Syriac tradition to get together, if there is an agreement for some kind of common publication of common liturgical texts? So that if we are to forge an agreement reconciling the East Syriac with the West Syriac tradition is a much more difficult task than bringing the Maronite and the Syrian Orthodox and the Syrian Catholic together, and bringing the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Syro-Malabar and of course the Malankara Catholics, and Malankara Orthodox, because they belong to the same tradition.

Mar Joseph Powathil: I am saying that we cannot agree on that, because it is a celebration of the faith. But you can't, without having the same basis, suddenly share in the same Eucharist. Secondly, about having a common text. Why do you want to have a common text, because we are all for unity in diversity? Only we can come to an agreement on the contents of that text, of the Eucharist, content of the sacrament. We can have our own different traditions. Why do you want to have one, if the East Syrian tradition agrees on the fundamentals? They can still have their own faith, same traditions, in different ways.

Fr. Bouwen: I was thinking, for instance, of the Syrian Orthodox and the Syrian Catholics. Each one of them published, some years ago and almost at the same time, a new missal, a new book for celebrating the Eucharist. Is it normal or necessary that each community publishes separately the same books at the same time, when they belong to the same tradition and live side by side in the same cultural and religious environment? As is the case, for instance, within the West Syrian or within the East Syrian tradition. Of course, between Mesopotamia and India, there are a lot of divergences and differences and therefore the question differs considerably.

Fr. Yousif: First, the question of the sacrament of Penance. It was not in my idea to bring in prejudice upon the sacrament, because we human beings need sensitive signs to have some sort of certainty of the power of God. So, if the other sacraments have some power of giving grace, still all Churches have seen that it was necessary, at least once in a year, whether you consider it a sacrament or not, for the special gift of pardon of sins. This is my idea. Second point, on the anaphora of Addai and Mari, the explanations for the acceptance of the anaphora were not given, theologically, very exact. So we have questions about this. We consider the structure of the anaphora, the second and third part of the anaphora, a separate part tradition of the Church. Thanksgiving for the divine economy is the second part, so in this case, the question is not "institution narrative or not." If you start from there, and make that as the issue of its validity, this is a prejudice thought that comes from the Latin theology. In the beginning in the Church, it was the prayer as a whole that meant the presence of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit. Still the conclusions given by the Holy See are very true and attentive, that is in cases of necessity, and for the need of the good of the faithful, this communion is possible. Lastly, Fr. Bouwen's comments on liturgies that would be very good that the Churches of the same traditions living in the same country could get together.

Fr. George: I just want to refer to Mar Bawai's comment of the Eucharistic hospitality, but of course he did not use that word. I can't distinguish his position from some of the positions expressed by the Protestants, where Christ is the host, and the Eucharistic table is open to all. I think he is very close to that point of view. When I take communion in your Church, it is officiated by a minister, and question immediately comes "Who has authorized that minister?" So that chain goes back to an ecclesiastical tradition and authority. The communion comes out of that tradition. The liturgical text also has the same problem, and the liturgical text is not an innocent thing. It is controlled by an ecclesiastical tradition.

Mar Bawai Soro: The reason why I would not accept, and probably I will need the help of the experts in trying to get us the primitive picture in the Early Church, the question of how the early churches would communicate people from different traditions, if we have that data available to us. Let us suppose that in one Church, I will not

communicate someone who has the wrong faith, because then he will not be looking at Christ the same way I am believing in that Christ. And to reverse that argument, people of the same tradition receive communion together because they have a common shared faith in Christ, which is the basis of that. I would make a very strong distinction between the protestant tradition and the Church of the East. It happened that we may be using the same terminology, but definitely the practice and the substance of faith is not the same. In the Church of the East, the way we look at ourselves and other Christians is so primitive, that it would allow us to see no error in the faith of those people whom we recognize as Christians. Without arriving at certain Ecumenical agreement with the other churches, we recognize the Orthodoxy of the faith of the Orthodox, the Orientals, the Catholics, despite the fact that we deferred with that certain terminological and even practical issues, but yet for us their faith in Christ in the same Eucharist is as legitimate as it is for our faith. That is why we see no problem in communicating them.

Fr. Khalife: In terms of working together, our aim is not to be uniform in our traditions, but our aim is to study our tradition to see what is common to us. What is common to us is genuine.

Fr. Thekeparambil: There should be dialogue between the ecclesiastical authority and the liturgical text, especially when it comes to the Syrian tradition. There should be a balance between the authority and the text.

Mar Boulos Matar: When we came to the recognition of the sacrament, we used, for all of us, the rule *lex orandi - lex credendi*. We looked at the texts and the prayers of Christ. We found that in all our churches, we have a common way of praying and expressing a common faith. Did we accomplish a step forward or do we need something more to do, in order to follow *lex credendi*? This is a problem.

Prof. Brock: Regarding the proposal to cooperate in the matter of publication, it seems to me that what would be needed would be much more than liturgical texts. One could extend the idea to the publication of catechetical material where the need of all the Churches is the same. This would be a way of working together and pooling resources and making a real practical contribution to all the Churches through cooperation.

Fr. Bouwen: When I speak of collaboration in publication, I maintain that the publication of the liturgical texts finally depends on the authority of the church; so it would be about working together between the churches.

Annex I

Mar Bawai Soro

THE EUCHARIST IN THE CHURCH OF THE EAST: A MEANS TO UNITY

In this paper, I shall share with you some insights from the Church of the East's theological understanding and liturgical practice which illustrate how and why the Eucharist ought to be held with the strongest conviction as that means by which followers of Christ may be transformed and moved from divisions to unity, and from mutual suspicion to shared mission — indeed, to manifesting openly and concretely the Church's faith that the Eucharist is surely and ideally a prayer for Unity.

I have divided my presentation into three parts. (1) Part one will deal with the Pauline concept that God has reconciled us to Himself in Jesus Christ and the implications this reality has for us in terms of our reconciliation with one another. (2) In part two I shall attempt to synthesize some of Saint Ephrem's Eucharistic concepts with certain theological elements in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari so that we may further appreciate the meaning of the Eucharist in the Church of the East. (3) I will in the last part share with you some insights on the consequences of continuing to celebrate the Eucharist as divided Churches and the opportunity that the Eucharist provides for healing our divisions and restoring our unity.

1. Reconciliation & the Absence of Reconciliation

In his Second Letter to the Corinthians Paul writes "Whoever is in Christ is a new creature: old things have passed away, and everything has been made new by God, who has reconciled us to himself in Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; for it was God in Christ who was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their sins against them, and entrusting to us our own message of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ; and as God is beseeching you through us, so we, on behalf of Christ, make supplication: be reconciled to God."¹

In Paul's mind, this concept of reconciliation does not in any way refer simply to a change of sentiments on the part of human beings or on the part of God but to a revolutionary change in the status of humanity's relationship to God.² Humanity's reconciliation with God is its justification by God, because to reconcile means to end a

¹ II Cor. 5:17-20.

² C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*. (Harper Row NY 1973), p.175.

a relationship of enmity and to substitute for it one of peace and benevolence.³ Furthermore, according to the Apostle, God has freely given us a 'ministry of reconciliation', and he sets forth the criteria for the fulfillment of this task, which he calls an "ambassadorship." It is a purifying grace bestowed on individuals and their Churches.⁴ Similarly, the Apostle affirms that when he is himself at work carrying out this *ambassadorship* it is not "Paul" who speaks, but God.⁵ In Saint Paul's words to the Galatians "I have been crucified with Christ, and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." (Gal. 2:20).

But, since the message of reconciliation entrusted to Paul is the same as that committed to our Churches, and since it is effectively exercised in the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, in which Christ's mediated presence is both the guarantee and source of its effectiveness, then, following the model of Paul, we must have the boldness to preach this life-giving Gospel, to set men and women out on a course of reconciliation — with God and, in Christ, with one another.⁶ The realization of reconciliation is the ultimate objective for which the Church's ministry is established, and her mandate to evangelize is grounded in it; reconciliation with God guides the Church's life and service to the world and calls her sons and daughters to unity and to reconciliation with one another.⁷ According to Paul, such *détente* (cooperation) with God and unity within the human family is possible because our Lord Jesus Christ has overcome death — the result of alienation between God and humanity — and has restored our fellowship with God (Romans 5).

But, having said the above about God's reconciling the world to himself through Christ, there remains the imperative of the Apostle, "be [yourselves] reconciled to God." Notwithstanding our status "from God's point of view," there is an imperative need to "realize" reconciliation in some way which may not actually be present in our existential situation, and which may therefore stand in our way of exercising a "ministry of reconciliation." I believe that this suggests three necessary dispositions on our part: (1) We must have faith and accept Paul's assurances about our standing with God, enough so that we are able to trust God and set an example of obedience to his will. This means following the model of Christ, making his values and principles (i.e., his law) our own, thereby becoming believable "ambassadors" who can speak authentically and authoritatively in Christ's name. (2) Since reconciliation with God has al-

ready been made real "in Christ," and "in Christ" the walls of separation standing between peoples have been "broken down," (see Ephesians 2) we must accept that our "ministry of reconciliation" goes beyond the primary step of relating men and women back to God, and extends to bringing conciliation and mutual acceptance to all nations and classes of men and women, both inside and outside the boundaries of our churches (John 20:22-23). (3) We must recognize that this ministry of gathering people into unity with God and with one another, which was carried on by Christ during his earthly life, is to be continued through time by his body, the Church, which is obliged to live out through her members the commission given her for the sake of her own unity, and that of all humanity.

The ministry of reconciliation which God the Father has freely given to the Church through Jesus Christ calls for a specific manner of life and action which is to be fulfilled in pious charity in the daily lives of all Christian individuals and communities. We must trust God's intentions toward us enough to submit our wills and actions to his will and purposes. Some important elements which provide this divine donation with a concrete manifestation are

"gestures of reconciliation, concern for the poor, fraternal correction, [mutual admission of faults], spiritual direction, acceptance of suffering, endurance of persecution for the sake of righteousness and, lastly, taking one's cross each day and following Jesus."⁸

As often as the Church has faithfully cultivated these virtues, her children have remained in a state of realized reconciliation with God, and her sons and daughters have been graced and empowered to overcome divisions within the Church. But very early in the Christian history, when members of the Church brought about divisions through pride and ambition and ceased to reflect in a Christ-like way obedience to God's commands for, and expectations of, His People, the resultant disunity began to undermine the oneness, catholicity, apostolicity and holiness of the Church. Abdisho of Soba, a fourteenth century Church of the East canonist and theologian, wrote the following on the causes of division in the early Church:

When the light of Christ's epiphany shone forth it scattered the darkness of error from the face of the world by the preaching of these devout [Apostles]... and the inhabitants of the world learned goodness, holiness, humility and gentleness, and the lands were filled with knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Consequently, this [reality] filled Satan with envy and rage. And so, just as he acted with Adam, he did with us. ... So that Christians rose up against each other and divisions and controversies sprang up among them.⁹

³ Ibidem, p.177.

⁴ Peter E. Fink, SJ, ed. *New Dictionary of Sacramental Worship*, (The Liturgical Press: Collegeville 1990) entry: *Reconciliation of Ministries*, p.1050.

⁵ Barrett, p.181-2.

⁶ Ibidem

⁷ Nicholas Lossky et al, eds., *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, (WCC Publications: Geneva 1991) entry: *Reconciliation*, p.846.

⁸ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (St. Pauls, 1994) p.1435

⁹ Abdisho of Soba, *Marganitha*, Aramaic version (Mar Narsai Press: Trichur India 1955) 26-27, also see the translation of Patriarch Eshai Shimun's, XXIII, of the East (Mar Narsai Press: Seattle 1965), p.32.

Today's divisions in the Church are the result of ancient wounds inflicted upon the Body of Christ; they arose from a lack of charity and from inattention to the need for ongoing conversion and reconciliation on the part of the sons and daughters of the Church. Pope John Paul II, in his 1994 Apostolic Letter on the Preparation for the Jubilee of the Year 2000,¹⁰ speaks about the Church's continuous need for conversion as "*the prerequisite condition for reconciliation with God on the part of both individuals and communities.*"¹¹ The Roman Pontiff states that the Church must repent and do penance before God and man, always acknowledging the sinfulness of her own sons and daughters.¹² This call to repentance finds its clearest voice in the preaching of Jesus, in whose public ministry we hear the Master calling us all to "*Repent.*" (Mt. 4:17; Mk. 1:15).¹³ The New Testament assuredly informs us that conversion is a fundamental moral decision, a "*change of mind,*" directed toward committing the whole of human life to God,¹⁴ so that by our turning away from sin and back towards Him we prepare the grounds for our personal reconciliation with God.¹⁵ Our God's provision of the forgiveness of sins gives us the opportunity to exercise our God-given freedom to stand against evil and overcome our own weakness.¹⁶ Conversion of mind and heart, as a condition for reconciliation with God, means that we will love our neighbor, for only in this way can we truly love God. Without such love to others no one can really know God with genuine personal knowledge (1 Jn. 4:7-8). Though the Sacred Scriptures tell us that God wills to save us and His Love for us is unconditional, yet we must always seize the moment of grace and recognize it as the "*here and now*" without assuming that this chance of salvation will always be available (Heb. 3:12-15). To *be* converted is to live in daily fidelity to God, knowing that our conversion is a *process* that can only be realized fully in the course of a whole lifetime.¹⁷ As long as divisions in the Church remain, it is incumbent on every Christian to recognize the need for ongoing conversion, and to pray for the unity and reconciliation of all Christians.

The need for ongoing conversion must be recognized and publicly acknowledged by all of us, but it is often implicitly (or, sometimes, explicitly) denied by our actions.

¹⁰ Pope John Paul, II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994).

¹¹ *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, p.32

¹² *Ibidem*, p.33.

¹³ According to Pope Gregory the Great, conversion consists of a four-fold process. (i) The recognition of the infinite goodness of God. (ii) The recognition of our own sinfulness in the face of God's goodness. (iii) The expression of sorrow about our own culpability. (iv) The rejection of sin. These four stages taken together are the means of turning from sin and alienation towards the living God, thus causing us to experience conversion. [Gregorius Magnus, "Moralia" IV, PL 75, p.509 ff.].

¹⁴ Rahner, *Sacramentum Mundi*, entry: Conversion, p.291.

¹⁵ *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, p.32.

¹⁶ Rahner, *Sacramentum Mundi*, entry: Conversion, p.291.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*

Behind every sin, and the source of every fruit of evil that erects walls of alienation between God and man, is willful pride. Pride is the opposite of goodness, humility and gentleness, and it prevents us from making gestures toward reconciliation and from admitting our faults to one another. It reverses the process begun by our conversion, a process only begun in time, and which must continue in order to prepare us for eternity, and it eliminates the very possibility of holiness in our life. In pride, humanity is deprived of the divine likeness, which the Creator formed in human nature. Pride produces evil through human hands and becomes a vicious habit and a serious source of other sins. Not only does it emerge in individuals, but also in communities, and therefore it is a danger for the church as well. Pride is an impulse, which stands as a barrier to love for God and to the innocent and proper love for one's self and the world.¹⁸

In recent years our various churches have been in dialogue and collaboration, gradually transforming the climate of inner and inter-church relations. Church ecumenists have shown us that by their willingness to function as effective ambassadors of Christ and ministers of reconciliation among a divided Christianity the One Church of Christ continues to live in hope. Yet, in spite of the best efforts of these well-intentioned and good-hearted leaders, Christianity has thus far been unable to resolve to a satisfactory degree the divisions and conflicts among its differing communities. The questions that arise, in the light of our Pauline text, are these: Is there not a connection between this sobering picture of ecumenism and a failure to understand and fully exercise the "*ministry of reconciliation*" with which we have been commissioned? Do not the divisions and disunity of the Church effectively hamper, if not negate, the Church's ability to advance the mission of Christ and his Gospel to all nations?¹⁹ The answer to both questions is "*Yes.*" A resuscitation and strengthening of vitality and hope in the Church can take place only when there is a proper understanding of the nature of the Church and the character of her relationship with Christ.

2. The Eucharist: Fire that Unites

If the ministry of reconciliation to which we are called is to achieve its God-ordained ends of unity and peace within the body of Christ, beyond the first step of repentance and conversion of heart and mind must come a further step: recognizing and utilizing the sacramental life on which we agree, and through which we are sustained as communities of believers — supremely the gift of the Body and Blood of

¹⁸ M. Downey, *New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, (The Liturgical Press: Collegeville Minnesota 1993) entry on "Pride" by George Evans, p.248.

¹⁹ Karl Rahner, SJ, ed., *Encyclopedia of Theology- the Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, (Seabury Press: NY 1975) entry: Divisions, p.1537.

Christ in the Eucharist — to heal our brokenness and bind up our self-inflicted wounds. Faith in the transforming effects of the Eucharist is something all Apostolic churches share. It is this faith which should prompt us to look to the Eucharist as a primary vehicle of reconciliation and unity among the splintered churches. What the sharing of the Eucharist achieves for discrete communities and for individuals it can achieve for the separated communities of believers. The Eucharist is a means of building solidarity among members of a faith community and constantly renewing their union with God and with one another.

Commentators on the Sacraments of Initiation in the Church of the East, among whom the most ancient and important is Saint Ephrem the Syrian, affirm such a faith and express such a hope. For Saint Ephrem, just as all humanity has been excluded from Paradise through Adam's fall — in that he broke God's commandment and ate from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Paradise — so too, the newly baptized enters into the Paradise of the community of believers, in which he is now a partaker of communion in Christ, who is the Tree of Life and the Transformer of mortality into immortality.²⁰ Through Baptism, the initiate gains access to the Eucharist, the Body and Blood of Christ, which is the New Fruit of the Tree of Life, giving of itself to all people and unifying them in the hope of immortality. By means of the spiritual bread (i.e., the Eucharist) everyone becomes an eagle who can soar as far as the heavenly Paradise.²¹ For Saint Ephrem, the shared faith in the transforming power of Christ in the Eucharist, and the hope of immortal life to be acquired therefrom, build unity; and the rationale for unity is found in the theology of the Sacrament itself.

Drawing upon numerous events in the history of salvation, the fathers of the Church of the East employ the metaphor of the purifying agent "fire" to explain the spiritual cleansing and sanctification brought about through the Eucharist. Making use of Isaiah's vision at the Temple in Jerusalem (Is. 6:6), Saint Ephrem describes Christ as the "Coal of Fire".²² In I Kings 18:38 the descent of fire during Elijah's sacrifice is understood as a sign that God had accepted Elijah's prayer and sacrificial offering.²³ Similarly, when Solomon had ended his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the temple.²⁴ Based on these Old Testament readings, just as the fire as a natural force

²⁰ S. Brock, *Spirituality in Syriac Tradition*, p.40-41.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p.77-78.

²² Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs (Is. 6:6).

²³ Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust, and even licked up the water that was in the trench (I Kings 18:38).

²⁴ II Chr. 7:1.

burns up and consumes matter, so too the divine fire that is believed to be in the Eucharist burns and destroys sin and at the same time purifies and sanctifies the human heart and mind. Since sin is at the root of all divisions in the body of Christ, it must be dealt with through the cleansing fire within the Eucharist.

In a New Testament setting, the concept of fire is more directly linked by the fathers to the presence of Christ in the Eucharist. An important parallelism between the presence of Christ in Mary's womb and his presence in the Eucharist is articulated in the following verse from Saint Ephrem's hymn on Faith. "*The coal of fire which came to burn away thorns and thistles had dwelt in a womb, refining and sanctifying that place of pangs and curses.*"²⁵ Ephrem also writes, "See Fire and Spirit in the womb of her who bore you; see Fire and Spirit in the River in which you were baptized; see Fire and Spirit in our baptismal font; and, see Fire and Holy Spirit in the Bread and Cup."²⁶

On the one hand, in the Church of the East's Order of the Hallowing of the Apostles Addai and Mari, the anamnestic prayer during the Eucharist makes clear that the celebration of the gathered community of faith is an act of commemoration in accordance with Jesus' command "do this in memory of me". The anamnestic prayer of the Eucharist in the Church of the East Fathers has a pivotal importance for our discussion because in the act of worshipful remembering the community celebrating the Eucharist is necessarily united, in accordance with Christ's command to remember his once-and-for-all sacrifice on the Cross.²⁷

On the other hand, the Epiclesis has maintained its most ancient form and thus it continues to be a prayer, not only for the consecration of the Oblation of bread and wine, but also for the transformation of those who will receive it through the forgiveness of sins and the kindling of hope in the resurrection life.²⁸ Because unlike most of the epiclesis prayers that are still being used in Eucharistic anaphoras celebrated by Oriental, Byzantine and Latin traditions, the epiclesis in the Addai and Mari hallowing does not pray directly for the change of the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, but, instead, it prays that the elements may become a source of sanctification and renewal for those who receive them.

"AND MAY THERE COME, O MY LORD, your Holy Spirit, and may he rest upon this oblation of your servants. May he bless it and hallow it, and may it be for us, O my Lord, for the pardon of debts, the forgiveness of sins, the great hope of

²⁵ Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field (Gen. 3:18). The "thorns and thistles" were part of the curse laid upon Adam (and men) because of his sin; the pains of childbirth were part of the curse upon Eve (and women, Gen. 3:16). Also, see, Brock, *Spirituality in Syriac Tradition*, p.79.

²⁶ Ephrem's Hymn on Faith 10:17 cited in Brock, *Spirituality in Syriac Tradition*, pp.79-80.

²⁷ Thomas Elanval, *Memorial Celebration*, (Oriental Institute of Religious Studies India Publications, Kottayam 1989) 138.

²⁸ See also *ibid.* p.172.

resurrection from the dead, and for new life in the kingdom of heaven with all who have been well-pleasing before you. And for all this great and marvelous dispensation toward us we will give thanks to you and praise you without ceasing in your church, saved by the precious blood of your Christ, with unclosed mouths and open faces.²⁹

The Holy Spirit is invoked and bidden to descend, sanctify, unify and benefit the worshipping community — just like the Fire that descended upon Elijah's sacrifice and Mary's womb. All this is prayed for with eschatological anticipation, a participation in the messianic kingdom, as the earthly community joins the heavenly choir in a hymn of praise.³⁰ In this manner the community receives the confident expectation of salvation, and its members are transformed into the Body of Christ and Temple of the Holy Spirit. But, such a spiritual change and conversion carries with it some serious responsibilities. The community of the church is now called upon to be a mediator of the Word of God to the whole world.³¹

It is through the celebration and the reception of the Eucharist that ultimately the eschatological reality of the Body and Blood of Christ is revealed and realistically apprehended here and now in the Eucharist. It is in the Eucharist that the many become one and the one becomes many. The nature of the local church, in the celebration of the Eucharist, is revealed to be catholic. The Gospel of John (Ch. 17) also emphasizes this reality by the priestly prayer of Jesus in the Upper Room before his passion, death and Resurrection. The eschatological presuppositions of the Eucharist during the Last Supper are deeply connected with the eschatological unity which Christ wills for his Church "that all may be one" (Jn. 17:21).³²

3. A Bride seeking Comfort from Her Bridegroom

In 1924, Joseph H. Oldham, one of the pioneers of the ecumenical movement, is said to have made the following statement:

"As Christ was sent by the Father, so he sends his disciples to set up in the world the Kingdom of God. Christ's mission was a declaration of war against death and the power of darkness; he was to destroy the work of evil. So, when Christian churches, who are the missionaries of Christ, find in the world a state of reality that is not in accordance with

the truth of the Gospel which we have learned from God, their concern is not that it should be explained or understood but it should be overcome."³³

This statement by Oldham is inspiring and well-taken: our attention needs also to be directed, not just toward "*explaining and understanding*" the evil that confronts the Church today, but also toward overcoming it. The sins of pride and disordered love of place have brought warfare and disunity within the Church for centuries, and they have proved strong and tempting to such an extent that they have deceived many of the Church's sons and daughters and deluded them into offending God's love and the unity of his Church. The Church must seek the means to do the extraordinary, to transcend the artificial barriers thrown up because of the personal weaknesses of her children by calling upon Her Bridegroom, Christ Jesus, to be present with her and to assist her in waging war against the divisions among her people, so that she, through her Master's immanent help, may at last win her ages long struggle with sin and evil.

How then ought we to do so? I would suggest that the Church go to the texts of the New Testament and seriously consider two commands given by our Lord to his disciples during the final days of his earthly ministry, commands which devolve upon us through the mission entrusted to us by them: (i) to celebrate the Eucharist in his memory (Lk. 22:19); and (ii) to go and make disciples of all nations (Mt. 28:19). What other means are there by which the Church may encounter her Lord and Savior in the fullest sense of the meaning other than in fulfilling what he has directed his Apostles and us to fulfill? Since the quest for Christian unity, informed and driven by the experience of our reconciliation with God, has been impaired by our disunity, we, together as the Church-Bride of Christ, must call upon Him to come and comfort his Bride and heal the wounds of His Church, which is the People of God and temple of the Holy Spirit.

Yes, I am very humbly proposing, based on the liturgical practice of my tradition, that Christian faithful whose churches hold the same apostolic faith in the Eucharist should increasingly be allowed to receive together the Eucharist, in order to invite and allow God's grace to heal their communal thinking, even as they, as one people—though divided by whatever differences—gather around the table of the Lord and partake of the absolving and unifying grace of his gift of himself. Since by their contact with the Eucharist Christians come into a vital, dynamic union with the Person of Christ, to be identified with the Body of Christ is no longer a metaphor only grounded in speculative theology. As Baptism initiates us into the Church, the People of God, so the Eucharist renews and strengthens the Body of Christ and deepens our incorporation into Christ's body as his members.³⁴

²⁹ Joseph Qalaita, ed., *The Hallowing of Addai and Mari* (Assyrian Press of the Church of the East: 1928), p.34-35.

³⁰ Thomas Elanval, Memorial Celebration, p.138.

³¹ Cyrus Velampampil, *The Celebration of the Liturgy of the Word in the Qurbana*, (Oriental Institute of Religious Studies India Publications, Kottayam: 1997), p.248.

³² Matthew Vellanickal, Catholicity and Communion of Churches: A Biblico-Oriental Perspective, in *Oriental Churches Theological Dimensions*, ed., Xavier Koodapuzha, (Oriental Institute of Religious Studies India Publications, Kottayam: 1988), p.53-54.

³³ Nicholas Lossky, *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, entry: Mission, p.691.

³⁴ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 5 (CUA: DC, 1967) entry: The Eucharist, p.595.

According to the theology of the Church of the East, every time the community of faith celebrates the Eucharist, the Spirit of Christ eschatologically restructures the worshipping community in a quite distinct and unparalleled way. In the Eucharist, the church becomes a renewed and reconciled community that transcends social, ethnic and racial boundaries and even natural divisions, for in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11; I Cor. 12:13), male nor female (Gal. 3:28), adult nor child (Mt. 19:13), rich nor poor (James 2:2-7; I Cor. 11:20f), master nor slave (I Cor. 12:13; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 6:8). In the Eucharist the earthly Church is revealed to be a true sign of the heavenly reality of the Kingdom of God. It is a sacrament, which unifies and is the center of true catholicity, which is related to the eschatological Kingdom awaiting fulfillment but that is already present sacramentally.³⁵ And so, we understand the Eucharist as manifesting, defining, explaining, and embracing the whole body of believers, which *is* the Church of Jesus Christ and the sign of his coming eschatological reign.³⁶

The effectiveness of Christ's presence among Christians of the various Apostolic Churches which firmly believe in his real sacrificial Eucharistic presence despite their theological differences does not depend upon their ecclesiological agreement and unity; for it is Christ himself who binds himself, by his words and in his Spirit, to those who in faith call upon him in the Eucharist. The Jesuit theologian, Fr. Francis Sullivan, SJ, has made a similar argument. In his analysis of this claim we see how the Eucharist brings the cause of Christian unity among the particular churches closer than anything else. He sets forth his argument in this manner:

"The one 'Church of Christ' exists not only when there is full ecclesial communion, but also when there are particular Christian Churches that are linked together in the sharing of the same sacramental and Eucharistic life and in the sharing substantially of the same faith because the 'Church of God' has to be understood as the communion of all those churches in which the Eucharist is validly celebrated, even though they are not all yet in full ecclesiastical juridical communion with one another."³⁷

The benefits of the Eucharist are many. It is a pledge on Jesus' part to further the whole ministry of reconciliation which is distinctly his, and of which he has commissioned us as ministers in his stead on earth and among people. In the celebration of the Eucharist the church offers herself to Christ and in turn Christ commits himself to molding her in his own likeness; he makes her the instrument of bringing God's reign into the world. The Eucharist protects the Church from assaults of temptation, nourishes her sons and daughters, stirs in her joy and peace, and brings her closer to

fulfillment of the eschatological hope.³⁸ In the preaching of Saint Paul we learn that just as the bread is one, we though many, are one body, all of us who partake of the one bread.³⁹ The "*One Body*" here has the same meaning as the "*Body of the Lord*."⁴⁰ Similarly (to use an everyday non-Sacramental example), as a family meal is a ceremony of bonding wherein a healthy family is renewed and refreshed together, sharing the same food and table companions, and at the same time becoming strengthened in a shared unity of heart and mind, so too, in every Eucharist, because it takes the form of a meal, we not only recognize a Sacramental Mystery conveying Christ's presence, but also an occasion of shared life, joy and fraternal union.⁴¹

The early church was quick to recognize the conciliatory powers of Christ's presence in the Spirit through the Eucharist; for this reason the celebration of the Eucharist was often called the *agape* (love feast). The prayer that Jesus prayed after the Last Supper, "*That they all may be one. As you, my Father, are in me, and I am in you, that they all may be one in us*" (Jn.17: 21) became also a traditional part of Jesus' memorial, as well as the affirmation that through the Eucharist the Church maintains her unity because of Jesus' promise that "*He who eats my body and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him*" (Jn. 6:56). Thus, the Eucharist came to be seen as the food of union with Christ and with all Christians, indeed, the food of reconciliation for all humanity. For in receiving the Eucharist we are partaking of him who died "*that he might gather into one the children of God who were scattered abroad*" (Jn. 11:52).⁴² The early Church expressed this thought very beautifully. In her first Eucharistic and Catechetical collection, which is called the Didache (dated about AD 100) she declares: "*As this broken bread was once scattered over the hillsides and then, when gathered, became one, so may your Church be gathered from the ends of the earth into Your Kingdom*."⁴³ The bread had been put together from the scattered elements of which it was composed: so the pious prayer expresses the hope and expectation that we, the scattered elements of which the Church is composed, may be united into one, in the likeness of the Eucharistic bread, in the Kingdom of God.⁴⁴

The fact that there are divisions in the church stands over against the message of reconciliation that Jesus preached to the world and taught the Church in the Eucharist. Only if the church allows God to work fully through his Word and Sacraments, (especially the Eucharist) will the church again fully realize the reconciliation which

³⁵ Vellanickal, p.54-56.

³⁶ Joseph Kallarangatt, The Relation between Church and Liturgy, in *Bride at the Feet of the Bridegroom*, ed., A. G. Kollamparampil & J. Perumthottam (Changanassery 1997) 164-165.

³⁷ Francis A. Sullivan, SJ, *The Church We Believe In*: (Gill and McMillan: NY 1988), p.62-63; also see Vatican II Document on Ecumenism (*UR*), p.15.

³⁸ Michael O'Carroll, CSSP, *Corpus Christi—An Encyclopedia of the Eucharist*, (Michael Glazier, Inc.: Wilmington, Delaware, 1988) entry on the Eucharist, p.48-49.

³⁹ I Cor. 10:17.

⁴⁰ *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, entry: The Eucharist, p.595

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, p.607

⁴² *Ibidem*

⁴³ Didache 9:4. Also see, Johannes Quasten & Joseph Plumpe, eds., *Ancient Christian Writers* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1948), p.20.

⁴⁴ William Barkley, *The Gospel of John*, vol. 2 (The Westminster Press: Philadelphia 1975) p.105-6.

God has effected in Christ Jesus and overcome the sinfulness which has brought about divisions in her. When divided churches rightly and validly celebrate the Eucharist and advance their evangelical mission in the world, they have already entered into a fellowship that should move them to restoration of full communion and to acts of reconciliation with other citizens of the world. The medicine of healing for the Church's divisions is the curative power of the Holy Spirit, moving the Church to reconciliation and to exercising a ministry of reconciliation in obedience to God, who was in Jesus Christ "*reconciling the world to himself*."

Only after the Church has been healed of division, and of the willful and defiant pride which is its root, will she effectively offer to the world the remedy that is inherent in fellowship with God.⁴⁵ To outsiders the Church proclaims the restoration of all things in Christ; therefore it is not unreasonable that outsiders should expect the absence of warring and divisions among the Church's own members, and to look for the fruits of reconciliation, renewal and peace (Col. 1).⁴⁶ A Church which ministers reconciliation cannot, therefore, base her ministry on anything other than the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus, which are uniquely made present in the celebration of the Eucharist, and which are together the ultimate vehicle of God's reconciling of the world to himself through his Son. Christ's presence in the Eucharist is our reconciliation, and humanity is called through the Eucharist to be reconciled with God.⁴⁷

The traditional position of the Catholic Church has been that "*the celebration of the Eucharist is a sign of the reality of the oneness of faith, life, and worship*."⁴⁸ The numerous proposals that have been set forth here encompass the idea that the Holy Eucharist is what establishes Church unity by way of communicating God's grace to the Church. The realization of unity is a gradually evolving process. The theology that sees the Eucharist as that which brings unity among Christians has partially been endorsed in the recent decision adopted by the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops. In the November 1996 "*Guidelines on Communion Reception*," the U.S. bishops have indicated that according to Roman Catholic discipline, they have no objection to the reception of the Eucharist by members of the Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Polish National Catholic Church if these Christians ask on their own accord and are properly disposed. The U.S. bishops' statement adds "*we pray that our common baptism and the action of the Holy Spirit in this Eucharist will draw us closer to one another and begin to dispel the sad divisions which separate us. We pray that these will lessen and finally disappear, in keeping with Christ's prayer for us 'that they may all be one ...'*."⁴⁹ Since

the Code of Canon Law does not create a bar to the reception of communion by the members of the Orthodox Churches, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Polish National Catholic Church (canon 844 §3), the US bishops have extended their invitation to these Christians to receive Eucharistic hospitality in exceptional circumstances (canon 844 §4).⁵⁰

Concerning the fulfillment of Jesus' second command, namely, to go and evangelize the nations of the world, we see how this mission of the Church is both fed by the Eucharist and is its consequence. Whenever the Church is truly a Church, mission is part of its Eucharistic mandate. In the Eucharist the Church is fully itself and is united to Christ in his mission. Thus, if we do not celebrate the Eucharist together we will not be able to fulfill the mission of the Church to the world. In the Eucharist, the Church's *ambassadorship* is newly affirmed, and her orders are refreshed and renewed: the ministry of reconciling the world with the Father. Individual members of the various churches who are reconciled in the Eucharist become servants of reconciliation among other men and women and witnesses of the joy of the Resurrection. Celebration of the Eucharist carries within itself an imperative: to refuse to accept the disunity in which believers in Christ are deprived of the oneness that Jesus has with God the Father, and which he sought for his disciples.

4. A Prayerful Hope

We ought today to commit ourselves to witnessing to the Gospel by pursuing charity, faith, peace and justice for all.⁵¹ Let us approach others in the same spirit of love as that which characterized the life of Jesus among us. Christ's Spirit of openness and concern for others — ultimately giving Himself for the redemption and reconciliation of others — is our model, our mandate, and our message. In the light of the Gospel, our relations with others ought not to be that of simple co-existence. It must be of an attitude of dialogue, of respect, and of bearing witness to and administering the Word of God, to one another and to all humanity.⁵² There is in the Eucharist after all — let us not ignore it! — Judgment upon the one who will not discern the body of Christ.⁵³ In his first letter to the Corinthians, after setting forth two images of Christ's body — the loaf of bread and cup of the Eucharist, and the men and women of the congregation of Corinth — the apostle Paul draws them together in order to challenge the willful and proud Corinthians on their divisiveness and lack of respect for one another. He presents the Eucharist as a moment of truth, if you will, a

⁴⁵ Nicholas Lossky, *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, Reconciliation p.846.

⁴⁶ Ibidem

⁴⁷ Ibidem

⁴⁸ USCCB Guidelines on Communion Reception, Origins, Vol. 26: no. 25 (05 Dec. 1996) 414.

⁴⁹ Jn 17:21; Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibidem

⁵¹ Rahner & Vorgrimler, *Dictionary of Theology*, entry: Ecumenical Movement, p.143.

⁵² Lossky, *Dictionary of the Ecumenical Movement*, entry: Evangelization/Mission, p.396.

⁵³ 1 Cor. 11:29.

moment in which we will either discern Christ's body in the Eucharist and in one another and be reconciled, or fail to discern Him and be judged accordingly. And the reconciliation, which comes to the faithful communicant, will encompass his relationships with God and with those around him.

The holy apostle commanded the members of the Church at Ephesus to "*be subject to one another in the love of Christ.*"⁵⁴ The human mind is simultaneously repelled and fascinated by this command — repelled because of pride and fear of loss which obedience may involve, yet fascinated by the possibilities that it offers if universally obeyed. But the Sacrament of Unity which the Eucharist is for us implies the offering up of ourselves, our pride and our fears, along with the oblation which we make, that we might receive the grace necessary to endure any loss of face or fortune which humble obedience might entail. In discerning the Body of Christ in the Eucharist we are given insight to discern the body of Christ in the brothers and sisters who join with us in our offering. When we approach the altar and stretch out our hands to lay hold of the Lord of our life we are given eyes to see the same Lord in those who share our Bread of Life and Cup of Salvation. We are compelled by the love of Christ to acknowledge him, both in the simple forms of bread and wine, and in the weak and sinful supplicants who come with us to seek succor and release. And when we have seen him, we must submit, we must love to the point of sacrifice, we must honor and revere and we must serve.

In the Eucharist, then, we already possess our starting point from which we, both as individuals and as communities of faith, may reach out to one another in order to fulfill the ministry of reconciliation which we have been given—first by extending ourselves to one another in humble submission, and then by proclaiming with conviction and power to the world the electrifying good news that "*God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.*" In the Eucharist, as given and intended by our Lord himself, we can achieve reconciliation with one another and thereby dispel the image of hypocrisy, which so many in the world see in us. But we, as leaders and as servants, must set the example of humility and conversion. Let me conclude with the words of Prophet Isaiah

"Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard."⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Eph. 5:21.

⁵⁵ Is. 58:8.

JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

of the Sixth Non-Official Syriac Consultation „Sacraments in the Syriac Tradition – Part III“

1. Continuing its efforts to provide mutual ecumenical understanding between all the Churches of the Syriac tradition, PRO ORIENTE invited the Sixth Non- Official Syriac Consultation to Vienna from March 7 to 11, 2003. This Consultation concluded the second phase of PRO ORIENTE 's Syriac Dialogue, and it was the third one on the subject of „Sacraments in the Syriac Tradition“. The ecumenical dialogue of this particular meeting focused its discussion upon Eucharist, Priesthood/Holy Orders and Penance.

2. Participants came from the Assyrian Church of the East, the Ancient Church of the East, the Chaldean Church, the Syro-Malabar Church, the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch, the Malankara Orthodox Church, the Maronite Church of Antioch, the Syrian Catholic Church of Antioch, and the Malankara Catholic Church. Also present were observers from the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the Anglican Church, as well as expert scholars and staff of PRO ORIENTE.

3. The Consultation began with a common opening prayer in the presence of H.E. Christoph Cardinal Schönborn, Archbishop of Vienna and chairman of the Board of PRO ORIENTE. Participants listened as representatives read letters of greetings and blessings from H.H. Catholicos-Patriarch Khanania Mar Dinkha IV, H.H. Catholicos-Patriarch Mar Addai II, H.H. Catholicos Baselius Marthoma Mathews II, H.B. Patriarch Cardinal Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir, H.B. Patriarch Ignatius Peter VIII Abdel-Ahad, H.E. Major Archbishop Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, and H.E. Metropolitan Archbishop Cyril Mar Baselios as well as a short and touching letter by Fr. Louis Sako, Chaldean member of the Syriac Commission, who could not participate due to the present political situation in Iraq. Each day began with a prayer, arranged by the various Syriac traditions (i.e. Syrian Orthodox Church, Syrian Catholic Church/ Maronite Church, and Church of the East).

4. On Sunday participants took part in the Holy Mass in the Catholic parish church of Oggau, where Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil delivered the homily. After being entertained to lunch by the parish priest Fr. Mathias Rainer and the mayor in a local restaurant, by invitation of Bishop Paul Iby, they enjoyed a visit in the countryside of Burgenland. The cultural program included a visit to Rohrau, the birthplace of Joseph Haydn and the picture gallery of the Harrach family, where they were hospitably received by Countess Stephanie Harrach.

5. In the course of the Consultation the following papers were read and discussed:

- Eucharist presented by Chorbishop Michael J. Birnie, Mar Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim, Fr. Elie Khalife Hachem;
- Holy Orders/Priesthood by Fr. K.M. George, Mar Bawai Soro, Fr. Thomas Mannooramparampil;
- Penance by Mar Yakoob Daniel, Mar Julius Mikhael Al-Jamil, Fr. Louis Sako (read by Chorbishop Pierre Yousif).

6. The first of the three topics was the **Eucharist**. Three papers were read, dealing with the main structures and drawing attention to certain distinctive features of the different traditions, of the Church of the East, the Syrian Orthodox Church and the Maronite Church.

7. All the different liturgical traditions have developed and changed over the course of the centuries. This process has resulted in several consequences of relevance for ecumenical understanding:

a) Some early common elements have become obscured over time. A notable example of this occurs in the almost identical anaphoral prayers to be found in the Anaphora of the Apostles Addai and Mari (Church of the East) and the Third Anaphora of St Peter („Sharrar“; Maronite), pointing to a common ancestor. In this case, the Sharrar, having once been the main Maronite anaphora in use, is today restricted to the presanctified liturgy (*rshom koso*).

b) As a result of the theological controversies between the different Churches in the past, specific language or terminology has sometimes been incorporated. An example of this, to be found in the Creed is the addition, after the mention of Mary, of the term *Yoldat Aloho* (Bearer of God) in the Syrian Orthodox tradition.

c) Another kind of addition, or alteration, behind which there is an underlying controversial purpose, concerns „latinizations“ which have been introduced, whose aim has been to „remedy deficiencies“ perceived in the Syriac liturgical rites. An example of this would be the provision of a coherent Institution Narrative in anaphoras which originally lacked this (notably, Addai and Mari in the East Syriac, Xystus in the West Syriac tradition). In this connection the recent recognition by the Catholic Church of the validity of the archaic Anaphora of Addai and Mari, transmitted without an Institution Narrative, is ecumenically highly significant.

d) The terms used to describe the Mystery of what is affected in the Bread and Wine at the consecration vary greatly from one anaphora to another, even within the same tradition. In general, the later the date of an anaphora, the more elaborated will be the terms used in the epiclesis.

e) Terminology used in a particular liturgical tradition may be explicable (and hence applicable) only when seen in the light of wider developments in a particular Church tradition. Thus, notably the term “transubstantiation,” essential from the point of view of western Eucharistic theology in the scholastic tradition, is not a term

that is particularly meaningful or useful in the context of liturgical theology as it has developed in the Syriac traditions.

f) Furthermore, with the Syriac Churches, different developments and emphases in the various commentary traditions will sometimes provide an explanation for terminology that otherwise seems puzzling. Thus in the commentary tradition of the Church of the East the eucharistic celebration as a whole is understood as a representation of the entire salvation history (*mdabbranutha*) in chronological sequence. This particular concept of the movement helps to understand why, in the East Syriac tradition, the Bread and the Wine can be described as the Body and Blood even at points prior to the consecration.

8. The paper by Mar Gregorios was also concerned with the ecumenical dimensions of the Holy Eucharist. While the Common Declaration (1984) between Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Mar Ignatius Zakka I Iwas, does not allow for a common celebration of the Holy Eucharist until such time when there was “a complete identity of faith” between the two Churches, nevertheless the Pope and the Patriarch authorized the faithful of both Churches “to ask for the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist, and Anointing of the Sick from lawful priests of either of our Sister Churches,” in cases where a priest of their own Church was not available.

9. In the Syriac tradition there has always been a strong emphasis on Christ as the heavenly Physician who provides his Church with the healing “Medicine of Life/Salvation” in the form of the Holy Eucharist. In the light of this, the Church of the East, as presented by Mar Bawai Soro, sees such instances of sharing in the Holy Eucharist, not just as exceptions made by ‘economy’, but as the very means of the process of healing and reconciliation.

10. The papers on **Priesthood** covered the traditions of the Malankara Orthodox Church, the Assyrian Church of the East, and the Malabar Catholic Church.

11. All the different Churches of Syriac tradition have basically the same concept of an apostolic priesthood, with a fundamental threefold ministry of bishop, priest and deacon. In later commentary tradition there has been influence of the ninefold Ecclesiastical Hierarchy (based on the poetic vision of the Celestial Hierarchy) attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite (c. AD 500).

12. In the liturgical and commentary traditions, various ways are found of expressing the relationship of the two Old Testament models of priesthood, that of Levi and that of Melkizedek, to the priesthood of Christ and to the Christian priesthood. Likewise, numerous divergences in the practice and the functions of the different orders have grown up over the course of time.

13. Unlike the situation in the Roman Catholic Church, the orders of Reader, Subdeacon and Deacon for the most part have retained their own specific characteristics and functions, and are not just viewed as steps to the priesthood.

14. The third topic was **Penance** (*tyabutha/tyobutho*). The three papers concerned the traditions of the Ancient Church of the East, the Syrian Catholic Church and the Latin tradition as practiced by the Chaldean Church. Although themes of repentance and forgiveness in general are pervasive in the liturgical texts of all the Syriac Churches (and in the West Syriac tradition, closely associated with the offering of incense), specific sacramental rites and practices have been developed for dealing with repentance from serious sins. In the earlier Syriac tradition the emphasis in these rites had been on themes of healing, whereas from the Middle Ages onwards they had taken on a more judicial character, especially in those Churches under Roman Catholic influence. Subsequent to Vatican II, however, there has been a change of emphasis within the Catholic Churches, from penance to reconciliation.

15. All the Syriac Churches recognize the importance of the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation. This is an area where the different Syriac Churches could very profitably consult together to discuss how best to meet the various pastoral problems concerning penitence that they face in common.

16. Unlike the case with certain of the Sacraments discussed in the previous Syriac Consultation (Syriac Dialogue 5), the three Sacraments covered in the present Consultation are traditionally celebrated by all the Syriac Churches.

17. After the completion of the three Consultations on the "Sacraments in the Syriac Tradition", the Syriac Dialogue sponsored by PRO ORIENTE plans to study the biblical, liturgical, patristic and canonical understanding of primacy in the Churches of Syriac tradition.

18. Participants once again express to PRO ORIENTE their deep gratitude and appreciation for organising this unique opportunity of increasing mutual understanding between all the different Churches of Syriac tradition.

GUIDELINES FOR ADMISSION TO THE EUCHARIST BETWEEN THE CHALDEAN CHURCH AND THE ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST

Given the great distress of many Chaldean and Assyrian faithful, in their motherland and in the diaspora, impeding for many of them a normal sacramental life according to their own tradition, and in the ecumenical context of the bilateral dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, the request has been made to provide for admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East. This request has first been studied by the Joint Committee for Theological Dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East. The present guidelines subsequently have been elaborated by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, in agreement with the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith and the Congregation for the Oriental Churches.

1. Pastoral necessity

The request for admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East is connected with the particular geographical and social situation in which their faithful are actually living. Due to various and sometimes dramatic circumstances, many Assyrian and Chaldean faithful left their motherlands and moved to the Middle East, Scandinavia, Western Europe, Australia and Northern America. As there cannot be a priest for every local community in such a widespread diaspora, numerous Chaldean and Assyrian faithful are confronted with a situation of pastoral necessity with regard to the administration of sacraments. Official documents of the Catholic Church provide special regulations for such situations, namely the *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, can. 671, §2-§3 and the *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms of Ecumenism*, n. 123.

2. Ecumenical rapprochement

The request is also connected with the ongoing process of ecumenical rapprochement between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East. With the '*Common Christological Declaration*', signed in 1994 by Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV, the main dogmatic problem between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church has been resolved. As a consequence, the ecumenical rapprochement between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East also entered a

further phase of development. On 29 November 1996 Patriarch Raphaël Bidawid and Patriarch Mar Dinkha IV signed a list of common proposals with a view to the re-establishment of full ecclesial unity among both historical heirs of the ancient Church of the East. On 15 August 1997 this program was approved by their respective Synods and confirmed in a *'Joint Synodal Decree'*. Supported by their respective Synods, both Patriarchs approved a further series of initiatives to foster the progressive restoration of their ecclesial unity. Both the *Congregation for the Oriental Churches* and the *Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity* support this process.

3. The Anaphora of Addai and Mari

The principal issue for the Catholic Church in agreeing to this request, related to the question of the validity of the Eucharist celebrated with the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, one of the three Anaphoras traditionally used by the Assyrian Church of the East. The Anaphora of Addai and Mari is notable because, from time immemorial, it has been used without a recitation of the Institution Narrative. As the Catholic Church considers the words of the Eucharistic Institution a constitutive and therefore indispensable part of the Anaphora or Eucharistic Prayer, a long and careful study was undertaken of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, from a historical, liturgical and theological perspective, at the end of which the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith on January 17th, 2001 concluded that this Anaphora can be considered valid. H.H. Pope John Paul II has approved this decision. This conclusion rests on three major arguments.

In the first place, the Anaphora of Addai and Mari is one of the most ancient Anaphoras, dating back to the time of the very early Church; it was composed and used with the clear intention of celebrating the Eucharist in full continuity with the Last Supper and according to the intention of the Church; its validity was never officially contested, neither in the Christian East nor in the Christian West.

Secondly, the Catholic Church recognises the Assyrian Church of the East as a true particular Church, built upon orthodox faith and apostolic succession. The Assyrian Church of the East has also preserved full Eucharistic faith in the presence of our Lord under the species of bread and wine and in the sacrificial character of the Eucharist. In the Assyrian Church of the East, though not in full communion with the Catholic Church, are thus to be found *"true sacraments, and above all, by apostolic succession, the priesthood and the Eucharist"* (U.R., n. 15). Finally, the words of Eucharistic Institution are indeed present in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, not in a coherent narrative way and *ad litteram*, but rather in a dispersed euchological way, that is, integrated in successive prayers of thanksgiving, praise and intercession.

4. Guidelines for admission to the Eucharist

Considering the liturgical tradition of the Assyrian Church of the East, the doctrinal clarification regarding the validity of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, the contemporary context in which both Assyrian and Chaldean faithful are living, the appropriate regulations which are foreseen in official documents of the Catholic Church, and the process of rapprochement between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, the following provision is made:

1. When necessity requires, Assyrian faithful are permitted to participate and to receive Holy Communion in a Chaldean celebration of the Holy Eucharist; in the same way, Chaldean faithful for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister, are permitted to participate and to receive Holy Communion in an Assyrian celebration of the Holy Eucharist.

2. In both cases, Assyrian and Chaldean ministers celebrate the Holy Eucharist according to the liturgical prescriptions and customs of their own tradition.

3. When Chaldean faithful are participating in an Assyrian celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the Assyrian minister is warmly invited to insert the words of the Institution in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, as allowed by the Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East.

4. The above considerations on the use of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari and the present guidelines for admission to the Eucharist, are intended exclusively in relation to the Eucharistic celebration and admission to the Eucharist of the faithful from the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, in view of the pastoral necessity and ecumenical context mentioned above.

**ADMISSION TO THE EUCHARIST
IN SITUATIONS OF PASTORAL NECESSITY.
PROVISION BETWEEN THE CHALDEAN CHURCH AND THE
ASSYRIAN CHURCH OF THE EAST**

The Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity recently issued a document entitled *'Pastoral Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Church'*. This document has been elaborated in agreement with the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith and the Congregation for the Oriental Churches. The purpose of the article at hand is to clarify the context, the content and the practical application of this provision.

1. The Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East

Since the very early times of Christian missionary activity, a flourishing local Church developed in Mesopotamia or Persia. As this Church was situated outside the eastern borders of the Roman Empire, it became commonly called the "Church of the East". In 1552, after a series of individual conversions of bishops or provisional unions, part of the "Church of the East" entered into full communion with the Apostolic See of Rome. Since then, the particular Church in full communion with Rome has usually been called the "Chaldean Church", while the other particular Church took the name of "Assyrian Church of the East". Both particular Churches, however, still share the same theological, liturgical and spiritual tradition; they both celebrate the Sacraments or Sacred Mysteries according to the East-Syriac tradition.

On November 11th, 1994 Pope John Paul II and Mar Dinkha IV, Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East, signed a Common Christological Declaration. This Declaration removed the main doctrinal obstacle between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East. Both Church leaders declared:

Whatever our christological divergences have been, we experience ourselves united in the confession of the same faith in the Son of God who became man so that we might become children of God by his grace. We wish from now on to witness together to this faith in the One who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, proclaiming it in appropriate ways to our contemporaries, so that the world may believe in the Gospel of salvation. (...) Living by this faith and these sacraments, it follows as a consequence that the particular Catholic churches and the particular Assyrian churches can recognise each other as sister Churches."

In their Common Christological Declaration, Pope John Paul II and Patriarch Mar

Dinkha IV also pledged themselves

to do everything possible to dispel the obstacles of the past which still prevent the attainment of full communion between our Churches, so that we can better respond to the Lord's call for the unity of his own, a unity which has of course to be expressed visibly".

For this purpose they decided to establish a *Joint Committee for theological dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East*. This Joint Committee started its regular activities in 1995; during its annual meetings, it mainly dealt with questions of sacramental theology, in view of a future "Common Statement on Sacramental Life". The Common Christological Declaration also paved the way for a process of ecumenical rapprochement between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East. Since 1994 Mar Dinkha IV and Mar Raphael I Bidawid, Patriarch of the Chaldean Church, supported by their respective Synods, approved several initiatives to foster the progressive re-establishment of ecclesial unity between their particular Churches. This process is supported by both the Congregation for the Oriental Churches and the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity.

Nowadays, many Chaldean and Assyrian faithful are living in a widespread diaspora. Due to various and sometimes dramatic circumstances, they left their motherlands (Iraq, Iran, Turkey) and moved towards the West. The great majority of the Assyrian faithful now lives in the Middle East, Scandinavia, Western Europe, Australia and North America; only a small minority remains in the motherlands. Although a majority of Chaldean faithful still lives in Iraq, about one third of them moved to the Middle East, Europe and North America. Both the Chaldean and the Assyrian Church are thus confronted, in various parts of the world, with a similar pastoral necessity: namely that many faithful cannot receive the sacraments from a minister of their own Church.

Given the great distress of many Chaldean and Assyrian faithful, in their motherlands as well as in the diaspora, impeding for many of them a normal sacramental life according to their own tradition, and in the ecumenical context of the bilateral dialogue between the Catholic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, the request has been made of a pastoral arrangement for admission to the Eucharist, when necessity requires, between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Church.

2. The Anaphora of Addai and Mari

The principal issue for the Catholic Church in agreeing to this request, related to the question of the validity of the Eucharist celebrated with the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, one of the three Anaphoras traditionally used by the Assyrian Church of the East.

This particular Anaphora must have originated in Mesopotamia, possibly in the region of Edessa. There is no hard evidence for the dating of its final redaction: some

scholars situate it about the year 200, others in the beginning of the 3rd century, others in the course of the 3rd century. The Assyrian Church of the East highly respects this Anaphora as an essential element of the apostolic heritage they received from Addai and Mari, whom they venerate as two of the 72 disciples of Christ and as the founding missionaries of their particular Church. The Anaphora of Addai and Mari, however, as reproduced in the oldest codices retrieved, as well as in the uninterrupted liturgical practice of the Assyrian Church of the East, does not contain a coherent Institution Narrative. For many years, scholars discussed which version of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari might have been the original one. Some scholars argued that the original formula of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari was longer and did contain an Institution Narrative. Other scholars are convinced that the Anaphora of Addai and Mari did not contain a coherent Institution Narrative and that the short version is consequently the original one. Nowadays, most scholars argue that it is highly probable that the second hypothesis is the right one. Anyhow, this historical question cannot be resolved with absolute certainty, due to the scarcity or absence of contemporary sources. The validity of the Eucharist celebrated with the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, therefore, should not be based on historical but on doctrinal arguments.

The Catholic Church considers the words of the Institution as a constitutive part of the Anaphora or Eucharistic Prayer. The Council of Florence stated

“The form of this sacrament are the words of the Saviour with which he effected this sacrament. A priest speaking in the person of Christ effects this sacrament. For, in virtue of those words, the substance of bread is changed into the body of Christ and the substance of wine into his blood” (D.S. 1321).

The same Council of Florence also characterised the words of the Institution as “*the form of words which the holy Roman Church... has always been wont to use in the consecration of the Lord's body and blood*” (D.S. 1352), without prejudice to the possibility of some variation in their articulation by the Church. Although not having any authority as to the substance of the sacraments, the Church does have the power to determine their concrete shaping, regarding both their sacramental sign (*materia*) and their words of administration (*forma*) (cf. CCEO, can. 669). Hence the doctrinal question about the validity of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, when used in its short version without a coherent Institution Narrative. Do the words of administration (*forma*) correspond to the conditions for validity, as requested by the Catholic Church? To answer this question, three major arguments have to be taken into due consideration.

In the first place, the Anaphora of Addai and Mari is one of the most ancient Eucharistic Prayers, dating back to the time of the very early Church and the first liturgical regulations. It was composed and used with the clear intention of celebrating the Eucharist in full continuity with the Last Supper, in obedience to the command of the Lord, and according to the intention of the Church. The absence of a coherent Institu-

tion Narrative represents, indeed, an exception in comparison with Byzantine and Roman traditions, as developed in the 4th and 5th century. This exception, however, may be due to its very early origin and to the later isolation of the Assyrian Church of the East. The validity of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, in fact, was never officially contested.

The Assyrian Church of the East also uses two other Eucharistic Anaphoras, which are some centuries more recent: the *Anaphora of Nestorius*, reserved to five liturgical occasions, and the *Anaphora of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, used from the beginning of the liturgical year till Palm Sunday, for approximately sixteen weeks. The Anaphora of Addai and Mari, however, is used during the longest and most important period of the liturgical year, which goes from Palm Sunday till the end of the liturgical year and covers about two hundred days. Moreover, the use of these three Anaphoras is not free, as in the Latin tradition, but prescribed by the liturgical calendar. It should be added that, for the period of the Catholic Patriarchate under Patriarch Sulaka (1551-1662), no document exists to prove that the Church of Rome insisted on the insertion of an Institution narrative into the Anaphora of Addai and Mari.

In conscience of faith, the Assyrian Church of the East was always convinced to celebrate the Eucharist validly and so to perform in its fullness what Jesus Christ asked his disciples to do. She expressed this conscience of faith, whether using the Anaphora of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the Anaphora of Nestorius or the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, independent from the fact that only the first two Anaphoras, of later origin, contain the Institution narrative.

The Assyrian Church of the East also practices the so called sacrament or mystery (*Rasà*) of Holy Leaven. From times immemorial, the Assyrian tradition relates that from the bread Jesus took in his hands, which He blessed, broke and gave to his disciples, He gave two pieces to St. John. Jesus asked St. John to eat one piece and to carefully keep the other one. After Jesus' death, St. John dipped that piece of bread into the blood that proceeded from Jesus' side. Hence the name of “Holy Leaven”, given to this consecrated bread, dipped into the blood of Jesus. Until this day, Holy Leaven has been kept and renewed annually in the Assyrian Church of the East. The local bishop renews it every year on Holy Thursday, mixing a remainder of the old Leaven within the new one. This is distributed to all parishes of his diocese, to be used during one year in each bread, specially prepared by the priest before the Eucharist. No priest is allowed to celebrate Eucharist using eucharistic bread without Holy Leaven. This tradition of the sacrament or mystery of Holy Leaven, which precedes the actual Eucharistic celebration, is certainly to be seen as a visible sign of historic and symbolic continuity between the present Eucharistic celebration and the institution of the Eucharist by Jesus.

Secondly, the Catholic Church recognises the Assyrian Church of the East as a true particular Church, built upon orthodox faith and apostolic succession. The Assyrian Church of the East also preserved full Eucharistic faith in the presence of our Lord

under the species of bread and wine and in the sacrificial character of the Eucharist. In the Assyrian Church of the East, though not in full communion with the Catholic Church, are thus to be found “true sacraments, and above all, by apostolic succession, the priesthood and the Eucharist, whereby they are still joined to us in closest intimacy” (U.R., no 15).

Finally, it must be observed that the eastern and western Eucharistic Anaphoras, while expressing the same mystery, have different linguistic, ritual and theological traditions. The words of the Eucharistic Institution are indeed present in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, not in a coherent way and *ad litteram*, but rather in a dispersed eucharological way, that is, integrated in prayers of thanksgiving, praise and intercession. All these elements constitute a “quasi-narrative” of the Eucharistic Institution. In the central part of the Anaphora, together with the Epiclesis, explicit references are made to the eucharistic Body and Blood of Jesus Christ

“O my Lord, in thy manifold and ineffable mercies, make a good and gracious remembrance for all the upright and just fathers who were pleasing before thee, in the commemoration of the body and blood of thy Christ, which we offer to thee upon the pure and holy altar, as thou hast taught us”),

to the life-giving mystery of Jesus’ passion, death and resurrection, which is actually commemorated and celebrated

(“that all the inhabitants of the world may know thee ... and we also, O my Lord, thy unworthy, frail and miserable servants who are gathered and stand before thee, and have received by tradition the example which is from thee, rejoicing and glorifying and exalting and commemorating and celebrating this great and awesome mystery of the passion and death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ”),

to the eucharistic offering for the forgiveness of the sins, to the eschatological dimension of the eucharistic celebration and to the Lord’s command to ‘do this in memory of me’

(“And let thy Holy Spirit come, O my Lord, and rest upon this offering of thy servants, and bless it and sanctify it that it may be to us, O my Lord, for the pardon of sins, and for the forgiveness of shortcomings, and for the great hope of the resurrection from the dead, and for new life in the kingdom of heaven with all who have been pleasing before thee”).

So the words of the Institution are not absent in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, but explicitly mentioned in a dispersed way, from the beginning to the end, in the most important passages of the Anaphora. It is also clear that the passages cited above express the full conviction of commemorating the Lord’s paschal mystery, in the strong sense of making it present; that is, the intention to carry out in practice precisely what Christ established by his words and actions in instituting the Eucharist.

A long and careful study was undertaken of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, from a historical, liturgical and theological perspective, at the end of which the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith on January 17th, 2001 concluded that this Anaphora can be considered valid. Pope John Paul II subsequently approved this decision.

3. Pastoral Provision

The Catholic Church provides special regulations for situations of pastoral necessity, such as those the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Church face today. The *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches*, can. 671, §2 and §3, states:

“If necessity requires it or genuine spiritual advantage suggests it and provided that the danger of error or indifferentism is avoided, it is permitted for Catholic Christian faithful, for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister, to receive the sacraments of penance, the Eucharist and anointing of the sick from non-Catholic ministers, in whose Churches these sacraments are valid.(...) Likewise Catholic ministers licitly administer the sacraments of penance, the Eucharist and anointing of the sick to Christian faithful of Eastern Churches, who do not have full communion with the Catholic Church, if they ask for them on their own and are properly disposed”.

The *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms of Ecumenism*, n. 123 and 125, gives the same regulations.

This provision of the *Eastern Catholic Church Law* and the *Directory for the Application of Principles and Norms on Ecumenism*, can henceforth be applied between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East. When necessity requires, Assyrian faithful are permitted to receive Holy Communion in a Chaldean celebration of the Holy Eucharist; in the same way, Chaldean faithful for whom it is physically or morally impossible to approach a Catholic minister, are permitted to receive Holy Communion in an Assyrian celebration of the Holy Eucharist. In both cases, Assyrian and Chaldean ministers should continue to celebrate the Holy Eucharist according to the liturgical prescriptions and customs of their own tradition, especially regarding the use of the Anaphora (cf. CCEO, can. 674, §2).

When Chaldean faithful are participating in an Assyrian celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the minister of the Assyrian Church is warmly invited to insert the words of the Institution in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari. This possibility already exists in the Church of the East. Indeed, the Holy Synod of the Assyrian Church of the East, assembled in 1978 in Baghdad, offered ministers in the Assyrian Church the option of reciting the words of the Institution in the Anaphora of Addai and Mari. Although this option does not affect the validity of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari, it might have a particular relevance from a liturgical, as well as an ecumenical viewpoint. From a liturgical viewpoint, this might be an appropriate means to bring the present use of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari into line with the general usage in every Eucharistic Prayer both in the Christian East and in the Christian West. From an ecumenical viewpoint, it might be an appropriate expression of fraternal respect for members of other Churches who receive Holy Communion in the Assyrian Church of the East and who are used, according to the theological and canonical tradition of their proper

Church, to hear the recitation of the words of the Institution in every Eucharistic Prayer.

It should be noticed, that the present considerations on the use of the Anaphora of Addai and Mari and the guidelines for admission to the Eucharist, are exclusively concerned with the admission to the Eucharist between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Church. The Anaphora of Addai and Mari pertains to the liturgical patrimony and ecclesial identity of the Assyrian Church of the East, since time immemorial, and should remain so. The Assyrian Church of the East cherished and respectfully transmitted this Anaphora from age to age, avoiding any alteration or adaptation in its recitation, out of respect for its venerable origin, traditionally related to the apostolic period. Because each particular Church celebrates the sacraments according to its own traditions, principles and norms, it would be liturgically improper to transfer particular elements of one liturgical tradition into another liturgical tradition. Liturgical traditions, indeed, are like languages, having their particular vocabulary and grammar; essential elements from one liturgical tradition cannot be transferred into another without taking from the particularity of the first and harming the coherence of the second.

4. Conclusion

The present Guidelines have been transmitted to both H.H. Mar Dinkha IV, Patriarch of the Assyrian Church of the East and H.B. Mar Raphaël I Bidawid, Patriarch of the Chaldean Church. The promulgation of this provision between the Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Church belongs to the competence of both particular Churches and their respective authorities (cf. CCEO, cann. 670, §1; 671, §4.5). Taking into consideration concrete circumstances and conditions, they will have to establish particular procedures and provide appropriate pastoral means to implement it.

This provision for admission to the Eucharist in situations of pastoral necessity is not to be equated with full Eucharistic communion between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East. Although closely related to one another in matters of faith and sacramental life, both particular Churches are not yet in full communion. They are still travelling, with hope and courage, towards that blessed day when full and visible communion will be attained and when it will be possible to celebrate together in peace the Holy Eucharist of the Lord. As Pope John Paul II wrote in his Encyclical Letter *Ut Unum Sint*:

“From this basic but partial unity it is now necessary to advance towards the visible unity which is required and sufficient and which is manifested in a real and concrete way, so that the Churches may truly become a sign of that full communion in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church which will be expressed in the common celebration of the Eucharist” (UUS, n. 78).