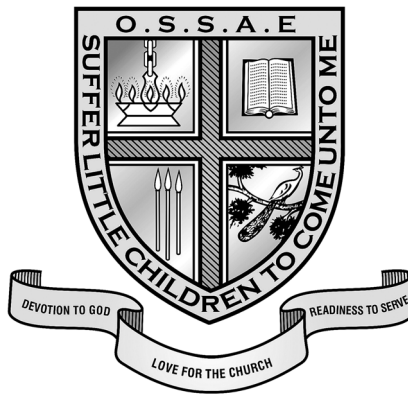


# ORTHODOX SYRIAN SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION OF THE EAST



## JERUSALEM DIVISION

### **Class X** **(Part II)** **(English)**

Sunday School Central Office  
Devalokom, Kottayam-686004  
[ossae.org](http://ossae.org), [ossaebodhanam.org](http://ossaebodhanam.org)

---

**AN OSSAE PUBLICATION**  
**Sunday School Padavali - X (Part II)**

First Edition: June 2015

Third Edition: November 2022

Copies: 4000

Price: ₹ 70.00

Printed at Alois Graphics, Kottayam  
aloisgraphics@gmail.com

# CONTENTS

## UNIT 4: HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Chapter 16: The Protestant Reformation Movement.....	5
Chapter 17: World-Wide Growth of the Church during Colonial Times.....	9
Chapter 18: Malankara Church from the 17 <sup>th</sup> to the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century .....	13
Chapter 19: History of the Catholicate of the East.....	17

## UNIT 5: THE HOLY EUCHARIST: A STUDY

Chapter 20: Maniso (Hymn) of Mar Severios .....	20
Chapter 21: The Ministration of Fraction, Consignation and Commixion ...	24

## UNIT 6: DOGMAS OF OUR FAITH

Chapter 22: The Holy Trinity .....	28
Chapter 23: Priesthood in Christianity.....	32
Chapter 24: Eschatology .....	36

## UNIT 7: GREAT MEN OF GOD

Chapter 25: His Holiness Catholicos Baselius Geevarghese II (1874-1964) ....	40
Chapter 26: His Grace Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios Metropolitan(1922-1996).....	45
Chapter 27: Fr. Dr. V. C. Samuel (1912-1998).....	49

## UNIT 8: GOOD HABITS

Chapter 28: Righteous Utilization of Wealth.....	53
Chapter 29: The Significance of Counselling .....	57
Chapter 30: God Calls Us.....	62

## Supplementary Reader

Sabha Bhasuran St. Geevarghese Mar Dionysius (Vattasseril Thirumeni) .....	66
Chapter One: Biography .....	67
Chapter Two: Historical Background.....	68
Chapter Three: The Establishment of the Catholicate in Malankara .....	71
Chapter Four: True Faith and True Worship .....	73
Chapter Five: The Multi-Faceted Personality of St Dionysius .....	75
Chapter Six: Malankara Sabha Bhasuran (The Illuminator of the Malankara Church).....	78

## STRUCTURE OF THE LESSONS

(PREPARED BY PROF. DR. SAM V. DANIEL)

1. **Message:** The central idea that should be sensitised through each lesson is given here.
2. **Verse to be Memorized:** A biblical verse related to the central theme of the lesson is given for memorizing. The teacher should read out this verse from the Holy Bible at the end of the class and the students should say it aloud several times.
3. **Teaching Aids:** Information on pictures, books, etc. connected to the central theme are given to present lessons effectively.
4. **Introduction:** This section helps in making the presentation of the lesson attractive and enjoyable.
5. **The Lesson or Text:** This is the content of the lesson. We have tried our best to make it student-centred. The ideas should be presented by participating students. The teacher should take the Holy Bible to class and should readout the biblical passages. The descriptions made should have the quality of a narration. The students should be encouraged through interaction questions. When important ideas come let the students recite them in Chorus.
6. **Song or Hymns:** A song or hymn connected with the lesson is given here. The teacher should sing it aloud and the students should recite it in chorus.
7. **Let Us Pray:** A simple prayer connected with the theme of the lesson is given here. The teacher and the students can say this prayer in the class together. All should stand up and cross themselves before the prayer.
8. **Our Decision or Resolution:** An idea that can touch the students' mind like a decision and that can be implemented in their lives is given in this section. Make the students say aloud this concept.
9. **Let Us Think:** These are evaluation questions given to examine how far the students have grasped the ideas in the text.
10. **Activities:** Most of the tasks given in the section are for enacting, drawing, physical action or narration.

## UNIT 4

# HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

## Chapter 16

### The Protestant Reformation Movement

**Objectives of the Lesson:** To learn about the Protestant Reformation Movement which changed the course of history of Christianity across the world. Let us also develop an Orthodox approach towards Reformist ideas.

**Verse to be Memorized:** “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek” (Romans 1:16).

**Learning Aids:** The Holy Bible, Book of Common Prayer, and the Service Book of Holy Eucharist.

#### Introduction

We need to react against the wrong trends which arise in the Church and society. We see selfish schemes and plans in the Church and the society around us today. They could be corrected only through meaningful interventions. A historical event of this kind came to be called ‘Protestant Reformation.’ Let us learn about this Protestant Reformation movement in this chapter.

#### The Lesson

The Reformation Movement was a religious revolution which started in Western Europe in the Sixteenth century. This movement had its origins in Germany. A Roman Catholic priest named Martin Luther started it and it developed into one of the most significant events recorded in world history.

#### Causes of the Reformation Movement

1. The influence of books and art forms containing Protestant Reformist thought.
2. Geographical and scientific discoveries.
3. The spread of the Holy Bible among the common folk as a result of the invention of printing press.
4. The popular clamour for nationalism.
5. The arrogance and excesses of Papacy.

6. Superstitions, evil practices and corruptions that plagued the Roman Catholic Church (eg. Sale of Indulgences).

### **Protestant Reformation**

Martin Luther, pasted the '95 Theses' condemning the evil practices of the Roman Catholic Church including 'Sale of Indulgences,' at the doorstep of Vittenberg Church in East Germany on October 31, 1517. This is considered as the birth hour of Reformation. 'Indulgence' was a decree of remission of past and future sins of a person issued by the Pope of Rome. A person who was granted 'indulgence' could escape from the temporal punishment for his sins in the purgatory. Anyone could buy an indulgence by remitting a prescribed fee to the Roman Catholic Church.

### **Growth of the Reformation Movement**

The ideas of Martin Luther spread quickly to Germany and the whole of Europe. Contemporaries of Luther like Ulrich Zwingli of Switzerland, John Calvin of Geneva, John Knox of Scotland and King Henry VII of England spread Lutherine ideology in their homelands. These reformists had certain ideological differences among themselves. Yet their efforts served to bring about a renewal in the Roman Catholic Church and the spread of Protestant ideology throughout the world. Those Christians who were attracted towards Reformation and who left the Roman Catholic Church were called as 'Protestants' or 'Reformists.'

### **Principles of Reformation**

The Principles of Reformation questioned the fundamental dogmas of faith conserved in the Church through theology, sacraments and rituals. Some of the important teachings of Reformation were the following:

- a. The foundation of Christian life and faith should only be the Holy Bible (Scripture Alone) and not the rituals and ecclesiastical hierarchy.
- b. The only sacraments of the Church should be the Last Supper and Baptism.
- c. All lay believers are entitled for priesthood. Hence special priesthood is irrelevant.
- d. We need to be justified only before God.
- e. The doctrine of Communion with saints and prayer for the departed are meaningless.

The Orthodox Church doesn't subscribe to the above principles.

### **Counter Reformation**

The Roman Catholic Church soon realized that some of the fundamental causes of Reformation were substantially true. Hence it turned to self-correction which would prevent the growth of Reformation Movement and purify its life of faith. This movement for self correction that originated in the Roman Catholic Church

was known as 'Counter Reformation'. The goals of Counter Reformation could be realized through the Trent Council held from 1545 to 1563. The Roman Catholic Church could reinstate its tradition and faith with certain revisions and corrections through this council. Ignatius Loyola and the monastic order 'Jesuits' (Society of Jesus) founded by him stood at the forefront of the Counter Reformation. In short, Counter Reformation helped the Roman Catholic Church to regain some of its lost ground.

### **Hymn**

(Akhilam Njan Aaranjittum...)

Even though I searched everywhere  
I haven't seen-anything better than  
Fear of the Lord-out of his love for God  
Joseph, the righteous, earned authority over Egypt  
And Moses the Great-split the ocean with his rod.  
Hananiah and his peers  
Were saved from the bone fire  
Fear of Lord is more desirable than gold  
And is sweeter than nectar  
Blessed is he who loves-worship of Lord.

### **Let Us Pray**

(Prayer after reading the Holy Bible)

*O Merciful God, we thank and praise You for the beneficial and living verses of the Holy Bible You have given us. We would Praise and thank You, the Father and the Holy Spirit now and ever. Amen.*

### **Resolution**

*We would try to understand the principles of Orthodoxy and remain steadfast in the faith of the Holy Church and lead a divine life.*

### **Let Us Ponder**

*"Instead of dreaming about realizing personal likes and interests, you should always look up on the execution of divine will in your life" - H. H. Baselios Geevarghese II Catholicos*

### **Let Us Think**

1. What were the causes of Protestant Reformation?
2. What is 'sale of indulgences'? How did Martin Luther react to it?

3. Who were the leaders of Protestant Reformation Movement?
4. List the major principles of Reformation. Are these principles acceptable for the Orthodox Church?
5. Explain 'Counter Reformation.'
6. "The Reformation Movement was a major event in world history". How is it relevant today?

### **Activities**

1. Prepare a project on the Protestant Reformation Movement.
2. Collect images of leaders of the Protestant Reformation and prepare an album.
3. Imagine that you are a Roman Catholic living during the rise of Protestant Movement. How would you react to the teachings of this movement? Write an essay.



## Chapter 17

# World-Wide Growth of the Church during Colonial Times

**Learning Objectives:** To learn about the world wide spread of the Christian Church during the colonial period (15th to 19th centuries).

**Verse to be Memorized:** “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19-20).

### Introduction

We have learnt about the evangelical works of the disciples of Jesus Christ and their successors. They obeyed the commandment of Jesus Christ to bear witness to Him throughout the world. In the later ages, growth of the Christian Church was fast. Christians who migrated and were spreading in foreign countries, started spreading Christian faith in the new lands. Let us learn about this dissemination of Christian faith.

### The Lesson

We learnt that the Protestant Reformation Movement of the Sixteenth century was a turning point in history of Christianity. After Reformation, both the Roman Catholic and the Protestant Churches strived hard for their existence and propagation. Both of them integrated evangelism with colonization for expanding their ecclesiastical authority. These evangelical movements helped in the dissemination of the Christian faith.

### Colonisation and Evangelism

Countries like Portugal, Spain, France, Holland, Belgium and Britain were the pioneers of colonization. They reached other countries primarily for trade and commerce. Gradually they wrested political control over these lands. This phenomenon is called colonization. Portugal and Spain led other countries in colonizing others lands between AD 1500 and AD 1800. Later, other countries followed them and became colonizers.

### Roman Catholic Evangelism

Roman Catholic evangelism depended on the rulers of Portugal and Spain who were supported by the Pope of Rome. Pope allowed the rulers of these countries to

evangelise the lands they conquered. The Roman Catholic Church adopted two main ways of evangelism.

1. Pedroado Mission: Evangelism carried out with the help of the rulers of Spain and Portugal.
2. Propaganda Mission: Evangelism was carried out directly by the Roman Catholic Church.

### **Protestant Evangelism**

The Seventeenth century was a period of self-preservation and institutionalization for the Protestant Christians. The growth of British, French and Dutch colonies led to the growth of Protestant evangelism. They focused mainly on Pacific islands and the countries of Asia and Africa. Their missionary work could make much headway through their activities in the fields of education, health care and social upliftment. They also started on translating the Holy Bible into local languages.

### **Important Missionary Societies worked in India**

The major Protestant Missionary Societies worked in India included the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS), London Missionary Society (LMS), Church Mission Society (CMS), British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS), American Baptist Missionary Society (ABMS), Basel Mission (BM) and Presbyterian Foreign Mission Society (PFMS).

### **Evangelism in India**

The first Christian to evangelise India was Apostle St. Thomas. The Christian community that developed subsequently in this land was founded on indigenous traditions. However the advent of Roman Catholic evangelism tried to remove the indigenous nature of the Indian Church. The indigenous Christians were weaned away towards foreign Christian faith and traditions.

Roman Catholic evangelism was carried out in India mainly under the auspices of Roman Catholic monastic orders like Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites and Jesuits. The stalwarts of Roman Catholic evangelism were Francis Xavier, Robert de Nobili, John de Brito and Constantino Giuseppe Beschi. In India, the evangelical activities of the Roman Catholics were followed by Protestant evangelism. The chief Protestant missionaries included Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, Heinrich Plutshau, William Carey, Thomas Norton, Benjamin Bailey, Joseph Fenn and Henry Baker.

### **Evangelism of the Malankara Orthodox Church**

Malankara Orthodox Church has made efforts to spread the Gospel in the Indian soil from the early stages of development. The early Church Fathers of Malankara realized their mission through precepts and examples of Christian living. However, an organized evangelical movement was started in the Malankara Church only during the

period of St. Geevarghese Mar Gregorios of Parumala. The processes of evangelism initiated by St. Gregorios of Parumala gathered momentum through the missionary work of Metropolitan Pathrose Mar Osthathios. Gradually the Church established its official missionary organ (Mission Board) which could bring the light of the gospels to various parts of India. Our Church Fathers like Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Osthathios of Niranam and Stephanos Mar Theodosius of Calcutta gave leadership to the missionary activities of the Church in India.

### **Consequences of Evangelism**

Evangelical activities made notable changes and transformation in world Christianity and society. The results of evangelization were following:

1. The spreading of the Christian Church.
2. Translations of the Holy Bible into various languages.
3. Spread of Modern education.
4. Advancement in health care.
5. Eradication of social evils.
6. Establishment of charitable activities and institutions.

### **Hymn**

(Taathanmare panditharam...., Mavurbo from the Night Prayers)

O Fathers and Learned  
Doctors of Faith! Rejoice  
The seed of Word grew through gospels  
As Lord has rightly told us  
It has given harvest of  
Thirty, sixty and hundred fold  
The thought of that harvest of faith  
Given to the people is wondrous.

### **Let Us Pray**

(Prayer after reading the Holy Bible)

*O merciful God, we praise and thank You for the beneficial and living verses of the Holy Bible You have given us. We would praise and thank You, the Father and the Holy Spirit now and ever. Encourage us that we have been active in spreading the Gospel. Amen.*

## **Resolution**

*We would undertake evangelical activities for building up the Kingdom of God, as assigned by Jesus Christ.*

## **Let Us Ponder**

*“There are limits to faith. But love for God is limitless”-Late Lamented His Grace Dr. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios Metropolitan*

## **Let Us Think**

1. What is meant by colonization? How is colonization connected with evangelism?
2. What were the characteristics of Roman Catholic evangelism?
3. Explain Pedroado and Propaganda Missions.
4. Compare the early Roman Catholic evangelism with that today.
5. “Protestant evangelism was part of their struggle for survival and self-preservation.” Explain.
6. What were the methods of Protestant evangelism?
7. List the important Protestant missionary organizations.
8. Who gave leadership to evangelism in India in the first century A.D?
9. Explain the evangelical activities of the Malankara Orthodox Church.
10. What were the results of evangelism?

## **Activities**

1. Write an essay making a comparative assessment of Roman Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Missionary activities.
2. Write a brief descriptive note on the missionary societies and missionaries of the Malankara Orthodox Church.
3. As an Orthodox believer, how do you evaluate the missionary activities of Roman Catholics and Protestants.

## Chapter 18

# Malankara Church from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

**Learning Objectives:** To learn about the decisive events that happened in the Malankara Church between 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Verse to be Memorized:** “Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction” (Isaiah 48:10).

### Introduction

The period from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century was an important era for the Malankara Church. During the period, the Malankara Church witnessed a lot of developments. Let us learn about these developments in this lesson.

### The Lesson

From the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards Malankara Church could take decisions independently and implement them without external interference. After the Koonan Cross Oath, Malankara Church became fully conscious of its own identity. But it had to encounter a lot of problems during this period. Let us look into that.

### Malankara Church after the Koonan Cross Oath

Malankara Church was liberated from a half-century Old Portuguese Roman Catholic domination (1599-1653), with the Koonan (Leaning) Cross Oath of 1653. Thereafter Malankara Church was governed by locally elected bishops who assumed the title, ‘Mar Thoma Metropolitans.’ Malankara Church approached various Oriental Orthodox Churches, with which it had communion from very early times, for meeting its ecclesiastical needs and maintaining its Apostolic tradition. However only the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch responded to its plea for help in 1665. Thus the Malankara Church could retain its Orthodox Indian identity with the help of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch.

Nine Mar Thoma Metropolitans reigned in Malankara between 1653 A.D. and 1817 A.D. However, Marthoma IX could not execute his authority because of the adverse circumstances prevailing in those days. In 1815 Ittoop (Joseph) Ramban of Pulikkottil became metropolitan and took the name ‘Mar Dionysius.’ Through a royal proclamation he assumed the throne as ‘Metropolitan of Malankara’ which was equivalent in status and authority to the title of ‘Mar Thoma.’ After the period of Mar Thoma Metropolitans, Malankara Church was led by ‘Metropolitans of Malankara’ who took the title ‘Mar Dionysius.’ It was during the period of ‘Metropolitans of

Malankara' especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, that several decisive and critical events in the history of Malankara Church took place. Let us look at these events.

### **'Vattippanam' or Fixed Deposit given for Interest (1808)**

About 3000 Poovarahan (Golden or star pagodas) equivalent to 10500 rupees collected by Marthoma VI was deposited by his successor Marthoma VII in the British East India Company at a rate of eight percent interest per annum. This fixed deposit was known as 'Vattippanam' ('vatti' means 'interest'). The annual interest acquired from this fixed deposit was meant to be spend on social welfare projects of the Church.

### **Founding of Orthodox Theological Seminary (1815)**

The construction of Orthodox Theological Seminary was begun by Ittoop Ramban of Pulikottil (Later Mar Dionysius II) in 1813. The then ruler of Travancore, Rani Lakshmi Bai, donated 16 acres of land, free of tax, for the purpose of the seminary. She gifted Rs. 20000 and the timber needed for the buidling. Besides, half of the fine imposed by Colonel Munroe on Hindu Brahmins for setting fire to Paliyekkara Church at Thiruvalla, was also granted for the construction of the seminary. The seminary started functioning in 1815 with the help of CMS missionaries and Colonel Munroe.

### **Mavelikkara Padiyola (1836)**

Malankara Church had a cordial relationship with CMS missionaries during the initial phase. But later these missionaries tried to impose 'Reformist' (Protestant) ideas in the liturgical tradition of the Malankara Church, and as a consequence, the relationship got strained. In 1835 the Anglican bishop of Calcutta, Bishop Wilson came over to Malankara with his six point suggestions. In order to deliberate and decide over these proposals, Mar Dionysius IV (Mar Dionysius of Cheppad) convened an assembly of Church representatives at Puthiyakavu Church, Mavelikkara on January 16, 1836. This assembly decided to reject the proposals of Bishop Wilson, and to remain steadfast in the Oriental Orthodox traditions which they had been following. The document containing the decisions taken at this assembly is known as 'Mavelikkara Padiyola'.

### **Synod of Mulanthuruthy (1876)**

Even though Malankara Church rejected Protestant Reformist ideas altogether through 'Mavelikkara Padiyola', a few people under the leadership of Abraham Malpan of Palakkunnattu, Maramon, adopted a sympathetic attitude to Protestant Reformist teachings. This group had to encounter staunch opposition from the Malankara Church. In order to overcome this resistance Abraham Malpan sent his nephew Deacon Mathew to Antioch in 1841 and got him consecrated bishop under the name 'Mathews Mar Athanasius'.

Mathews Mar Athanasius returned to Malankara in 1842. He influenced the native rulers to assert his position as Metropolitan of Malankara. As a result Mar

Dionysius IV of Cheppad had to abdicate his throne. But the Malankara Church sent Father Joseph of Pulikkottil to Antioch and got him consecrated Metropolitan in 1865. Joseph Mar Dionysius V returned to Malankara in 1866. Even though he tried to establish his position as 'Metropolitan of Malankara' he couldn't succeed initially.

At last, in order to settle the dispute, Malankara Church decided to invite the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch to Malankara. Responding to this invitation, Patriarch Peter III arrived in Malankara in 1876. He convened a Synod (Church Assembly) at Mulanthuruthy Marthoman Church. This 'Synod of Mulanthuruthy' lasted three days and questioned the authority as well as governance of Mar Athanasius. Besides, Malankara Church declared its allegiance to Patriarch of Antioch and devised certain arrangements for Church administration.

### **Division of Malankara Church into Dioceses and Consecration of Bishops**

In one sense, the Synod of Mulanthuruthy allowed the supremacy of the Patriarch. However, Mar Dionysius and his followers did not submit themselves to the Patriarch, in their subsequent activities. The Patriarch realized this and without the consent or knowledge of Mar Dionysius, divided Malankara Church into seven dioceses and consecrated six new metropolitans to these dioceses. The new dioceses were Kottayam, Thumpamon, Angamaly, Niranam, Kandanad, Kochi and Kollam. The newly consecrated Metropolitans were Paulose Mar Athanasius, Geevarghese Mar Yulios, Geevarghese Mar Coorilos, Geevarghese Mar Gregorios (St. Gregorios of Parumala), Paulose Mar Ivanios (first Catholicos Basелиos Paulose I) and Shemavoon Mar Dionysius.

### **Royal Court Verdict (1889)**

Even though the Synod of Mulanthuruthy rejected the appointment of Mar Athanasius as Metropolitan of Malankara, the rulers of the state asked the Church leaders to legitimize their decision through a court of law. Subsequently Mar Dionysius filed a case in the district court in 1879 and it came to be known as the 'Seminary case.' A final verdict in this case came from the Royal court in 1889. Through this Royal Court verdict, Mar Dionysius' position as Metropolitan of Malankara was confirmed. Besides, the verdict unequivocally declared that the Patriarch had only spiritual oversight in Malankara.

### **Hymn**

(This hymn is recited during the Matins on Friday in Sheema Prayer, Sabhaye Nityam Nin...)

Holy Church your-gate- keeper's vigil  
Protects you ever -from the Evil One  
Simon laid the base-St. Paul sculptured it

Beloved Yuhanon-rendered great service  
Haleluiah-vu- Haleluiah  
King David is the-harp of Lord's Spirit

### **Let Us Pray**

(This Prayer is recited while lighting a lamp.  
It is given in Pambakkuda Book of Prayer)

*O Jesus Christ, full of light! You are the True Light that illumines the entire creation; we see light by Your Light. O the true Ray of Heavenly Father, illuminate us with Your bright Light. Amen.*

### **Resolution**

*We would remain steadfast in the faith of the Orthodox Church and would support the Fathers of the Church in its hour of need.*

### **Let Us Ponder**

*"We cannot claim that all the great things that happened in our Church are the products of our intellectual vigour and administrative skill"-Late Lamented His Grace Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios Metropolitan*

### **Let Us Think**

1. Who gave leadership to Malankara Church after the Koonan Cross Oath?
2. Explain the issue of 'Vattippanam.'
3. How were the activities of CMS missionaries a gain and also a loss to the Malankara Church?
4. Was the Synod of Mulanthuruthy in the interest of the Malankara Church? Explain.
5. Name the dioceses established, and Metropolitans consecrated by the Patriarch.
6. Summarise the Royal Court Verdict.

### **Activities**

1. 'The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a decisive period for the Malankara Church.' Explain this statement.
2. Collect details about the establishment of Orthodox Theological Seminary and the Synod of Mulanthuruthy.
3. Prepare an album of the decisive events of the Malankara Church.



## Chapter 19

# History of the Catholicate of the East

**Learning Objective:** To study more about the Catholicate in Malankara, the most important institution in the Malankara Church.

**Verse to be Memorized:** “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Matthew 19:28).

### Introduction

The nerve centre of any administrative system is the ruler or the administrator. Any government has a particular person as the centre of the administrative authority. Let us learn about Catholicate in Malankara in this lesson.

### The Lesson

We know that the headquarters of Malankara Church is the Catholicate Palace at Devalokom, Kottayam; and the head of the Church is ‘His Holiness the Catholicos of the East and Malankara Metropolitan’. The Catholicos reigns on the throne of St. Thomas, the Apostle of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Let us trace the history of the Catholicate.

### The Throne of St. Thomas

We claim the heritage and tradition of St. Thomas, the disciple of Jesus Christ. This heritage is known as the ‘faith and tradition’ of St. Thomas (Marthomayude Margavum Vazhipadum). The heritage and authority of St. Thomas inherited from the earliest times is considered as the Throne of St. Thomas. The administrators of Malankara Church during various periods of history including ‘Veda Thalavan’ (Spiritual Head), ‘Jaathikku Karthavyan’ (Head of the community), Arch Deacons, Marthoma Metropolitans, Malankara Metropolitans and the Catholicos are the real inheritors and successors on the Throne of St. Thomas.

### Catholicos

The title ‘Catholicos’ was given to primates of Churches outside the Roman empire. The word means ‘one who represents the whole’ (‘represents all’). The title ‘Catholicos’ was first used by the Metropolitan of Seleucia-Ctesiphon in the Persian Empire. The Persian councils held in AD 410, 420 and 424 determined the rights and authority of the Catholicos.

### Catholicate

During the early ages, the development and expansion of the Church was mostly local. The title ‘Catholicos’ was used for the first time in Malankara in 1912 with the

founding of the Catholicate. The administrators who reigned over Malankara Church prior to 1912 too executed the same administrative and spiritual responsibility. The position of authority from 'Vedathalavan' to Catholicos, gradually evolved through history.

### **Founding of the Catholicate**

The Catholicate was established in Malankara on September 15, 1912. The immediate cause of founding an independent Catholicate in Malankara was the illegal excommunication issued to the then Metropolitan of Malankara Mar Dionysius VI (St. Geevarghese Mar Dionysius of Vattasseril) by Mar Abdulla, Syrian Orthodox Patriarch of Antioch. When Patriarch Abdulla illegally and uncanonically excommunicated Mar Dionysius VI, people of Malankara contacted Patriarch Abded Messiah who was actually the canonical Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch and convinced him about the need to establish an independent Catholicate in Malankara, which is equal to the Antiochian Patriarchate. Patriarch Abded Messiah had been politically ousted from authority because the Sultan of Turkey had withdrawn the royal recognition. Patriarch Abded Messiah arrived in Malankara in 1912. He elevated Paulose Mar Ivanios Murimattathil as the first Catholicos with the title 'Moran Mar Baselius Paulose I'. The enthronement took place at Niranam Church. Thus, the Catholicate, which is a symbol of its independent status, became a reality in the Malankara Church.

When Mar Dionysius VI passed away in 1934, the two positions, of 'Metropolitan of Malankara' and the 'Catholicos' were merged and vested within a single person. The first Catholicos to hold both these posts was the third Catholicos, Moran Mar Baselius Geevarghese II. Thereafter all the succeeding Catholicoses held both the positions simultaneously. In 1934, Malankara Church drafted and adopted its own constitution. This constitution of the Church was adopted sixteen years before the constitution of independent India was adopted. The Malankara Church could uphold its identity and independence through this constitution. It declared unequivocally that the Catholicos was the spiritual and the temporal head of the Malankara Church. Just as Catholicate and Maphrianate were founded in Persian Selucia and Tigris respectively in accordance with the specific circumstances prevailing there, the specific circumstances in Malankara too necessitated the establishment of the Catholicate here. The Catholicate of Malankara exists today as a golden lamp in our Church history.

### **Hymn**

(Marthoma Simhasanathil...)

O Father who sits  
On the throne of St. Thomas  
Revered Catholicos of all the East  
Reign in glory for long (2)

The grace of Priesthood granted by  
Jesus of Nazareth to his disciples  
Has passed on down through centuries  
And is lighted as thousand lamps  
In this Holy Father (2)

Always a refuge to the poor  
And the reliance of the sad and the sick  
Be the shepherd of ten thousands of children  
And reign in prosperity for long (2)

### **Let Us Pray**

(Prayer to the saint)

*O St. Thomas, Holy Father, may God enable us to commune in your virtues and through your intercession qualify us for His mercy and clemency, for ever. Amen.*

### **Resolution**

*We would remain steadfast and faithful under the Catholicate of Malankara and preserve our identity, uniqueness and independence of the Church.*

### **Let Us Ponder**

*“We entrust with you the responsibility to preserve the Catholicate which you sincerely believe, along with us, as inevitably essential for the preservation, wellbeing and progress of our Church and which we together had hitherto been conserving amidst several hardships”-The last will and Testament of St. Geevarghese Mar Dionysius of Vattasseril.*

### **Let Us Think**

1. What is meant by the ‘Throne of St. Thomas’?
2. Bring out the significance of the ‘Catholicate’ in Malankara Church. Who is the present Catholicos of our Church? Explain the circumstances which led to the establishment of the Catholicate in Malankara Church.
3. What are the benefits earned by Malankara Church from its constitution?

### **Activities**

1. Write a brief note on the administrative positions of Malankara Church in different periods of history.
2. Compare and contrast the positions of the Catholicos and the Patriarch.
3. “The Catholicate is the symbol of independence of the Malankara Church.” Discuss.

## UNIT 5

# THE HOLY EUCHARIST: A STUDY

## Chapter 20

### Maniso (Hymn) of Mar Severios

**Learning Objectives:** To understand the meaning and significance of the hymn of praise known as ‘Maniso of Mar Severios.’ We recite this prayer during our morning worship and at the beginning of the public celebration of the Holy Eucharist. To learn to participate in the recital of this hymn with devotion comprehending its meaning.

**Verse to be Memorized:** “My soul magnifies the Lord. And my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour” (Luke 1:46, 47).

**Learning Aids:** The Liturgical Book of the Holy Eucharist, the Holy Bible, and the Book of Common Prayer.

#### Introduction

We recite the hymn beginning ‘By Thy Mother’s earnest prayers...’ at the beginning of the public celebration of the Holy Eucharist. This hymn is titled ‘Maniso of Mar Severios’ (You may refer to the Book of Holy Eucharist; Let us recite this hymn together). This is a solemn hymn in which we commemorate the Mother of God, Saints, Jesus Christ’s Birth, Passion, Crucifixion and Resurrection. We also adore the Holy Trinity through this hymn. Today, we are going to learn this hymn and understand its meaning and significance.

#### The Lesson

The prose order of the Maniso of Mar Severius is given in the Pambakkuda Book of Prayer and other books of Canonical Prayers. It begins with the line “One who is deathless by nature...” The word to word translation of the Maniso is given in the Service Book of the Holy Eucharist.

#### What is ‘Maniso?’

The Syriac word ‘Maniso’ means ‘praise’. The song of praises used in our worship follow of the praises or hymns used in the Holy Bible and in the liturgy of the Early Church. St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians says; “Speaking to one another in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:19-20). Three types of songs used in worship are mentioned by St. Paul. They are Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual songs. The song

beginning 'By Thy Mother's earnest Prayers' belongs to the second category. This hymn is much more than a song. Here we also declare the Creed of the Church. Mar Severios sings about the mystery of Incarnation of Jesus Christ. When we examine the theme of this 'Maniso', we understand that it is a proclamation of the Creed of the Church, and a hymn to the Almighty.

### **Mar Severios of Antioch (465-538 A.D.)**

Mar Severios was one of the renowned Fathers of the Oriental Churches. He was born into an affluent family in the city of Sozopolis of Pisidia (Modern Turkey) in 465 A.D. He was trained in language and oratory in Alexandria, which was a great centre of culture and education. Later he went to Beirut and became well versed in Roman Law. It was during his stay in Beirut that he came to know about the Cappadocian Fathers and became a Christian. Mar Severios became a monk. Though he was an expert in Law, he preferred to reside in Jerusalem and lead the life of an ascetic. He donated his family wealth to the poor. He not only sang about the Incarnated Christ but also testified Christ through his life.

After the council of Chalcedon, there arose a dispute regarding the unity of the person and nature of Christ. Mar Severios expounded and defended the faith in 'One Nature of Christ' (Miaphysitism), and staunchly opposed Two-Nature theorists (Diaphysitism). His treatises, epistles and debates with the heretics, are valuable lessons in Christology. In 512 A.D. he was consecrated the Patriarch of Antioch. In his first speech on assuming the throne, he extolled the Creed of the Great Councils of Nicea, Constantinople and Ephesus and rejected the heretics of the council of Chalcedon. In those days the Non-Chalcedonians were cruelly persecuted. Mar Severios also had to suffer much and had to flee to Egypt. He passed away in AD 538. He is the author of several great spiritual hymns and writings including the hymn "By Thy mother's earnest Prayers". He is referred to in the Fifth Diptych as "the crown of the Syrians, the eloquent mouth, the pillar and the Doctor of the Holy Church of God, as a whole, the meadow abounding in blossom, who preached all the time that Mary was undoubtedly the God-bearer." This long acclaim shows the esteem that Mar Severios had in the Church.

### **An Analysis of the Hymn, "By Thy Mother's earnest Prayers"**

We learned in the lower classes that our worship and liturgies are also occasions for proclaiming our Creed. The first instance of proclaiming our Creed during the public celebration of the Holy Eucharist is the hymn "By Thy Mother's earnest prayers". This hymn contains the mystery of Incarnation of Lord Jesus Christ as well as the events from His Crucifixion to Resurrection. This is a verse rendering of the teachings of Mar Severios regarding Christology.

#### **1. Introductory Part of the Hymn**

When the Chancel is unveiled for the public celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the priest censes the Altar and recites the Ekbo beginning 'Mariam Deelethok...' ("Mary

who bore Thee; John who baptized Thee, may they be to Thee the supplicants for us; have mercy on us”). This Ekbo might originally have been the prologue of our hymn. Later this prologue might have been extracted out of the hymn as a separate prayer. Nevertheless this prayer is repeated with a minor alteration in the hymn recited by the people as well. “By Thy Mother’s earnest Prayers, by Thy saints entreaties...” Instead of specifying the name of St. John the Baptist along with St. Mary, we commemorate all saints in this hymnal rendering.

## **2. The Christological Teaching in the Hymn**

The teachings in this hymn regarding Jesus Christ, “Who being in the form of God did not regard equality with God, as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness” (Philippians 2:5-11), can be divided into two parts.

- a. The first part expounds the following regarding Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ in his true nature is free from mortality. He became incarnate for the salvation of the entire humankind out of His tender mercy. Even though Jesus Christ took the human form from St. Mary who is “glorious, chaste and pure”, His True Nature remained unaltered. He was crucified for the sake of all creation. We adore Lord Jesus who is Lord and King, Word and Father’s Son.

- b. The second part expounds the following ideas regarding the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and His position in the Holy Trinity.

Jesus Christ by virtue of His death, trampled upon the power of death over us (Romans 6:4-6). Lord the Son is one of the three persons of the Holy Trinity. He is worshipped and praised as equal to God the Father and the Holy Spirit (St. Matthew 28:19, 2 Corinthians 13:13).

## **The Maniso of Mar Severios and the Creeds We Use**

It would be better if we learn the Maniso of Mar Severios comparing it with the second paragraph of the Nicean Creed and the Pauline teachings in the Epistle to Philippians (2:5-11). In the Maniso of Mar Severios, only the events from the Birth till the Resurrection of Jesus Christ are mentioned. On the other hand the Nicean Creed states about Christ’s Ascension, the state of Him being seated on the right hand side of the Father and His second coming. St. Paul states that at the name of Jesus Christ, who got crucified and resurrected “every knee should bow, of those in heaven and of those on earth and of those under the earth” (Philippians 2:10-11). God the Father would be glorified through Jesus Christ.

The public celebration of our Holy Eucharist begins with the commemoration of the salvific work of the Incarnated Lord Jesus Christ. Like the angels, shepherds and the wise men who bowed to Jesus when He was born in Jerusalem, we too bow before the Lord at the beginning of the Holy Eucharist. This is ritually indicated through

the priest encircling the altar and censuring the altar and the people. The people who make the sign of the cross and bow to the censuring confess this gospel and their faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Hymn**

(Dhanye Mathave...)

O blessed mother, - by His love for you  
Let the Lord lighten-burden of our sins  
Pray on our behalf -before your own Son  
Not to condemn us -when He comes to judge  
Halleluiah -Vu-Halleluiah  
Your prayers alone are our refuge always.

### **Let Us Pray**

*O Virgin Saint Mary, kindly don't cease your prayers for our sake. Pray for us so that your only Son would show mercy upon us.*

*O Lord of all creation, by virtue of the prayers and supplication of the prophets who loved You and the Apostles who preached Your Gospel, let Your peace and tranquility reign all over the world. Amen.*

### **Resolution**

*We would recite the hymn 'Maniso of Mar Severios' understanding its meaning; during our morning worship at home and during the Holy Eucharist; and be confirmed in the faith of the Holy Orthodox Church*

### **Activities**

1. Mention the major faith confessions in the 'Maniso of Mar Severios.'
2. Explain the importance of Mar Severios of Antioch among our Church Fathers.
3. Describe the significance of the hymn 'By Thy Mother's earnest Prayers' in the life of a believer.
4. Explain the importance of confessing the salvific actions of Jesus Christ.
5. Compare this hymn with the second paragraph of the Nicene Creed.
6. Identify the similarities between the theme of this hymn and certain Pauline ideas in the Epistle to the Philippians (2:5-11).

## Chapter 21

# The Ministration of Fraction, Consignation and Commixion

**Learning Objectives:** Let us understand the features of the ministration of Fraction, Consignation and Commixture done during the Holy Eucharist.

**Verseto be Memorized:** “For my flesh is food indeed and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me and I in him” (John 6:55, 56).

**Learning Aids:** The liturgical book of Holy Eucharist and the Holy Bible.

### Introduction

The Diptychs is a solemn part of our Holy Eucharist. We learned about the Diptychs in earlier classes (Class IX, Unit 5). After the reading of the Diptychs, the chancel is veiled and we recite the Catholic Hymn (kasolikki) beginning “Hearken, gracious Lord, we pray...” The secret ministration performed in the veiled Holy of Holies at this time is known as the ministration of Fraction, Consignation and Commixion. Jesus Christ who founded the Holy Eucharist took bread, blessed, broke and gave it to his disciples. The service of the Eucharist could be divided into four parts based on these four acts of Jesus Christ while He established the Holy Eucharist. The act of ‘Taking’ indicates the preparatory ministrations and the lessons from the Holy Bible. ‘Blessing’ indicates the ministrations performed by the priest standing upon the altar step. This ministration ends with the Diptychs. What follows is the ministration of fraction, consignation and commixion which is the act of ‘Breaking.’ The part of the Holy Eucharist from the Lord’s Prayer to the administration of the Holy Communion is the ‘Giving’ part. Now let us analyse the various components of the ministration of Fraction, Consignation and Commixion.

### The Lesson

#### The Second Benediction

There are three ‘Benedictions’ during our Holy Eucharist. After the second benediction, the chancel is veiled and Catholic Hymn, ‘Hearken, gracious Lord, we pray...’ is sung. While the other two benedictions are given in the name of the Holy Trinity, the second benediction is given in the name of Lord Jesus Christ. It says “May the grace of Jesus Christ, the exalted God and our Savior be upon you, my brethren, forever.” This benediction is similar to the benedictions given by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 16:23 and Galatians 6:18.



## **Catholic Hymn**

The hymn recited after the veiling of the chancel is known as the Catholic Hymn. This term means ‘a general prayer.’ Certain special hymns are recited on this occasion on special days and feasts. However, we generally recite one of the two hymns, when the chancel is veiled.

### **1. The Hymn beginning ‘Hearken, gracious Lord, we pray...’**

The Syriac version of this hymn begins with ‘B’tharvo Deelok Hanono’. It is a simple hymn to be recited meditatively. It begs mercy from our Lord while the Holy Body of our Lord is broken. It is the moment when we beg mercy from our Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified for our sake.

### **2. The Hymn ‘Seraphim of fiery line...’**

This hymn is composed with the background of the heavenly vision of prophet Isaiah, described in chapter six of the Book of Isaiah (6:1-8). It is a sacred moment in which we become aware that the multitudes of angels are worshipping, Lord Jesus Christ. That is why, the priests often insist that no one should go out of the church or engage in other activities at this important occasion.

## **The Ministration of Fraction**

This ministration is called the ‘ministration of fraction’ because the priest breaks the Holy Bread kept in the Paten. Three events happen during this ministration.

- a. Fraction of the bread.
- b. Consignation of the holy body with the blood of Christ in the Chalice.
- c. Commixion of the body and blood of Christ.

The ministration of fraction is done secretly. The priest recites the prayer of the Church Father Dionysius bar Salibi on this occasion. It is not just a prayer, but another declaration of the Creed of the Church.

The priest confesses the following through the recital of this prayer.

- a. Through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, God the Word was broken and sacrificed for the salvation of humankind.
- b. When the body and spirit of Jesus parted at death, Godhead was with his Body and Spirit.
- c. Jesus Christ died on the cross for the remission of sins of the entire creation. Through crucifixion, we sinners (people inclined to the left) are forgiven and sanctified (people inclined to the right).
- d. Through crucifixion, Jesus Christ reconciled heaven and earth. Thereafter, He was resurrected on the third day. The offering of Christ on the cross was a divine act for the reconciliation between God and humankind; Jews and

gentiles. This prayer secretly recited by the priest ends with the statement; “We believe in and confess what we have said. We affirm what we have said.”

### **Litany**

Litanies are the supplications recited by the deacon following the Catholic hymn. These prayers are composed in such a manner that we beseech for mercy from Lord Jesus Christ who became an offering on the cross for the entire creation.

### **Conclusion**

The Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ has enabled our re-entry into paradise, which had been lost because of our sin. After commemorating these salvific events the chancel is unveiled and we prepare to recite the Lord’s Prayer. As we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews (10:19-22), we come to God the Father “by the blood of Jesus. By a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh.” With the freedom to cry out “Abba, Father” (Galatians 4:6-7). Then we recite the prayer “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name...” (Matthew 6:9-13).

### **Hymn**

(Agnimayanmaar aare nokki...)

The one on whom -fiery angels trembling gaze,  
That one as Bread-and wine upon-the altar see;  
As angels clad-in lightning are-enflamed by Him,  
So those who eat-them have their faces made as bright  
The secrets of-the Son are for-the angels fire;  
So witnesseth-Isaiah too-who them perceived;  
Those mysteries-within God’s bosom deep concealed  
For Adam’s sons-dispensed upon-the table, see!

### **Let Us Pray**

(Prayer before receiving the Holy Communion -  
from the Book of Holy Eucharist)

*Make us worthy O Lord God, to receive Thy Holy Body and drink Thy propitiating Blood that we may inherit Thy heavenly kingdom with all those who have pleased Thy good will, our Lord and our God forever. Amen.*

### **Resolution**

*We will participate prayerfully in the Holy Eucharist during the service of ‘fraction’, for it commemorates the crucifixion, death, burial, resurrection and ascension of our Lord.*

## Let Us Think

1. What are the four 'acts' done by Lord Jesus Christ when he founded the Holy Eucharist? How do we categorise our Holy Eucharist into various parts according to these four acts?
2. What is the special about of the second benediction given during the Holy Eucharist? Which benediction given in the Holy Bible is equivalent to this second benediction?
3. What does the 'Catholic hymn' mean in the Holy Qurbana?
4. Locate the Bible passage for the hymn 'Seraphim of fiery line...'
5. List the three 'events' happening during the ministration of fraction.
6. "The silent prayer recited by the priest during the ministration of fraction is a declaration of the Creed of the Church". Substantiate.
7. Analyze the litany recited at the end of the service of Fraction.

## Activities

1. Paraphrase the hymn 'Hearken gracious Lord, we pray...'
2. List the litanies recited during the ministration of Fraction. Read them carefully and understand their meaning.

## UNIT 6

# DOGMAS OF OUR FAITH

## Chapter 22

### The Holy Trinity

**Learning Objectives:** To get confirmed in the Trinitarian faith. To learn to adore the Holy Trinity. To understand the Old and New Testament bases of faith in the Holy Trinity. To understand the significance of Trinitarian faith in our life.

**Verse to be Memorized:** “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the suffering and afflicted” (Isaiah 61:1).

**Learning Aids:** A picture depicting baptism of Jesus Christ, the Holy Bible, the service book of the Holy Eucharist and the Book of family worship.

#### Introduction

A significant aspect of Christian faith is faith in the Holy Trinity. We believe in a Triune God, the three persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The three persons are recognized in the Holy Trinity. The Christian Church does not believe in several gods. Our God is a Triune God, One God and Three Persons at the same time. God is immeasurable and indefinable. We cannot delimit God in numbers like one or three. God is a mystery beyond the human intellect. Human intellect is only a creation of God. A creation cannot fully comprehend the Creator. However we should understand the fundamental principles of the Holy Trinity. Let us try to learn about the Holy Trinity today.

#### The Lesson

We confess our faith in the Holy Trinity in all our prayers. The sacraments begin with praise of the Holy Trinity. “In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, One True God.” We recite ‘Shubaho labo labro wal rooho kadeesho’ the Syriac version of “Glory be to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit” during our prayers and hymns recited during Canonical prayers and the sacraments. This is also a praise of the Holy Trinity. The prayers also end with a benediction in the name of the Holy Trinity. After the ‘Celebration of the Sosaffa’ during the Holy Eucharist, the priest gives the first benediction in the name of the Holy Trinity. “May the love of God the Father, the grace of the Only Begotten Son and the Communion of the Holy Spirit

be with you all.” St. Paul also concludes his second epistle to the Corinthians with this benediction (13:14).

During the Holy Eucharist, the Holy Mysteries are elevated and exalted with the pronouncement “Holy mysteries, for the Holy and the undefiled.” Following this, the declaration that “One Holy Father, One Holy Son and One living Holy Spirit” are ‘with us’ is made. These prayers indicate that during the Holy Eucharist and other prayers we are assembled in the presence of the Holy Trinity, and we submit our prayers to the Holy Trinity.

### **The Concept of Holy Trinity in the Old Testament**

The Jews believed in one God. “O Israel, listen: Yahweh is our God, Yahweh alone” (Deuteronomy 6:4). This verse was the creed of the Jews. However we can find pointers to the Holy Trinity throughout the Old Testament. Before the creation of human beings, the three persons of the Holy Trinity spoke among themselves. “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness...” (Genesis 1:26). “So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27). In the first verse plural form (‘us,’ ‘ourselves’) and in the second verse singular form (‘his’) is used to designate God. These verses indicate that God is Three in One and One in Three simultaneously.

In the Old Testament we find indications of the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. Psalm 33:6 says “By the word of the Lord (the Son) the heavens were made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth (the Holy Spirit).” The word used for ‘breath’ in both Hebrew and Syriac is ‘rooho’ (spirit). Here the reference is to the Son and the Holy Spirit who partook with the Father in the act of creation (see Psalm 147:18; here God’s Word and His wind (Spirit) are referred to).

The Psalmist in 51:11 prays “Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.” Similarly Isaiah 61:1 says “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring goodness to the suffering and the afflicted.” Jesus Christ began his public ministry by reading this prophetic passage on Sabbath day at the synagogue of Nazareth (Luke 4:16-19).

### **‘The Holy Trinity’ in the New Testament**

The manifestations of the Holy Trinity in the Old Testament were partial and shadowy. But the Holy Trinity is manifesting in the New Testament. Jesus Christ made revelations regarding the other two persons - the Father and the Holy Spirit. Later the New Testament writers, including St. Paul, taught about the Holy Trinity according to the divine revelations received by them.

The first manifestation of the Holy Trinity was at the baptism of Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ was baptized in River Jordan, St. John witnessed that “the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him and a voice came

from heaven which said “You are my beloved Son; in You I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:16-17, Luke 3:21-22, Mark 1:10-11 and John 1:32-34). In the Jordan River, the Son was present in human form, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove and the voice of the Father was heard.

There are several references to, God the Father in the teachings of Jesus Christ. The Lord’s Prayer is addressed to ‘Our Father Who art in heaven.’ Though Jesus Christ addresses the first person of the Holy Trinity as ‘Father’, the Father’s manifestation in the New Testament is only through voice. God is Spirit, beyond human thinking and intellect, and is invisible. Besides the manifestation at River Jordan, God the Father revealed Himself and witnessed the Son during the transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabore, saying “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him” (Matthew 17:1-9, Mark 9:2-10, Luke 9:28-36, 2 Peter 1:17-18).

The Holy Spirit too is invisible and beyond human intellect. The Holy Spirit manifested Himself in the form of dove at Jordan, in the form of tongues of fire on the Day of the Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) and in the form of wind in the beginning of creation (Genesis 1:2). The Holy Spirit manifested differently because He was formless.

### **The Holy Trinity in Our Christian Life**

The Triune God is a ‘Community.’ The believers who are joined with Christ through the sacrament of Baptism and who live in Christ through the Holy Communion come near to this ‘community.’ This is known as Communion. This word indicates our life with the Holy Trinity. The communion with the Holy Trinity is possible only through prayer. We join Christ through Baptism and the anointment through by the Holy Chrism. Thus the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in us. Thus we are transformed as children of heavenly Father. Each prayer strengthens our relationship with the Holy Trinity. “And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, Abba, Father! Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Galatians 4:6-7; see Romans 8:15).

Jesus Christ commanded his disciples to baptize all the nations in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). The goal of Incarnation was to bring humankind, that had drifted away from God the Father because of sin, back into communion with God. The Holy Baptism and Holy Communion are means of fulfilling this goal.

### **Hymn**

(Maramathinuyire Karthave)

May departed ones receive  
Who confessed the Trinity  
What was promised to the thief  
Paradise with Thee, O Lord.

## Let Us Pray

(Let us recite the prayer to the Holy Trinity together. This is the first prayer given in the section special prayers in the Book of Family worship)

*O Holy Father, guard us by Thy sacred Name. O Son of God, our Saviour, protect us with Thy victorious cross. O Holy Spirit, make us worthy temples of Thy Holy habitation. O Lord, our God forever, shelter us under Thy divine wings, at all times, forever. Amen.*

## Resolution

*We learnt the biblical basis and significance of the Holy Trinity. We will worship and praise God as the most Holy Trinity.*

## Let Us Think

1. How do we express our faith in Holy Trinity through our prayers?
2. Describe briefly the pointers to the Holy Trinity in the Old Testament.
3. List the instances in the New Testament where the Holy Trinity was revealed.
4. Describe the concept of the word 'Communion.'
5. Explain the importance of faith in of the Holy Trinity in our Church life.
6. What is meant by 'Triune God'?
7. List the liturgical hymns that commemorate the Holy Trinity.
8. What is the significance of the Holy Trinity in the Holy Eucharist?

## Chapter 23

# Priesthood in Christianity

**Learning Objectives:** To understand the fundamental concepts of Christian priesthood. To compare the features of priesthood in the Old Testament and the New Testament. To understand the various modes of ordinations in the New Testament and their significance. To develop respect for the ordained priests.

**Verse to be Memorized:** “Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession (Hebrews 4:14).

**Learning Aids:** The Holy Bible, the Service Book of the Holy Eucharist and the Book of Common Prayer

### Introduction

What are the various positions of priesthood in our Church? We have bishops (Episcopos), priests (Kashisho) and deacons (Mshamshono). Each stage has its own duties and functions. Today, we are going to learn about the meaning and significance of three fold ministry (priesthood) in Christianity.

### The Lesson

The basis of Christian priesthood is the priesthood of Lord Jesus Christ. The Epistle to the Hebrews describes Jesus Christ as “High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek” (6:20). This epistle also says that “Christ came as the High Priest of the good things to come” (9:11) and “through the eternal spirit offered Himself without spot to God” (9:14). Christ’s crucifixion at Calvary was an offering made by Him in His capacity as a priest.

### Israel and the Kingdom of Priests

God told Israel “And you shall be a kingdom of priests to God, a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). The epithet ‘Kingdom of priests’ means that everyone in the nation should fulfill their ‘priestly mission.’ God entrusted with each Jew the responsibility to preach the love and mercy of God to all people and pray for them. Though Israel as a whole was called a ‘priestly nation’, God selected the tribe of Levi from them to lead the people in worship and to make offerings. Among the Levites, Aaron and his sons were specially selected to lead the people in worship.

1 Peter 2:9 says “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people...”. This indicates that the Christian Church is the



'New Israel'. The Church has got the dignity as 'Kingdom of Priests.' Each Christian is called to preach the love and mercy of God to the world, and pray for the entire creation. Lord Jesus Christ founded Christian priesthood to lead the Church, lead in worship of God and administer the Holy Sacraments, as God had done in Old Israel.

### **Jesus Ordains His Disciples as Priests**

Epistle to the Hebrews describes Jesus Christ as 'High priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek' (6:20, 7:26-28, 8:2). St. John saw Jesus Christ adorned with the vestments of the High Priest. "And in the midst of the seven lamp stands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band" (Revelation 1:13). The garment down to the feet (Exodus 28:4,15) and the embroidered belt (Exodus 39:29) were part of the vestments of the Old Testament priests.

Jesus Christ made His disciples partners in His mission and authority. He entrusted the ministry He had been doing, to them. "And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease" (Matthew 10:1-2). Similarly Jesus Christ gave His disciples authority to absolve sins: "Assuredly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth, will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18:18; John 20:21-23). The Old Testament priests used to make offerings for the remission of sins of the people. Jesus Christ gave His disciples the authority to absolve sins.

The founding of the Holy Eucharist was the founding of the New Testament offering. 1 Corinthians 11:25 says, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood." Jesus Christ who is the True High Priest founded the New Covenant or the New Testament. Every celebration of the Holy Eucharist is a commemoration of this incident. Jesus Christ instructed the disciples to continue His priestly ministry through the commandment. "Do this in remembrance of Me" (1 Corinthians 11:24).

### **Christ's Disciples Selected Faithful as Partners in their Priestly Ministry**

Jesus Christ chose his disciples and ordained them as ministers, the disciples also selected others to the priestly ministry. One example is the selection of Matthias as apostle in place of Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:15-26). The selection of new candidates and making them partners in the priestly ministry of Jesus Christ is known as Ordination.

After the selection of Matthias, the Church selected "seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6:3), "whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them" (Acts 6:6). The apostles ordained seven deacons. Since the apostolic times the candidates for priesthood were ordained by laying on of hands. Hence, ordination is also known as 'Laying on of hands.'

## Other Ordinations in the New Testament

1. When Saul (St. Paul) and Barnabas set off for their first missionary journey, the ministers of the Church of Antioch laid hands on them and authorized them; “Then, having fasted and prayed and laid hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:3).

2. Barnabas and Paul ordained the elders in the churches they founded, by laying hands on them. “So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, in whom they had believed” (Acts 14:23). The elders or presbyters thus ordained were called ‘Presbyteros’ in Greek and ‘Kashisho’ in Syriac. This Bible passage tells us that Paul and Barnabas ordained ‘Kashishas.’

The New Testament also contains references to the bishops (‘Episcopos’ in Greek) ruling over the churches (Acts 20:17; 28; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:7; 1 Timothy 3:2). After the ascension of Jesus Christ, the Apostles gave leadership to the churches directly. They ordained bishops and ‘Kashishas’ in the churches they founded. The deacons were ordained to assist of bishops and priests. These three hierarchical positions gave leadership in all apostolic churches in church administration and ministry of sacraments. Christian priesthood was founded by Lord Jesus Christ to sustain the unity and faith of the Church.

## Hymn

(Aadyacharitwam kaikond...)

When the priesthood passed on down,  
Moses got it, Aaron too;  
Moses passed it to Skariah,  
Passed Skariah it on to John

John did pass it to our Lord  
Christ ordained Apostles twelve;  
They sent forth by Him  
Passed it on throughout the world...Moriyo Rahemelain vadaryn

## Let Us Pray

(This is a prayer recited along with the vespers on the Sunday of Priests given in the Book of Prayer)

*O Lord, grant good remembrance in heavenly Jerusalem to the priests who have kept Your commandments and above everything, earned Your pleasure. Let them be made part takers in the feast of Your Kingdom. Since they have entrusted their souls with You during their lives and at the hour of death, crown them in glory on the day of revelation of Your greatness. Amen*

## **Resolution**

*We will participate devoutly in the sacrament of Ordination of the Church and would respect the bishops, priests and deacons.*

### **Let Us Think**

1. What is the relevance of a special priesthood in the ministering of sacraments if the Church as a whole is a 'Kingdom of Priests'?
2. When did Christ ordain His disciples as priests?
3. Identify and explain the instances of ordinations done by the apostles.
4. What are the three hierarchical positions of Christian priesthood (Threefold Ministry)?
5. What were the principles in the concept of priesthood during the Old Testament period?
6. What are the characteristics of the priesthood of Jesus Christ?

### **Activities**

1. List the characteristics of 'Melchizedek as priest' (refer Hebrews 7:1-4).
2. Illustrate the three hierarchical positions of priesthood by drawing a pyramid.
3. Conduct a discussion in the class on the characteristics of Christian priesthood.

## Chapter 24

# Eschatology

**Learning Objectives:** To understand the Orthodox perspective of the End of Ages. To understand the New Testament teaching on the End of Ages and the importance of this vision to Christian life. To compare the teaching on the End of Ages with the Resurrection of the dead. To compare and understand the characteristics of life in the Kingdom of Heaven with the worship of the Church. To prepare ourselves and wait for the experience of eternal life.

**Verse to be Memorized:** “Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea” (Revelation 21:1).

**Learning Aids:** The Holy Bible, the Service Book of Holy Eucharist and the Book of Common Prayer

### Introduction

One day our world will come to an end. This day is known as ‘End of Ages.’ End of Ages will happen at the second coming of Lord Jesus Christ. The Last Judgement and eternal life are connected to the End of Ages. Today we are going learn about the End of Ages, as described in the New Testament.

### The Lesson

In the Nicean Creed we confess our faith in the Triune God; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We also confess our faith in the Holy Church, one Baptism and eternal life in the world to come. Note that these are the fundamental dogmas of the Church.

### Teaching on the ‘End of Ages’ in the New Testament

The importance of the End of Ages is the second coming of Lord Jesus Christ. At the time of ascension of Jesus Christ, two heavenly angels told the disciples. “This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). The Holy Bible ends with the prayer “Amen. Come Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20). The first coming (Incarnation) of Jesus Christ, even though many people did not acknowledged it, became a turning point in history. History is divided into BC (Before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini means Year of the Lord) based on the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. However the second coming of Jesus Christ will be the end of history, and the beginning of eternal life. Mark 13:26

reads “Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.” This means that the entire creation will see the second coming of Jesus Christ.

There are about 150 references to the second coming of Christ in the New Testament. The second coming is often described using the Greek word ‘parousia.’ This word means ‘arrival’ or ‘presence.’ The word parousia was used to describe the visit of the emperor or the high officials. This word indicates that the second coming of Jesus will be in glory (The entry of Jesus into the Temple of Jerusalem on Palm Sunday is often considered as a sign of the coming of Jesus Christ, see Matthew 24:3, 27, 39).

Words like ‘revelation’ and ‘manifestation’ are also used in the New Testament to describe the second coming of Jesus Christ. During the second coming of Jesus, the meaning of life, the state of soul after death and the essence of eternal life would be fully revealed. These words indicate that the second coming would reveal things invisible and intractable to humankind.

### **The Teaching on the ‘End of Ages’ and Church Life**

When we say that Jesus Christ would come again, it does not mean that today we do not have His presence in the Church and the world. He said, “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). Jesus Christ is present in our life and worship. He is present in the Church as its Head, its Groom and its Shepherd. Christ is present in the life of each believer who has received the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion; and who maintains a live relationship with Jesus Christ. Christ abides in us, as our very life. “Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:54).

However we would experience the totality of Christ’s presence and life only at His second coming. The New Testament exhorts us to pray and live in the hope of second coming. We pray “Thy kingdom come” in the Lord’s Prayer with this hope in mind. We confess our hope in the second coming of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist as well. “We commemorate Thy death, O Lord, and confess Thy resurrection, and await Thy second coming. May Thy blessings be upon us all.”

Even though the second coming is a certainty, the New Testament doesn’t specify when that would happen. In Matthew 24:42, Lord Jesus Christ commands thus: “Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.” Prayer is a sign of awakening. We say each of our prayers in hope of the second coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ himself has suggested that His second coming would be from the East. “For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be” (Matthew 24:27).

We say our prayers facing the east and bury our dead with their faces turned eastwards in hope of this second coming from the east. The canonical prayers and the treatises of Church Fathers also contain the hope that Jesus Christ, the Sun of

Righteousness (Malachi 4:2) would rise in the east, at the End of Age. The Church Fathers describe the End of Age 'as the dawn of Resurrection.' This is because the second coming of Jesus Christ would be the dawn of a New Age as well.

### **The End of Age and the Resurrection of the Dead**

The most important event at second coming would be the resurrection of the dead. The New Testament gives a description of the resurrection of the dead at the second coming. "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch angel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, this passage is read during the funeral service of women). After resurrection we would assume a glorified body, and a life different from that of today (1 Corinthians 15:35-57)

There would be the Last Judgement accompanying the resurrection of the dead. "For the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice. And come forth- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:29). Eternal life or the life in heaven would be a life in fellowship with the large community of saints. When we compare the kingdom of heaven to a marriage feast it indicates a life of fellowship (Matthew 8:11-12; 22:1-14). One characteristic of life in heaven is incessant worship. "And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be into, and His servants shall serve Him" (Revelation 22:3). The worship in the Church is a sign of the eternal worship in heaven (Revelation 22:4). "They shall see His face." What we get through the worship and sacraments of the Church is a foretaste of the eternal life in which we would see the face of God forever.

### **Hymn**

(Hey mruthigathare...)

O-departed-resurrection is at hand  
Don't-be sad at-the loss of-your flesh  
The One who made-you as beautiful  
Has given-resurrection in body  
The good Lord gives-reward to-all upon their merit.

### **Let Us Pray**

*We commemorate Thy death, O Lord, and confess Thy resurrection, and await Thy second coming. May Thy blessings be upon us all. Amen.*

## Resolution

*We await the second coming of our Lord. We would prepare ourselves and wait for eternal life in heaven.*

### Let Us Think

1. List the fundamental dogmas of faith of the Church.
2. What are the words used in the New Testament to indicate the 'Second Coming' of Jesus Christ? Write short notes on the meaning of each of these words.
3. Why do we pray facing the east?
4. What are the characteristics of life in the Kingdom of Heaven?
5. Describe briefly how the vision of the End of Ages is expressed in our liturgy.
6. The Incarnation of Jesus Christ was a turning point in history. Why?
7. What is the meaning of the Greek word 'parousia'?

### Activities

1. Collect relevant verses on the vision of end of Ages in the Holy Bible, and write them in your diary.
2. Conduct a discussion in the class on how the End of Ages would happen.
3. Conduct interview with Bible Scholars to know more about the End of Ages.

# UNIT 7

## GREAT MEN OF GOD

### Chapter 25

## His Holiness Catholicos Baselius Geevarghese II (1874-1964)

**Learning Objectives:** To study the life of His Holiness Catholicos Baselius Geevarghese II, and follow the example of this Church Father in our lives.

**Verse to be Memorized:** “By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks” (Hebrews 11:4).

**Learning Aids:** Books on Church History by Z. M. Paret and Fr. Dr. Joseph Cheeran, Malankara Church Fathers by Dr. Samuel Chandanappally, Encyclopedia of Church History by Fr. Dr. Joseph Cheeran, Church Encyclopedia, the Holy Bible, the Service Book of Holy Eucharist, and the Book of Common Prayer, and a pictures of H. H. Catholicos Baselius Geevarghese II

### Introduction

In the Malankara Church, up to 1876, there had been only one Metropolitan. He was had the title ‘Metropolitan of Malankara’. This Metropolitan had been the only episcopal and administrative authority in the Church. The Synod of Mulanthuruthy in 1876 brought about a change in this state of affairs. Apart with the Malankara Metropolitan, six other metropolitans were consecrated. In 1912 the Catholicate was established in Malankara, which gave the Malankara Orthodox Church the status of a fully autocephalous Church. Thus began modern age of Malankara Church.

Since the establishment of the Catholicate in 1912, nine Catholicoses reigned over Malankara Orthodox Church. Among these, the one who reigned for the longest period is H. H. Catholicos Baselius Geevarghese II. Today let us learn about the life and contributions of this saintly Father.

### The Lesson

#### A Biographical Sketch

H. H. Catholicos Geevarghese II was born on June 16, 1874 as the son of Ulahannan and Achiyamma of Kallasseriyl house Kurichy, Kottayam, Kerala. His pet name was Punnoose. Geevarghese was his baptismal name. Later he came to be



known as 'Kallassery Bava' or 'Kurichy Bava' based on names of his family and of native place respectively. During his childhood he had a serious illness which was cured through prayer. Then his parents dedicated him for the service of God, and he remained steadfast in that vow throughout his life.

The period of his life and work was a critical one in the history of Malankara Church. The Church was progressing under the able leadership of Pulikkottil Joseph Mar Dionysius II. St. Gregorios of Parumala was a source of spiritual strength for the Church at that time. Vattasseril Geevarghese Ramban and Punnoose Ramban worked as disciples of St. Gregorios of Parumala. Such a strong spiritual leadership could successfully withstand the storm of the Protestant and Pentecostal Movements in Malankara.

This saintly Father was ordained a deacon in 1892 and a priest in 1898. On the very third day of his ordination as priest, he took vows of a complete monastic life and was professed Ramban. He stayed with St. Gregorios and served the saint and learned principles of ascetic life from his guru. When St. Gregorios passed away on November 2, 1912, he was appointed as Manager of Parumala Seminary. He visited Jerusalem in 1908. In those days it had been a trouble some and yet, a spiritually enlightening journey. On September 8, 1912 he was consecrated Metropolitan with the title Geevarghese Mar Gregorios. A few days after his consecration as Metropolitan, on September 15, the first Catholicos of Malankara was installed. He was a member of the Holy Synod which installed the first Catholicos. When the second Catholicos was consecrated, he was also part of it. After the sudden demise of the second Catholicos, on February 15, 1928, he was chosen as the third Catholicos of Malankara. During this period he was shepherding the dioceses of Niranam and Kollam.

He founded a seminary at Kundara (Kollam District) and effected a great spiritual awakening in that region where the Protestant teachings had gained influence. The saintly life and authoritative teachings regarding true faith became instrumental in retaining people in the true Faith. He published several books like Private prayers, History of Martyrs of the Church, Penkeesa (Canonical Prayers for feast days), and a translation of 'Paradise of the Holy Fathers' from Syriac into Malayalam. These literary works were done in times when printing facilities were limited.

Vattasseril St. Dionysius Metropolitan passed away on February 23, 1934. The Malankara Syrian Christian Association which met on December 25 of the same year, entrusted the position of Malankara Metropolitan also with the Catholicos. Thus H. H. Geevarghese II became the first Catholicos to function in the twin offices of the Catholicos and the Malankara Metropolitan. Malankara Metropolitan is the administrative authority of the Church. The Catholicos exercised the spiritual authority in the Church which included consecration of metropolitans, consecration of the Holy Chrism and presiding over the Episcopal Synod. Though these two

positions had been held by two different primates of the Malankara Orthodox Church because of historical reasons, subsequent history has shown that the same person holding both these positions is better for the effective administration of the Church.

He had been Metropolitan for 52 years, in he functioned as Catholicos for 35 years and held the twin offices of the Catholicos and the Malankara Metropolitan for 26 years. Our Church cannot boast of another Church Father who had such a long tenure in these high offices. Several people have called him 'Father of the Renaissance of Malankara Church' and the appellation seems quite suitable when consider his saintly life and great contributions. The saintly Father entered into eternal bliss on January 3, 1964, at the age of 90. He was interred at Catholicate Palace, Devalokam, Kottayam which had been bought by the Church during his tenure. He was the first Catholicos to be buried at the Catholicate Palace, Devalokam.

### **The Greatness and Contributions of this Saintly Father**

Even though the eventful life of this Church Father requires a detailed examination, certain important characteristics are given below.

#### **A Great Ascetic**

His spiritual rigor and ascetic practices were exemplary. He saw in his teacher, St. Gregorios of Parumala, a model for his asceticism. He was enthusiastic and vigilant about observing the canonical prayers, fasts and conducting sacraments. He followed them faithfully. He had rare spiritual experiences like hearing God's answers in his solitary prayer and meditation. As a result, his words and vision became a rich spiritual treasure for the believers. His life and observances helped even those who felt inclined towards teachings of Protestant Reformation, to appreciate the flavours of Oriental Orthodox Spirituality.

#### **Christian Witness**

He lived during a period in which Malankara Church was undergoing bitter factional squabbles. Though several court cases were going on, he relied on God's grace in settling the disputes. Hence he was undaunted when the verdict of 1951 went against him. He emboldened the believers with the optimistic statement "Truth shall Triumph." He did not keep any bitterness against those who opposed him. On the other hand he extended his love and affection to all of them. When the Supreme Court Verdict of 1958 became favourable of Malankara Orthodox Church, he was not excessively elated by it, and never scoffed at the opponents. He accepted them into his fold with Christian love, and reigned over the united Church as its High Priest till the end of his life.

#### **His Social Recognition and Acceptance**

Even though he was the head of a small Church, he was recognized and accepted as if he were the head of the whole community in Kerala. The second World Conference

of Faith and Order met at Edinburgh in 1937, the participants looked upon him as a great Oriental Orthodox Father and he earned the attention and recognition of all who attended the meeting. The 'spiritual glow' of countenance is earned by men of God. It was this glow that attracted people towards him. He also visited the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Yugoslavia and Serbia. During his tenure the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, the Cyprus President Archbishop Makarios and the Armenian Patriarch Vaskan visited the Malankara Church.

H. H. Geevarghese II gave leadership to the Church during a period when India was moving from foreign domination to independence. Various political and religious leaders of the times showed great love and respect to the Catholicos. Leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru, Mannath Padmanabhan, and R. Sankar were among them. Within the Church, lay leaders like journalist Jacob Kurian, K. C. Mammen Mappila, Advocate John Elanjikkal and A. M. Varkey, gave staunch support to the Catholicos in leading the Church and in animating the spiritual organizations. He could also resist the onslaught of the Malankara Catholic movement (Syro Malankara Catholic Rite) which originated in 1930. In 1947 he proclaimed Metropolitan Geevarghese Mar Gregorios of Parumala and Maphrian Yeldo Mar Baselius of Kothamangalam as saints of the Church. He entrusted his duties to H. H. Baselios Augen I as his successor, and passed away in peace and hope from this world, on January 3, 1964.

### **Hymn**

(Episcopanmarakum...)

Our Lord for us has chosen  
Episcopas as church heads  
Appointing them shepherds  
Of His Holy Church pure

### **Let Us Pray**

*O saintly Fathers of the Church, we praise God the Father for choosing you to your posts. We adore Lord Jesus who strengthened you. We worship the Holy Spirit who crowned you. By virtue of your prayers let God shower mercy on us sinners ever. Amen.*

### **Resolution**

*We would always remember our Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan H. H. Baselius Geevarghese II who boldly led the Church at a critical time in its history. We would follow the good examples set by him.*

## Let Us Think

1. Evaluate the contributions of H. H. Baselius Geevarghese II to the Church and Community.
2. How did the Catholicos exemplify Oriental Orthodox spirituality?
3. How was the Catholicos welcomed at the Edinburgh conference?
4. Who is the 'Father of Renaissance' of the Malankara Church? Why is he called so?
5. What were the qualities of the Catholicos Geevarghese II as an ascetic?
6. Point out an example for the powerful Christian witness of this Church Father.
7. Why do we often call H. H. Catholicos Geevarghese II 'Kallassery Bava' and 'Kurichy Bava'?
8. Comment on the social ecclesiastical state of the Malankara Church during the period of His Holiness Catholicos Geevarghese II.
9. Describe the activities of the Catholicos at Kundara.
10. What do we understand by saying "the positions of Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan converged in a single person?"

## Activities

1. Collect pictures of all the Catholicos who reigned in Malankara Orthodox Church.
2. Read books on Church history and Church Fathers.
3. Follow the examples set by the Church Fathers.

## Chapter 26

# His Grace Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios Metropolitan (1922-1996)

**Learning Objectives:** Our Church has produced a great scholar who could be designated 'Gregorios of Nyssa of India'. Let us learn about him the this lesson.

**Verse to be Memorized:** "Receive my instruction, and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold" (Proverbs 8:10).

**Learning Aids:** Church Encyclopedia, Church Fathers of Malankara by Samuel Chanadanappally, Gregorios: The Teacher by Fr. Dr. K. M. George, and The Autobiography of Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios.

### The Lesson

The eminent scientist Albert Einstein wrote about the martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi thus. "The future generations would refuse to believe that such a man lived on earth in flesh and blood." Gandhiji's life was extraordinary enough to invite such a comment. The life of Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios metropolitan was also an extraordinary one. Our Church cannot boast of a greater scholar than him during the two thousand years of our history. Such a multifaceted genius is not seen in the entire history of all Christian Churches in India. You may not be able to understand his intellectual prowess at your age. Hence, let us learn his biographical details today. You could read his books when you grow up.

### Childhood and Education

Have you heard about the hardships suffered by Abraham Lincoln during his childhood? He had to wade through several hardships before he became a great man. The childhood experiences of the Metropolitan too were similar. He was born on August 9, 1922 as the son of Paily Master and Eli Paily of Thadikkal family in Thrippunithura. His name was Paul Varghese. He has written in his autobiography (The Freedom of Love: A Great Mystery) that though he studied in several renowned universities, he learned the basic lessons of his theological studies from his mother. This mother who imparted prayer and love to her son, later became mentally imbalanced.

This was a great blow to Paul Varghese during his childhood. His father and four siblings were greatly grieved by this, and all domestic affairs including housekeeping and cooking went out of gear. Paul wrote his school final exams amidst these hardships. Yet he passed the examination in first class. However, he could not enjoy the happiness

of his academic success. His father, who had been a school teacher, was not wealthy enough to give university education to his son. His father had to give primary education to the younger children. He was in a serious financial constraint. Paul Varghese was grieved at this misfortune but was not disappointed.

He believed that God would open up a path before him, and struggled to earn his own livelihood. He spent the next ten years of his life in material struggles. He worked as a journalist for a newspaper and later in a transporting company. Along with his work, he found time to study on his own. Consequently he wrote the competitive examination of the Postal and Telegraph Department and earned a job. Since he grew up amidst hardships of life, he could naturally empathize with the working class. He worked as a union leader in the Postal Department and worked for the welfare of the employees. But he did not give up his desire to acquire higher education.

### **A Teacher in Ethiopia**

His appointment as a teacher in Ethiopia was a great turning point in his life. He got this opportunity quite accidentally. One day he helped some foreign tourists when their car broke down. He told them the directions to reach their destination in good English. Besides, his good manners attracted them, and this paved the way for his Ethiopian journey. Those foreigners had come to recruit graduates to teach in Ethiopia. They selected Paul Varghese who was just a matriculate then for, they could assess his abilities well. For the next three years, he worked as a teacher in Ethiopia. He mastered the Ethiopian language Amharik, and wrote a grammar book for that language. This grammar text earned much praise from all and even the emperor Haile Selassie noticed the young man. However Paul Varghese had to suffer several hardships in Ethiopia because of the jealousy of his colleagues.

### **Higher Education in England and America**

In Ethiopia, Paul Varghese was not satisfied with the job not commensurate with his ability. God gave him an opportunity to pursue his greatest goal of theological studies. He joined Goshen College, USA for his undergraduate studies. Later, he moved over to Oklahoma, Union Theological Seminary, New York and Princeton Seminary, and earned his graduate and post graduate degrees in theology. The next two years he worked in Fellowship House, Aluva, Kerala, MGOCSM and in the Student Christian Movement (SCM). Within the short span of these two years, he became well known throughout Kerala as a Bible scholar and theologian.

### **Paul goes again to Ethiopia and Abroad**

The Emperor of Ethiopia himself directly invited Paul to Ethiopia. Emperor Haile Selassie who arrived as the guest of Government of India in 1956, participated in the 100th Feast of Commemoration of Mar Dionysius of Cheppad and certain other programmes of the Malankara Church. During the visit the Emperor obtained

the consent of H. H. Catholicos Baselius Geevarghese II and took Paul Varghese along with him to Ethiopia. It is abundant grace of God that enabled a child born in a village in Thrippunithura to become an Advisor to the emperor of a foreign country. Even though Paul had a lot of opportunities and temptations for material growth, he didn't succumb to them. He kept up his burning desire to serve his Church and through it, the entire humankind. With this goal in mind, he left Ethiopia before the emperor lost his crown.

He went for his higher studies at Oxford in the Yale University. His studies on the Cappadocean Fathers, especially St. Gregory of Nyssa, brought him to the forefront of the leading theologians of his time. He was slowly becoming a world citizen. He became the Associate Secretary of World Council of Churches. Meanwhile peace and unity was established in the Malankara Church in 1958 after the Supreme Court verdict. He was ordained a deacon in the same year and was ordained priest in 1962.

Fr. Paul Varghese became a teacher par excellence in the bible study classes of World Council of Churches. His knowledge of English excelled that of western scholars. Along with English, he used Syriac, Greek, Latin, German, French, Sanskrit, Tamil, Hindi and Malayalam in explicating Western and Eastern philosophy and theology. Such multilingual lectures were a renewing experience for his audience. His knowledge was not confined to any one particular subject or topic. This multidimensional knowledge was a unique gift. He had vast knowledge and communicative skills to explain logically how Western and Eastern theology, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Confucianism, Taoism, Marxism, Art, Literature, Political Science, and above all, Science, with its theories and philosophical perspectives, were interrelated.

He was a member of various bodies of World Council of Churches including the Central Committee before he became its President. He participated in various international struggles for justice, in issues which affect humankind. He participated in UN General Assembly, and had contact with Russian leaders like Mikhail Gorbachev who introduced 'perestroika'. He was active in and issues like disarmament, world food scarcity, drinking water issues and protection of nature. He earned several doctorates and awards.

### **Principal of the Orthodox Theological Seminary and Metropolitan of Diocese of Delhi**

He did not forget his own Church even when he was engrossed in various national and international issues. He became principal of the Orthodox Theological Seminary in 1967, and continued in that position till his death. In 1975 he was consecrated the metropolitan of the Diocese of Delhi. He was actively engaged in theological pursuits in his capacity as principal of the Orthodox Theological Seminary, and as the metropolitan of Delhi. He got involved in religious and socio-political activities. His mission was to transform all people, irrespective of their caste or religion,

into the kingdom of God, as revealed in Lord Jesus Christ. He pointed out that all religions, ideologies, sciences, art, politics and literature have a role to play in this transformation. The Divyabodhanam was started in 1984 because of his zeal that the laity of the Church were to acquire a deep knowledge of the Scriptures and theology.

He firmly believed that it was God who would transform this world ultimately. However, everyone should play his/her role in this process. He taught that wherever there is goodness, its source is God. He visited various continents and several countries. During his flight from England to Germany in 1993 he had a stroke and for the next three years he could work only within the limitations imposed by this. He passed away on November 24, 1996 in New Delhi. He was buried on November 26 at Orthodox Theological Seminary Chapel, Kottayam. His life is really great and unbelievable. We should learn more about this great Church leader, theologian and genius.

### **Let Us Pray**

*O Lord Jesus Christ, the life of H. G. Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios Metropolitan teaches us to overcome crises in life. Lord Jesus, help us to overcome crises in life. Amen.*

### **Let Us Think**

1. What was the greatest crisis encountered by Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios during his childhood?
2. What were the positions held by Dr. Paulose Mar Gregorios in foreign Countries?
3. What aspect of the life of Mar Gregorios would, in your view, be most attractive for the youth of today?
4. The Metropolitan tells us that he learned the basic lessons of theology from his mother. Has anyone influenced you in a similar way?



## Chapter 27

### Fr. Dr. V. C. Samuel (1912-1998)

**Learning Objectives:** To learn about Fr. Dr. V. C. Samuel who was like deacon St. Athanasius who defended Orthodox faith at the Ecumenical Council of Nicea (AD 325).

**Verse to be Memorized:** “Lord who may abide in Your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart?” (Psalm 15:1-2).

**Learning Aids:** Church Encyclopaedia, Church Fathers of Malankara by Dr. Samuel Chandanapally, the books and articles of Fr. Dr. V. C. Samuel

#### The Lesson

Fr. Samuel was born on April 6, 1912 as the fifth child of the nine children of E.A. Cherian and Annamma of Edayil Family, Omalloor, Pathanamthitta. His father was a school teacher, who was interested in educational field. He wanted to give good education to his children. Samuel completed his primary education in his father’s school at Pathanamthitta and had his high school education at Kozhencherry. Even though he was a brilliant student, he could not continue his higher education for a while due to the social circumstances. He joined Manjinkara Dayara at Omalloor for his religion and theological education.

#### His life at Manjinkara Dayara

His life in Manjinkara Dayara (monastery) shaped his vision and perspective of life. After the mortal remains of Patriarch Elias III of Antioch were interred in the Dayara, a representative of the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch always resided there. Ramban Abdul Ahad (Later Patriarch Yakub III) and Elias Mar Julius who resided there, he helped Samuel to acquire deep knowledge in Syriac and Hebrew. Along with this, he acquired mastery in English language through his wide reading. This was the beginning of his language studies. Later he mastered several languages like Greek, Latin, German, Kannada and Tamil.

#### Higher Education

He could go for higher education only thirteen years after completing his school education. He began his higher studies in 1944 and continued it till 1957. He completed his BA in philosophy from UC College Aluva, MA in Philosophy from Madras Christian College, Bachelor of Divinity from United Theological College

Bangalore, Master of Sacred Theology from New York Union Seminary and finally Ph.D from the Yale University. He completed all his degrees with high academic excellence.

### **A Researcher in Search of Truth**

Though he was born and brought up in a Malankara Orthodox Syrian family which professed allegiance to Syrian Patriarch, he had, from childhood, an earnest desire to understand the truth of the schism between Orthodox Church and Jacobite faction, objectively. He was interested in enquiring whether there was any truth in branding Oriental Orthodox Churches as 'Monophysites'. He enquired into the background of the Council of Chalcedon which caused the first split in the Christian Church, and also the truth behind 'One Nature', 'Two Natures' theories. His findings on these issues became beneficial to the Church. He proved through his studies that the controversies regarding One Nature and Two Natures originated because of the socio-political conditions in those days, and because both factions did not understand the actual theological position of the other. His doctoral thesis, 'Council of Chalcedon-Re-examined' was an eye opener for the entire Church.

### **The Search for an Indian Church Identity**

Fr. V. C. Samuel had great vision and interest regarding an Indian Church, free from the hegemony of Western Churches (including the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch). His studies in this direction were carried out at CISRS (Christian Institute for Studies in Religious sciences), Bangalore established by Dr. P. D. Devanandan. He also got the fellowship of Rockefeller Foundation for carrying out Post Doctoral Studies. He made in depth studies of Vedanta in Indian Philosophy, Vivekananda, Sri. Ramakrishna, Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Movement. He argued that Indian Churches should have a national character and wrote several books and articles on the topic. His self critical book on Malankara Orthodox Church titled 'Is this an Indian Church?' is one of the most insightful books written by him. The challenges raised in this book, several decades ago, still remain live and significant.

### **An Ideal Teacher**

His career as a teacher of Syriac language at Manjinikkara Dayara soon found new platforms in great centres of learning. He taught at Serampore College, UTC Bangalore, Holy Trinity Theological College in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Ecumenical Institute at Whitefield, Bangalore and finally for a decade at Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam and Federated Faculty for Research in Religion and Culture (FFRRC). Students from various churches could experience his great scholarship, humility and love.

### **In the Ecumenical Movement**

Fr. Samuel earnestly tried to bring the various churches to greater understanding of each other. Most of his later works were in this direction. He presented treatises on

Ecumenism at four assemblies of World Council of Churches: Evanston (USA) 1954, New Delhi 1961, Uppsala (Sweden) 1968 and Nairobi (Kenya) 1976. He served for 23 long years (1961-1984) in the Faith and Order commission of the World Council of Churches, the theological fellowship of various Churches which includes the Roman Catholic Church. He presented scholarly papers at all the seven assemblies of this fellowship during this period.

He gave active leadership to the dialogues between Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches and also to 'Pro Oriente', the fellowship between Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church. While giving leadership in international fellowships, he did not discard the ecumenical movements in India. He gave active leadership to Kerala Council of Churches (KCC) and National Council of Churches in India (NCCI).

### **Services to the Malankara Church**

He began his work in the Church as a Sunday School inspector. He was ordained deacon and priest in 1935. When he worked in Serampore, Bangalore and Ethiopia, he took the initiative to establish Churches and centres of worship in those places. Most of his work in this direction was done at Bangalore. He gave leadership to St. George (Trinity) Church, St. Gregorios Church Hosur (He was a member of this Church when he died), St. Mary's Church Jalahalli, St. Thomas Church Bangalore East, and St. Stephen's Church Vijayanagar. He also served in a few parishes in Kerala.

### **Writer, Scholar, Orator**

He was not an orator at religious conventions. His speeches were scholarly. He has written several books and articles. His book 'Truth Triumphs' on Vattasseril St. Dionysius is a classic. His autobiography titled 'On the Stage of Own Experiences' (Swanubhava vedhiyil) the sincere account of a truthful life. He was a true philanthropist. His love had no boundaries of religion, caste, denomination or nationality. His book 'Who is Jesus Christ?' is an excellent work in Christology and was published by CLS, Thiruvalla. He has also authored books included in the curriculum of 'Divyabodhanam' (Lay Theological Education Programme) of Malankara Church. He spent his last days in Bangalore. He left for the heavenly abode on November 18, 1998 at the age of 86. This chapter should serve as an introduction to him. The life and work of Fr. Dr. V. C. Samuel merits deep study and appreciation.

### **Let Us Pray**

*O Lord Jesus Christ, help us to stand for true faith like Fr. Dr. V. C. Samuel. Strengthen the Malankara Orthodox Church to remain as a truly Indian Church. Let everything be for Your glory and according to Your will. Amen.*

## Let Us Think

1. Write a note on the student days of Fr. V. C. Samuel.
2. What were the circumstances which enabled Fr. Samuel to learn Syriac language?
3. How does Fr. V. C. Samuel's research help the reconciliation of the Byzantine and Oriental Orthodox Churches?

## Activities

1. Prepare a list of the books written by Fr. Dr. V. C. Samuel
2. Prepare your response to the question 'Is this an Indian Church?' raised by Fr. V. C. Samuel and discuss.
3. Expand the following

CISRS.....

FFRRC .....

KCC.....

NCCI.....

# UNIT 8

## GOOD HABITS

### Chapter 28

## Righteous Utilization of Wealth

**Learning Objectives:** To understand the need to utilize wealth with justice and righteousness. To understand the ways in which wealth can be utilized righteously.

**Verse to be Memorized:** “For, the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows” (1 Timothy 6:10).

**Learning Aids:** The Holy Bible and the Book of Common Prayer.

### Introduction

Many consider wealth more important than anything else. New generation Charismatic groups try to link wealth and prosperity with Christian faith. In this lesson let us understand what the Holy Bible says about earning, keeping and spending money.

### The Lesson

Human beings need money to meet their life needs. Earning, keeping or spending money is not a sinful act. But it is important to check if the means of earning money is righteous. Keeping and worshipping wealth is a sin. wealth is God-given. Our possessions are entrusted to us by God. Possessions come in different forms. House, vehicle, land property, domestic animals, stores and business houses, factories, bank deposits, share investments, gold, and money are examples. Today, wealth decides the style and standard of life. Many think that wealth is the basis for defining relationships, forming friendships and deciding social status. Let us look at the various aspects of utilizing wealth.

### 1. Acquisition of Wealth

Whatever we have is God-given. God rewards those who do His will. Jesus Christ tells such people, “Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little” (Luke 19:17). While lauding the servant who worked hard and gained profit using the talents given to him. The important sources of income are agriculture, trade, employment in government and private institutions, and business enterprises. In modern times people are interested in amassing wealth rather than earning it as a

means of livelihood. With this goal in mind many people resort to usury, bribes, corruption, trafficking, black market, and black money. When people try to amass wealth illegally, the number of criminals who engage in theft, robbery, murder and looting would increase. Shall we reflect for a moment? We have a song: "I have nothing else to count as my wealth; Jesus is my only wealth." Can we really confess that Jesus is our only wealth?

## **2. How should we spend our wealth?**

We should be righteous not only in acquiring wealth, but also in spending it. 75% of the wealth of the world is in the hands of 25% of its population. Today, wealthy people try to display their affluence before others. Luxury cars ply on roads. Some people build palatial mansions for their nuclear family. Birthdays, baptism, marriage and even funerals have become occasions to display wealth. These are all examples of misusing and squandering money. Not only individuals, but also institutions, churches, religious institutions and parishes do not refrain from this kind of display of wealth. Spending money on things which do not have an essential and spiritual value, during church feasts and festivals, is also a misuse and waste of money.

## **3. Wealth, which is given by God, is for All**

The wealth of the world, including that which we enjoy personally and spend for our personal needs, is the common inheritance of the entire humankind. The wealth given to us by God, is also meant to be given to the needy. If our neighbours leads life of poverty when we live in affluence, we will have to answer for it before God. Jesus tells the wealthy young man who wants to enter the kingdom of heaven: "Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (Luke 18:22). The Holy Bible teaches us that we should keep ten percent of our wealth to help the needy. Similarly we should dispense with the luxuries in life.

## **4. The Influence of Society**

Today we are living in a consumerist society. Globalism and consumerism thrive on attractive advertisements. We have no right to spend and squander wealth for our selfish ends. There are some people who even borrow money to imitate the rich, and to show off their snobbery. Some people who become alcoholics, under the influence of others. Alcoholism leads not only to poverty and ignominy, but even to health hazards and suicide. Many children spend a lot of money in buying junk food, which is hazardous to health. Such food has little nutritional value, and is usually harmful to health.

## **5. Need we earn for future?**

In the Holy Bible, we read Jesus Christ telling the wealthy man who filled his granary with crops "Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?" (Luke 12:20). Emperor Alexander the Great who conquered most parts of the world, proved that he did not take any wealth along with him, in death. We cannot store money as our wealth. Money is

meant to be exchanged. Only then it will become wealth. Jesus Christ has told us that the talent buried in soil is not wealth. Those who received five and two talents should increase them as ten and four talents respectively and should give them back to God. Then it will become wealth. We should not amass or bury the money we get. Instead we should invest and increase it and utilize it for the good of others. Many families amass wealth as necessary for their successors. This tendency is ingrained in our social system. Though some amount of earnings are beneficial for our old age, we should not devote our entire life to acquisition of wealth, which would not make our life any better.

As a student, let us be clear about the acquisition and use of wealth. Let us keep the following pointers.

i. You are in a period of growth from a child to a socially responsible individual. See whether the money earned, stored and spent in your house has been righteous.

ii. You can spend your pocket money righteously; without squandering it selfishly. The money you spent should be beneficial to others as well.

iii. Make sure that your family spares ten percent of its income for charity. Pledge to keep ten percent of your income for charity when you start earning on your own (Read Malachi 3:8).

iv. Acquiring wealth through unjust ways is wrong. We shall never discriminate among people on the basis of their wealth. All are equal before God.

v. Along with wealth, talents given by God are also wealth; and let us try to develop those talents for the common good.

vi. We should not 'bury' our earnings in the form of 'deposits.' Instead we should 'invest' and increase our earnings and utilize it for the good of others.

When we prayerfully try to spend our wealth according to God's will, we will become happy. It will make our lives peaceful.

### Hymn

(Sambannanam...)

Richest wealth-earnings given by  
God alone gives us happiness

When excess profits and wealth  
And love of luxuries  
Attract me I'd think  
Is earnings the basis of life?

(Richest wealth...)

All evils are caused by love of wealth  
Let us think that material gains are all gifts  
And share love of soul

(Richest wealth...)

## Let Us Pray

*O God, help us to rely on Your blessings and lead a life without relying on our material wealth. Give us to the understanding that all the good things enjoyed come from You and teach in to share them with others. Amen.*

## Resolution

*We studied how we can righteously spend our wealth. We would eschew squandering of wealth and avoid luxuries in life and help these in need making use of our wealth. We would wish only for the wealth given by God, and avoid luxuries in life.*

## Let Us Think

1. Explain the various dimensions of spending our wealth.
2. “Wealth is a reward given by God.” Substantiate.
3. What are the various instances of squandering of money we see in society. Comment on them.
4. What are the benefits of leading a simple life?
5. How can we develop the talents given us by God?
6. As a student, what can you do to ensure the righteous utilization of money?
7. How can we utilize wealth properly?
8. How is wealth useful to human?
9. “Wealth is a good servant but a bad master.” Explain this proverb.
10. What are the different forms of wealth?
11. What does Jesus call those who earn wealth according to His will?
12. What is the message contained in the hymn “I have nothing else to count as my wealth?”

## Activities

1. Identity Bible verses on greed for money, and earning money through unjust means.
2. Conduct a discussion on “Righteous and moral utilization of wealth.”



## Chapter 29

# The Significance of Counselling

**Learning Objectives:** To understand the meaning and significance of counselling. To understand how counselling helps the mental health of individuals and communities.

**Verse to be Memorized:** “My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commands” (Proverbs 3:1).

**Learning Aids:** Books included in the curriculum of ‘Divyabodhanam’ like ‘In the Path of Life’ and ‘Mind and Life’ by Fr. Dr. O. Thomas, the Holy Bible, and the book of Common Prayer.

### Introduction

Many people face mental and emotional problems. Good counselling might help them to overcome these problems. Let us learn more about counselling.

### The Lesson

#### Introduction to Counselling

Do we have the word ‘counsellor’ in the Holy Bible? We do not come across that word in the Malayalam bible. But in the English Bible we see the word counsellor on various occasions. Words like ‘Paraclete’ and ‘counsellor’ are often found in relation to the Holy Spirit. The faithful require God’s answers over and beyond human help. God may reveal things to us or may help us to find answers to problem. The Holy Spirit will reside in the hearts of believers and will reveal things which are beyond human understanding. God reveals His will to human beings.

In olden days the elders in the family, priests and teachers functioned as informal counsellors in the society. They had the ability to impart good guidance, groom and to lead the young generation in the right path. Their advices contained spiritual truths. The Proverbs of Solomon contains spiritual instructions on how to lead a good life. As the science of Psychology developed, the techniques developed from Psychology were also employed to find remedies to personal and social problems. The modern idea of counselling is developed from this. Counselling which excludes God and spirituality will not be beneficial to the community. The faithful shall give importance to the counselling programme which includes both spirituality and psychological principles.

#### What is Counselling?

In earlier times, parents, teachers and priests used to give guidance for life to those who faced mental and emotional problems. But this may not work with those

who are not inclined to accept guidance. Today this method has undergone a lot of changes. Even those who have mental, emotional and spiritual problems haven't lost their capacity to take decisions on their own. Besides, those who take their own decisions would feel the drive to implement them. Many people don't like decisions being imposed on them. All people do not have the ability to analyse their problems realistically. Hence modern counselling enjoins two things-the ability of the counsellor to understand and analyse the problems, as well as the ability of the individuals to take responsible decisions on their own. Modern counselling is based on these two aspects.

This process can be compared to looking into a mirror. We cannot see our face directly. But, when we look into a mirror, we see our face and find out how it looks like. We may try to 'redo' our face from the image we see in the mirror. We may define counselling using this analogy. Counselling is the act of sharing our mind with those who know how to analyze various aspects of our mind. This would provide us with insights in order to take our own decisions in order to solve our problems. Thus counselling is 'helping others to help themselves'. If people who analyze the mind have spiritual insight as well, counselling will become more beneficial and fruitful.

### **Who needs Counselling?**

Some people have the mistaken idea that counselling is meant for people suffering from mental diseases. People with psychological disorders require medication. Counselling might be beneficial to them along with their medicines. But this does not mean that counselling is solely meant for mental patients. There are very few people who have not encountered difficulties and problems in life. Similarly 'stress' has become a common problem in modern times. Our problems would increase, if we suppress these tensions in our mind. If we can share our tensions with others, we would definitely feel relieved. This is also a form of counselling. If we can find a good counsellor when we go through a lot of mental stress, we will be able to prevent our mind from complete disorder.

There is a lot of stress involved even in the natural development of an individual. When a mother goes to work leaving behind her infant child at home, both the mother and the child suffer mental stress. When children go to school they experience stress in adapting to the school environment. Examinations create stress in students. When we grow into adolescence and youth, we encounter a lot of stressful situations. Immature love relationships, bad habits acquired through peer influence, and inclination towards alcohol, drugs and pornography are some of them. The estranged relationship between husband and wife within the family is another stressful situation. If parents are estranged, their children will experience stress. Senior citizens become stressful when they are neglected by their children. Mental stress caused by financial difficulties, debt and disease are really serious. Certain types of mental stress lead people to commit suicide. Thus, there are a lot of situations of mental and emotional

stress in social life. Family problems arising from alcoholism and drug abuse are also on the rise in society.

Psychology-centred counselling alone is not sufficient to encounter all these. Several stressful situations are caused by the evil in society. Hence, knowledge supplied by psychology alone is not sufficient. We also need spiritual programs and insights to make us good and useful individuals. So we need a counselling resource which integrates both technical and spiritual knowledge. We need to provide counselling facilities in every Sunday School, to help students suffering from mental stress, deviant behavior and emotional disturbance.

### **Relevance of Counselling**

The personal advice given to mentally-stressed people, and the 'interview' for students seeking admission to professional courses are also designated 'counselling'. Hence, it has different meanings according to the situation. Here, we are referring to the counselling offered to people who experience stress.

### **Counselling is not for Mental Patients**

Many have the mistaken notion that counseling is for mental patients. People with mental disorders might require counseling along with medication. However, counselling is often provided as help to find solutions to problems in life. If such interventions are not provided on time, some people may fall into psychological disorders. Mental tensions are usual in life. The remedies suggested might not be sufficient for us in certain situations. In those situations, a trained counsellor's help would be useful. Hence it is advisable to seek a counsellor's help in any situation in which we feel we cannot find solutions on our own. No one should be branded as a 'mental patient' for seeking a counsellor's help.

The counsellor functions as the mirror of our mind. Our thoughts and emotions include both healthy and unhealthy ones. A counsellor will point out the mental disposition, which an individual cannot see on his own. If we change our attitudes accordingly, we can overcome several mental conflicts. For example, a young man who does not have friends and who does not like to form friendships, goes for counselling. The counselling revealed that the young man withdraw from friendships because he had inferiority complex about his physical appearance. From counselling the young man understood that he should develop the attitude of accepting his own physical appearance in order to escape from his withdrawal tendency. Counselling thus helps people to identify their problems. Counselling can be defined as the process of realistically analyzing issues which trouble us, and finding solutions to them, on our own. The counsellor never provides any 'solution' to problems.

### **Early Forms of Counselling**

In all cultures we find wise people, parents, teachers, priests, ascetics and elders giving guidance to those who approached them with problems. Young people in those

days used to listen to the advice of these wise elders who had attained spiritual quality and mature perspective on life. In joint families the younger generation would listen to the censures of the elders and greatly benefitted from them. But these conditions changed with times. People started doubting whether the elders are spiritually mature enough to impart guidance. The young generation refuse to listen and guidance. The thinking is that accepting advice is detrimental to personality development and so individuals should be allowed to take decisions on their own. Moreover, the philosophical principles centred on the individual led to the thought that we should not interfere in the lives of others. Thus, counselling became an intervention which doesn't interfere with the freedom of the individual. Besides, it was decided that instead of giving guidance, the individual should be helped to take decision on his own. In one sense we need not try to look upon it as a new system being introduced. Instead we should see it as a change in counselling strategies.

In Indian mythology, there is an instance of counselling in the Bhagavat Gita. Bhagavat Gita contains guidance offered by Krishna to Arjuna who was hesitant to fight in the battle field of Kurukshetra. In the Holy Bible, we see some fundamental principles of counselling used by Lord Jesus Christ in his interaction with the woman of Samaria, Zacchaeus and Nathaniel. Holy Confession contains not only remission of sins but also guidelines to overcome mental tensions and difficulties. We need not limit the scope of counseling. All cultures have developed methods to help the mentally distressed by empathizing with them.

### **Who needs counselling?**

As stated earlier, counselling should not be viewed as something meant for mental patients. An individual faces stress right from infancy. Instances of stress in life include weaning from the mother, going to school, entering adolescence, going to far away places, inability to acquire the desired level of learning, unemployment, stress in the place of work, selection of a partner in life, in domestic problems, differences of opinion with children, diseases, financial difficulties, mental depression and tendency to suicide, old age, mortality, and grief. Good counselling will provide relief in all these instances and will help to go forward in life.

### **Who should we approach for counselling?**

People should be discriminatory in choosing, their counsellor. Secular counseling based only on psychological principles would not be entirely suitable for a Christian. Such counselling does not give much importance to reliance on God and spiritual experience. Since human being is a creation of God, we should try to analyze the problems of life and find solutions, in our relationship with God. We can make use of insights provided by Psychology along with spiritual principles. Hence, it would be better for us to approach a pastoral counsellor who has received training in both Psychology and Theology. We could seek counselling for solving problems without which these problems might grow into a big crises.

## Let Us Pray

*O merciful God! We pray to You. You are the ocean of tender mercy. We submit all those who suffer from distress and sorrow before You and pray for their sake. O Lord Jesus, the Great Doctor, send Your Holy Spirit and heal them. O Jesus Christ, do not abandon us or them in sins. Save us and heal us. Amen.*

## Let Us Think

1. Do we have the word 'counselling' in the Holy Bible? In what sense is the term used in the Holy Bible?
2. What were the earlier forms of counselling? Who functioned as 'counselors' in earlier times?
3. What are the drawbacks of the old counselling method of 'guidance'?
4. How does counselling promote the ability of individuals to take their own decisions?
5. What are the elements of modern counselling?
6. Define 'counselling.' What is the relevance of counselling in today's world?
7. Is counselling meant only for mental patients? When do people require counselling?
8. Do you think that a good counsellor provides solutions to mental problems of people?

## Activities

1. Write an essay on the relevance of counselling in life.
2. Think of a problem that worries you. Try to find a solution to the problem in the light of what you have learned in this chapter.
3. Submit your problems to God and pray for solutions.
4. Is counselling based only on psychological techniques absolutely useful? Is it possible to connect counselling with spirituality? Discuss.
5. Suggest ways to provide counselling in Sunday School. Share your suggestions with the headmaster and the teachers.

## Chapter 30

# God Calls Us

**Learning Objectives:** To understand that God calls and challenges each of us to take up responsibilities. God would delegate us to take up a particular job. Hence we shall prayerfully hear the call of God, and choose our vocation in life.

**Verse to be Memorized:** Then I heard the Lord asking, “Whom shall I send as a messenger to my people? Who will go?”. And I said, “Lord, I’ll go! Send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

**Learning Aids:** A picture of ‘burning bush’ of Moses and pictures of Metropolitans Pathrose Mar Osthathios and Dr. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios.

### Introduction

God calls us all every day for a purpose. Let us listen to that call of God. What does He want to tell us? God delegates certain responsibilities and duties to people. God might call us and give instructions regarding life. Or else, he might want to console us in our grief or to scold us for our mistakes. Whatever be the purpose of God’s call, we should be ready to hear, answer and obey His commands. God calls each person, with a definite purpose.

### The Lesson

We are servants of the Kingdom of God. Wherever we are and whatever we do, we work for God. God has given us life to use it for God. We can thank God and make our lives meaningful. If we act according to our will and our selfishness then it would be impossible for God’s will to be fulfilled in us. Therefore, whatever be the path of life we choose, we should use it for God and for the glory of God.

Look at all the things given to us by God. We are given health, intellect, wealth, opportunities, friends, and beautiful landscape. We have certain fundamental needs like food, clothing, shelter, love, recognition, and ability to work. If we analyze everything at close quarters, we would realize that we lack nothing. The goal of our life, and the secret of success in life is submitting gladly to serving God throughout our life.

God provides us with time and opportunities in our lives. Even our life breath is in God’s hands. If God forsakes us for a moment, we will cease to exist. We have the duty to serve God thankfully, since He leads us forward in life. We submit ourselves to God through such service. We serve God by serving humanity, animals and nature. God has sustained this world on the principle of mutual service. In fact God has called us to share in this service.

## **People who heard God's Call**

Though God called Moses directly, the latter was at first hesitant to respond. But later he became the leader and prophet of the people of God. Abraham was called to become the 'Father of nations'. Abraham accepted this call with humility, and lived faithfully. Humility and obedience made him a great man. The right response to God's call involves not only listening to God's commandments, but also obeying the call. Samuel was called by God during night. God revealed the good and evil of the contemporary society to him and made him a judge of Israel. The Apostles, who were the disciples of Lord Jesus Christ, accepted the call of their master. They gave up all matters of the material world and followed Lord Jesus Christ. They were made the leaders of the entire world. Thus, we see that God delegates great responsibilities to those who accept His call with humility and earnestness. St. Mary was called by God through archangel Gabriel. She was elevated to the highest position of 'Mother of God.' God calling St. Paul is dramatic. That 'selected vessel' became the greatest missionary and leader of the Christian Church.

We have lots of such great models before us. God has certain specific goals when he calls us. All people are not called for the same goal. Some people were called to become apostles. Others were called be prophets. Yet others got the calling to become martyrs. The call for Fr. Damien was to go to Molokai Island in Hawaii, nurse the lepers there, and die of leprosy. Jesus called Mother Teresa to take care of the destitute and the dying. Ida S. Scudder, who started Christian Medical college in Vellore, Tamil Nadu had the conviction that God had sent her to serve the villagers and poor people of India who were dying without proper medical care.

When those people called by God accept the call and work with humility, it is God who works in and through them. God will not forsake us alone in our hour of need. God will be our companion in joys and sorrows alike. God suffers along with us in our sufferings. God selects people for specific tasks. Remember, "those who are called are numerous, but those who are chosen are quite few" (Matthew 20:16).

### **Points to be taken care of while responding to God's calling**

If we neglect God's call, it would be ingratitude to God and the Church. God calls His people, according to the needs of the community. The Church needs committed and ideal priests and leaders to serve it priests, monks and missionaries can provide a great awakening to the Church. Here is a challenge.

Jesus Christ calls us, to take His good news and love, to the cities and villages of India. Majority of the Indian population lives in rural areas. Most of them have not hear about Jesus Christ. Hence Jesus Christ calls us too, to work in the villages marked by poverty, disease lack of educational facilities, superstition and exploitation. We can do mission and charity work whenever we are. We would feel proud when we learn that it was British government employee who spread Christianity in Nepal. We

have heard the hymn, “For God’s servic-from childhood days...” (Balyathil thanne...). This hymn is recited on the day of feast of St. Gregorios of Parumala. St. Gregorios was a saint who eschewed the luxuries of the material world and lived with purity of life for the glory of God. He lived a saintly life and worked for the uplift of the people around him. He founded schools and served the poor and downtrodden. Similarly Metropolitan Pathrose Mar Osthathios witnessed Jesus Christ and spread the Gospel among the poor.

The Church needs ascetics and missionaries, who witness God and work for the poor. An ideal monk is one who leaves himself completely in the service of God. Such monks and people would be the strength and source of energy of the Church. St. Antony of Egypt, the first among the Christian monks, decided to forsake the world when he listened to the Gospel that was read in the Church, which said: “What benefit if one earns the whole world, but loses his soul” (Matthew 16:26).

We could prayerfully try to identify ‘God’s calling’ for us. God’s calling can be identified from reading of the Holy Bible, listening to homilies, advice of others, and inspiration of spiritual guides. God calls us too, just as he calls others. What is the use of amassing wealth and living without helping others? Let our lives be of use to both God and humans. We could live illuminating our surroundings like a candle. God works wonders with those who are ready to take risks for his sake. Let us join the fold of those who respond to God’s calling. It is God who gives us the reward. Let the example of St. Paul who submitted his life to Jesus Christ be a model for us.

### **Hymn**

(Balyathil thanne...)

From childhood days  
Submitted himself  
To the Lord’s service  
O saint of great miracles  
During and post earthly life  
Beloved son of Lord Jesus  
Parumala Mar Gregorios  
Remember us, your devotees

### **Let Us Pray**

*O Lord Jesus Christ, You have showed us several people who listened to and responded to Your call. Kindly reveal us your will for us. Help us to work according to Your call and take up Christian responsibilities accordingly.  
Amen.*



## **Let Us Think**

1. We are the children of the Kingdom of God. Who should we work for?
2. What is the source of all our possessions?
3. How can we submit our lives to God?
4. In what manner has God sustained this world?
5. The missionary activities of Metropolitan Pathrose Mar Osthathios.
6. What was the Bible verse which transformed St. Antony completely?

## **Activities**

1. Prepare a list of Old Testament Fathers who obeyed God's commandments.
2. Read the Gospel passage where Jesus calls His disciples, and conduct a discussion in the class on it.
3. Prepare a list of institutions founded by Metropolitan Dr. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios, who was a great missionary in the Malankara Church.

## Supplementary Reader

# Sabha Bhasuran St. Geevarghese Mar Dionysius (Vattasseril Thirumeni)

### Introduction

As Orthodox Christians, we commemorate the feast days of the saints of the Church and seek refuge in their intercession. This is the tradition of the Church from very early times. The Malankara Orthodox Church, has canonized only three Church Fathers in its two-thousand year old history (Because, generally the Orthodox Churches do not have practice of officially 'canonizing' people). They are St. Yeldho Mar Baselios Maphriano of Kothamangalam, St. Geevarghese Mar Gregorios of Parumala and St. Geevarghese Mar Dionysius Vattasseril. Our Church takes into account several factors in the life of the saint, as relevant and necessary, while considering him/her for the process of canonization. This is unlike in the Roman Catholic Church, where proven 'miracles' form the major criterion. Our Church thinks in terms of sanctity of life, being a defender of faith, selfless service to society, being a model for the faithful to follow, being a great religious teacher, and also sacrifices made for the community. Along with these, the element of 'miracles' is also considered; but that is not the sole criterion.

St. Baselios, St. Gregorios and St. Dionysius were qualified for several of these characteristics. We see people of different faiths, religions and languages thronging their tombs, seeking intercession. People had accepted them as saints and servants of God. Using the criteria listed above, St. Dionysius was a great Malpan, great defender of faith the Indian Church has seen, one who suffered for the freedom and wellbeing of the Church throughout his life, and led an impeccable life of holiness. So, we are to be convinced of his holy life and unparalleled contributions to the Church.

God makes use of different people in different ways. St. Dionysius was the chosen vessel and instrument, like St. Paul, in the hands of God, at a decisive period in the history of the Malankara Church. Let us try to understand why he was declared as a saint of the Church. This rather brief account of the saint's momentous life and sacrifices is included as a Supplementary Reader, with the hope that it will inspire students for a detailed study of the life and times of this great Malpan and Defender of Faith of the Malankara Church.

## Chapter One

# Biography

Geevarghese was born as the fifth son of Joseph and Aleyamma of Vattasseril family in Mallappally (Pathanamthitta District, diocese of Niranam) on October 31, 1858. One of his brothers was a priest. He had his primary education in the CMS School, Mallappally, and High School education in the CMS High School, Kottayam. At this time, the Western Protestant missionaries were active in the field of education in Kerala. He was ordained as deacon during his High School days, in October 12, 1876 at Puthuppally St. George Church. The ordination was conducted by the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Peter III, who was in Kerala, at that time. It was this Patriarch who unauthorisedly convened the Synod of Mulanthuruthy in 1876.

Following his ordination, he proceeded to Orthodox Theological Seminary (Old Seminary), Kottayam, for his theological education. It was at this time that he became a disciple of St. Gregorios of Parumala. He also studied Syriac, the liturgical language of the Church. Metropolitan Paulose Mar Ivanios, who was staying in the Vettikkal Dayara, taught him theology and Syriac language. Before long, he came to known as a great theologian and Syriac scholar. He was ordained as Deacon (M'shamshono) on October 16, 1879. He was ordained priest on January 18, 1880 by St. Gregorios, and was appointed as Manager of Parumala Seminary. Fr. Geevarghese served at Parumala for a long period. He accompanied St. Gregorios to Jerusalem in 1895.

During those days very few people had well-versed in Syriac language, theology, Canon Law, and teachings of the Fathers. Fr. Geevarghese had attained very high standards of scholarship in these areas. Hence, he was designated as 'Malankara Malpan', and was appointed as Malpan in the Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam. Fr. Konat Mathen Malpan was his colleague in the seminary. They together published the 'Book of Common Prayer' for the Church.

### **Principal of M. D. School, Kottayam**

It was during this time that Pulikkottil Joseph Mar Dionysius II, the then Malankara Metropolitan, established a number of schools in Kerala, including M. D. School, Kottayam. Malpan Fr. Geevarghese was appointed as the Principal of M. D. School. He worked at the seminary and the school simultaneously, and continued as principal for eight years. St. Gregorios of Parumala passed away on November 2, 1902. Geevarghese Malpan was professed as Monk-priest (Ramban) on the first death anniversary day of St. Gregorios. The Malankara Metropolitan found Ramban Geevarghese as a great asset, and wished that he be consecrated Metropolitan and made his successor. The Malankara Association elected him to the position of

Metropolitan. He went over to Jerusalem and was consecrated Metropolitan on May 31, 1908, by Patriarch Abdulla of Syrian Orthodox Church.

However, the Patriarch refused to issue the *statikon* (Letter of Authorization) as successor to the Malankara Metropolitan. This was because Mar Dionysius refused to comply with the Patriarch's demand, that he be acknowledged as the authority over all the temporal assets of the Malankara Church. He returned to Malankara; and Pulikkottil Joseph Mar Dionysius, the ruling Malankara Metropolitan, received him as his successor, bequeathed him all authority and moved to Kottayam Cheriyaapally. Pulikkottil Thirumeni passed away on July 12, 1912. The Malankara Association accepted and acknowledged Vattasseril Mar Dionysius as the new Malankara Metropolitan.

Subsequent events in the Malankara Church history are very significant and momentous. Patriarch Abdulla reached Malankara with the wily intention of usurping the material wealth and all spiritual authority in the Malankara Church. The Malankara Metropolitan, Mar Dionysius resisted it all, trusting in God. This led to the uncanonical excommunication of Mar Dionysius by the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch Abdulla. The independent Malankara Catholicate was established in 1912. The first, second and third Catholicoses were installed during the reign of Mar Dionysius. One of his favourite disciples, Geevarghese Mar Ivanios of Bethany deserted the Church, cheating his mentor, in 1930. Many events of these times caused a great deal of heartburn to Vattasseril Thirumeni. He was suffering like no one else in the history of the Malankara Church. However, he could weather every crisis, with his steadfast faith in God. He prepared a draft of the constitution for the Church, which was modified and passed by the Malankara Association in 1934 after his demise. The great and saintly Malankara Metropolitan Mar Dionysius passed away on February 23, 1934 and was interred in the Old Seminary Chapel. In consideration of his exemplary life, and great sacrifices for the Malankara Orthodox Church, he was proclaimed a saint of the Church on February 23, 2003. He is commemorated on February 22 and 23 every year.

## Chapter Two

# Historical Background

In order to understand the greatness of St. Dionysius, we should also understand the times in which he lived and worked. In history, certain events are more important than others. The relationship of Malankara Church with the Anglican Church, which began in the first half of the 19th century, evolved through different phases. When the Protestant missionaries tried to influence the faith of the Church, Malankara Church severed its relationship with them, through Mavelikkara Padiyola (declaration of faith) of 1836. However a group of people in the Church supported the ideas of

Protestant Reformation. In order to strengthen their position, they sent a person (deacon Mathews) to Antioch to be consecrated Metropolitan. Thus, Mathews Mar Athanasius Metropolitan of Palakunnathu was consecrated in Antioch and returned to Malankara. This was the first instance of the Malankara Church come into active contact with the Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch. This incident happened in 1842.

Malankara Church too followed this example under the impression that if we get our Metropolitans consecrated by the Patriarch of Antioch, it would give more legitimacy. Pulikkottil Joseph Mar Dionysius II Metropolitan (Mar Dionysius V) also received his consecration from the Patriarch of Antioch in 1865. This resulted in the establishment of some kind of Patriarchal authority over the Malankara Church. The most visible result of this relationship was the Synod of Mulanthuruthy of 1876. Patriarch Peter III of Antioch came over to Malankara and convened the Synod, and divided the Malankara Church into seven dioceses in order to weaken the sole authority of the Malankara Metropolitan. This action of the Syrian Patriarch was unauthorized, illegal and uneconomical. Moreover, he also obtained a covenant of allegiance from the metropolitans he consecrated. As a result of the Royal Court Verdict of 1889, the court cases with the Protestant Reformists came to an end.

The Protestant Reformists broke away from the Church, and formed a new church called the Marthoma Church. Thereafter the issue of the supremacy of the Antiochean Church originated. Even though the Royal Court Verdict clearly stated that the Patriarch of Antioch had no temporal power over the Malankara Church, Patriarchs from time to time tried to impose their claim over the temporal possessions of the Malankara Church. Since a faction of the Malankara Church was ready to support him, the Patriarch dared to make such claims. Thus, two factions originated in the Malankara Church-the supporters of the Patriarch (Bava kakshi) and the supporters of Malankara Metropolitan (Metran kakshi). Even though the supporters of Malankara Metropolitan were more in number, the supporters of the Patriarch are strong in certain pockets.

The authority of the Syrian Patriarch in India was examined by the various courts ever since, which declared with no uncertain terms that the Patriarch had no temporal authority in the Malankara Church. This was in the context of the Patriarch raising claims over the temporal possessions of the Malankara Church. However, unfortunately, a section in the Malankara Church, chose to support the false claims of the foreign prelate. Thus arose two factions in the Malankara Church. Though the supporters of the Metropolitan, who stood for the native independence of the Church, formed the majority, the other faction was strong in some areas.

### **The Excommunication of Mar Dionysius by the Patriarch Abdulla**

The unauthorized interference of the Patriarch in the affairs of the Malankara Church, with the connivance of a section of the people, led to a faction tussle, and it went on unabated. The entire heat of the fight was turned on the Malankara

Metropolitan, Mar Dionysius, who humbly and firmly told the Patriarch that the Church is independent, and its assets are managed through its administrative bodies and that no other person has a right over them. This position of the Metropolitan infuriated the Patriarch, who had his eye, on the temporalities of the Church. Before long, the terrible thing happened, the Metropolitan was 'excommunicated' by the Patriarch Abdulla, who was a guest in the Malankara Church! This aggravated the issues and gave Mar Dionysius a lot of heartburn. One, he had done nothing wrong; two, the foreign prelate had no authority to unauthorisedly interfere in the administration of the Church.

We read earlier that Mar Dionysius Vattasseril was consecrated Metropolitan at Jerusalem. At that time, Patriarch Abdulla had demanded him to give a declaration of allegiance to the Patriarch, which was flatly refused by Mar Dionysius. Thereupon the Patriarch refused to issue the normal *Sthathikon* (a formal letter of consecration and authorization). The letter issued only said Mar Dionysius was consecrated Metropolitan, with no mention of authority. The new Metropolitan returned to his see. Before long, the Patriarch too reached India, with the agenda of 'confiscating' the Malankara Church. He also stayed in the Old Seminary, which was the residence of Mar Dionysius. The infructuous letter of excommunication was sent by post from the room in which the Patriarch stayed, to the next room where the Metropolitan was staying!

### **Another Traumatic Incident**

The elected Trustees of the Malankara Church—Priest Trustee and Lay Trustee—were expected to stand by the Malankara Metropolitan, especially when the Syrian Patriarch had his sinister eye on the Church. Sadly enough, that did not happen. The two Trustees, Konat Mathen Malpan and C.J. Kurian, came out in support of the Patriarch, against the interests of the Church and the Metropolitan. The new Metropolitans consecrated by the Patriarch had to give in writing, their declaration of allegiance to the Patriarch. This was against the canons and traditions of the Church. This left the Malankara Metropolitan in distress; and he had to plough his lonely furrow, in confronting the greed of the foreign prelate, and also his local supporters. Nevertheless, he was not prepared to surrender the freedom of the Church, its temporal wealth and the authority of the Malankara Metropolitan, to anyone, including the Patriarch. This standpoint of the Metropolitan had the support of the earlier Royal Court verdict. Hence the visibly angry Patriarch Abdulla excommunicated the Metropolitan, on July 27, 1911, which action was illegal and foul. However, this uncanonical action of the Patriarch was declared null and void by the civil court, since, it had given the go-by to the Canon Laws and the principles of natural justice.

Before the courts of the land came to the rescue of Mar Dionysius, the rightful and canonical Patriarch of Antioch, Mar Abdel Messiah, annulled the excommunication letter issued by Mar Abdulla, on August 17, 1911. Though the Trustees chose to desert

the Metropolitan, the Church Managing Committee fully backed the Malankara Metropolitan. Mar Dionysius faced all these trying situations with equanimity, and total faith in God. He would never run away from his God-given assignment; and ultimately, God made him victorious. He believed that one has to bear the cross, while standing up for truth; yet one should remain steadfast in truth. Let us not forget that Mar Dionysius who bore the cross, and literally suffered for the sake of the Church, sometimes, risking his own life.

### **Chapter Three**

## **The Establishment of the Catholicate in Malankara**

The establishment of the Catholicate in Malankara is the greatest contribution of the *Sabha Bhasuran*. In the early Church, there were no stipulated positions of Catholicos, Patriarch or Pope. They evolved in the course of history, in the respective sees, as the local churches developed and spread. By the time of the Ecumenical Council of Nicea (325), some of these titles had already developed; for instance, there were Patriarchs in Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch. Besides there was a Catholicos, outside the limits of the Roman Empire. The Catholicos in Seleucia-Ctsephon was independent, and the Malankara Church had contact with this See, which was in the Persian Empire. This See ceased to be, owing to the brutal policies of the Muslim Ottoman rulers. The Catholicate in India followed the lineage of the Persian Catholicate, but it was established (not re-established) as an independent institution, because, as an autocephalous Apostolic Church, Malankara Church has the right and duty to establish its own canonical and ecclesiastical hierarchical positions.

### **The Historical Background**

The Malankara Church was in contact with the Persian Catholicate for several centuries. In the Oriental Churches, the Primate has to fulfill certain significant functions, including the consecration of bishops and the consecration of the Holy Chrism (Myron). The Malankara Church had to depend on other Orthodox Churches for these basis needs.

The Malankara Church had followed the East Syriac language and liturgy for centuries. The onslaught of the Muslim invaders led to the disintegration and gradual extinction of the Persian Catholicate. This also led to a situation where Persian bishops no longer visited India, which was also caused by the blockade made by the Portuguese Roman Catholics, with imperial and religious hegemonic designs. Ever since the Protestant Reformists in Kerala got a bishop consecrated for them (Mathews Mar Athanasius of Palakkunnath) by the Patriarch of Antioch in 1842, there developed an informal connection with the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch. This connection grew in a situation, where there were no Persian bishops in India.

However, history records that the Syrian Patriarchs really exploited this situation, and tried to spread their hegemony on the Malankara Church. So, what began as a 'mission of help', assumed the magnitude of a 'religious invasion'. The plain truth is that, the head of Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch always wanted to rule over the Malankara Church, and annex its material wealth, denying its identity and native independence. Mar Dionysius, as a faithful leader of the Church, would not give in to such illegitimate demands. Naturally, he believed, along with many others, that Malankara Church should have a primate of its own, equal to the Patriarchal positions in the Universal Church. Then, the Church need not depend on other churches for its sacramental and ecclesiastical needs.

Orthodox Churches do not have a Universal leader, like in the Roman Church. Each Orthodox Church is national and independent, with its own primate; and all Orthodox primates are equal in authority and prestige. Mar Dionysius was thinking along these lines. It was perhaps the long Persian connection, which led the Church to choose the title, 'Catholicos', for its primate. There were some moves in this direction for some time, but they did not succeed. In a sense, the excommunication of Mar Dionysius was the immediate cause for the establishment of the independent Catholicate in Malankara. Mar Dionysius was illegally 'excommunicated' by the same hierarch, who consecrated him. In all these, Mar Dionysius stood like a strong indomitable tower, strengthened by God.

### **Patriarch Abdel Messiah in Malankara**

A question may naturally arise here: what was the need for bringing the primate of another Church to preside over the installation of the first Catholicos of Malankara? The answer is obvious and circumstantial. The participation of the head of another Orthodox Church in the installation was deemed good for ensuring recognition by sister Churches. Further, those people in Malankara, who sided with the Patriarch Abdulla, could be silenced by the presence of the canonical Patriarch of Antioch (though out of administrative authority, due to political machinations). That Patriarch Abded Messiah was not excommunicated by the Antiochene Synod was clear to Mar Dionysius and Augen Ramban (later Catholicos Baselios Augen I), who was in Syria in those days.

On an invitation by the Malankara Church, Patriarch Mar Abded Messiah arrived in Malankara in 1912. Paulose Mar Ivanios Murimattathil was installed as the first Catholicos of the Malankara Church at Niranam Church on September 12, 1912, with the title, 'Baselios'. The first Catholicos was His Holiness Moran Mar Baselios Paulose I. The Catholicos was given the *Stathikon* to consecrate bishops, and consecrate the Holy Myron (Chrism). Thus, the native independent Church in India attained its full ecclesiastical and canonical position and status, and became fully equipped to manage its own affairs. The results of this historical event could be summarized as under:

1. Malankara Church no longer needed to depend on other Churches for the purpose of consecrating bishops and consecrating Holy Chrism.



2. The native autocephalous nature of the Church attained its full fruition.
3. The Church could elect, by its own means, and install, its own Primate.
4. Malankara Church could stand firmly rooted in Indian culture, and attain the status of the true National Church.
5. The Church could establish ecumenical relations with other Churches, as an Independent, autocephalous Church. Thus Malankara Church became member of World Council of Churches, National Councils, and regional ecumenical movements.
6. The Church could reinvent itself its apostolic tradition, mission and relevance in India.
7. As an independent member in the comity of Orthodox Churches, it could develop its own schemes of worship and liturgy.

It is when we look at these details, initiated and fulfilled by the *Sabha Bhasuran*, that we realize his hard work, great intellectual acumen, vision for the Malankara Church, despite the persecutions and threats he faced, in realizing these objectives. These sacrifices actually made him a 'living martyr' during his life time.

## Chapter Four

### True Faith and True Worship

The two pillars of Orthodoxy are true faith and true worship. The Church cannot claim to be what it is, without them. The Church is Holy, because it is the mystical Body of Jesus Christ. However, because of human frailty and erring behavior, deviant thinking is likely to creep into the faith and worship of the Church. It is also because of lack of understanding of the nature of the Church, and how it came to be. Such difficulties were there even in the early Church. As the Church developed in time, space and climes, different interpretation of faith also cropped up. We have already seen that, the Ecumenical Councils were organized to solve certain faith issues, which threatened the unity and integrity of the Church. St Paul asserts that there is only one Lord, one faith and one baptism (Eph 4:4-6).

The Universal Church has interpreted the true faith on the basis of the Nicene Creed. The canonical hours and the sacraments usually end with the recital of the Nicene Creed. With the passage of time, matters related to liturgy, sacraments, intercession to St. Mary and other saints, prayer for the departed, and responses to social issues of the times required clear interpretations, based on the fundamental Orthodox faith of the Church. This was necessary to ward off heterodox interpretations. Such interpretations and affirmations of the Universal Church, hardly reached a far off land, like India. Reasons for this phenomenon were numerous. The liturgical and the spoken language of the Indian Church were different.

Malankara Church had an ecclesiastical (not administrative) relationship with the Persian Church, till it established a relationship with the Syrian Orthodox Church. The liturgical language was East Syriac, intimately connected with Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus Christ. Though the details of faith were enshrined in the liturgy, they were not properly documented for the laity, and were understood only by a few. Hence the interpretations of faith were not properly communicated to the Church at large. The local language had not developed to a level, where it could cater to such needs; or, it was not used towards it. All these resulted in dearth of documents explaining the true faith to the faithful. Vattasseril St. Dionysius' work in this direction had been monumental. He was the pioneer in publishing for the first time in the local language, the essentials of Orthodox faith, which could be read and understood by the common people. *Mathopadesha Sarangal* ('Essentials of Religious Instruction'), which he published, perhaps, collecting his teaching notes in the seminary, should be appreciated in this context.

### **Essentials of Religious Instruction**

The two monumental contributions made to the Malankara Church, by its greatest Metropolitan, St. Dionysius, viz. the establishment of the Catholicate of the East, and the framing of the Church Constitution, are enough to establish his unparalleled position in the 2000 year history of the Malankara Church. The saga of resistance against the hegemony of Syrian Orthodox Church of Antioch continues to this day; therefore one could better appreciate the life and work of Mar Dionysius. It is amazing that the Metropolitan, who had to sacrifice his time, energy and unique intellectual powers, for protecting the independence of the Church, could turn his attention to the teaching ministry of the Church as well.

As mentioned earlier, dearth of suitable books explaining the basic faith and practices of the Church attracted his attention. Despite his numerous activities, he spared time to document and publish, a seminal work on the Orthodox faith and practice. Perhaps, the lecture notes he prepared at the seminary constitute its content. However, this rather small volume is the first of its tribe in Malankara. The preface to this book, titled, *Mathopadesha Sarangal*, the author has stated the purpose of preparing it: that 'if we do not study and understand the true faith, we would be attracted towards the teachings of heretics, and might think that their teachings are true'.

The book presents quotes from the venerable Orthodox Church Fathers, and also makes mention of heretics and their teachings. Each major article of faith is compiled under the caption, *Matha Sangathi* ('Essential Faith'); and there are thirty four *Matha Sangathikal*. In each case the background Biblical reference is provided, not just for the benefit of readers, but also to show that the Orthodox faith is based on the Holy Bible and the teachings of the Fathers. Several books of this vein, interpreting faith, have been published in later times; but the fact should not be missed that this was

the guide and pioneer of them all. Clear and standard definitions and explanations are provided in this book, for the Holy Trinity and the Sacraments. It also contains instructions regarding the observance of Sunday, *Moranaya* feasts, the importance of prayer and fasting, the intercession of the Mother of God and other saints, and prayer for the departed. In later years, several books have appeared explain and interpreting each of these topics. The intention of Mar Dionysius was to teach the people on the quintessence of Orthodoxy, and help them get confirmed in it, in the context of diverse heretic teachings.

### **True Worship in the Native Language**

The study of faith is said to be more an intellectual function; but, worship can elevate us from the level of cognition, to the level of experience. We explain our divine experience at the intellectual level in theology. But that experience is gained through worship. Orthodox spirituality unites knowledge and experience. Theology becomes a dry intellectual exercise without worship and worship is made meaningful through theology. Therefore, it is most beneficial to worship in one's own native language. This was not the case in the ancient Malankara Church, where, the liturgical language was East Syriac, which was 'foreign' to the people. Later, the Antiochene connection in the eighteenth century brought in the West Syrian language and liturgy. It was like moving from one unknown to the other unknown.

In this context, two liturgical books were published: One, Vattasseril Malpan, with the help of Konatt Mathen Malpan, published the prayer book for the Easter season (*Kyomtho*); two, prayers for the seven canonical hours was also published. Vattasseril Malpan rearranged the seven canonical hours into two: None, Vespers and Compline for the evening, and Matins, Lauds, Terce and Sext for the morning. This was done for the convenience of the common people. Today, we have prayers for the seven canonical hours, and prayers for the *Kyomto* and *Sleebo* Seasons; and also prayers for *Moranaya* feasts in the native language. Mar Dionysius thus made a breakthrough in preparing the prayer books in the native tongue. We acknowledge that true faith and worship, and its ecclesiastical independence, are basic essentials for a living Church. Let us thank God, that He made use of St. Dionysius, to provide the Church with prayer books for worship in the native language, a book containing the essentials of Orthodox faith explained, and also ensuring the independence of the Church.

## **Chapter Five**

### **The Multi-Faceted Personality of St Dionysius**

St. Dionysius was an extraordinary person, a great genius of a unique variety. The facets of his personality were numerous, dazzling and amazing.

### **His Life was His Message**

Once Mahatma Gandhi was asked, what was his message to the world. He replied, “My life is my message.” One could say much the same about St. Dionysius. Fossilization of personality, a phenomenon in modern times could be avoided only by turning to genuine spiritual development. However, such spiritual modes of personality are a rare commodity today. There are some who make absolutely no contribution to society. There is another category of people, who are prompt in actions, only to hit the headlines, and steal the limelight. But, the life of St. Dionysius was a class apart. He integrated ‘being’ and ‘doing’ in his life and activities. His life enunciated the words of our Lord, “A good tree would bear good fruit.” Mar Dionysius walked his talk.

### **A Life Deep-Rooted in Prayer**

St. Dionysius was the dear disciple of St. Gregorios of Parumala; and the disciple tried to imitate and follow the guru, as best as he could. He was a man of prayer; but, he never wanted to make a show of it. St. Gregorios had defined prayer in beautiful words. Here is a definition of Prayer by St. Dionysius: “Prayer is lifting up of one’s heart towards God the Creator; and communicating with Him. This is accomplished by doing one’s duty to God, for the good received from Him, by singing His praise; and thus doing His Will. Prayer is made, in order to earn from the Creator, what one needs for salvation of the soul and well-being of the body”.<sup>1</sup> The saint has exhorted us that along with public prayers, we need to have private devotions. Mar Dionysius overcame countless hurdles in life, through the strength of prayer.

### **Sincerity**

Hypocrisy is a great sin. Making a show of devotion and secret desire for popularity are temptations that all spiritual people have to confront. Such a thing would be common in a ritualistic society. Hypocrisy was the hallmark of Judaism. Jesus condemned the Jews for their façade of prayer, charity and fasting. Instead, Jesus taught his disciples to pray, observe fasting and give alms not for public acclaim, but in secret (Matt 6:1-21). Mar Dionysius had his regular schedule of private prayers, but never wished anyone to know about it. There were several threatening attempts on his life by his detractors; on one such occasion, when an assassin scaled the wall and reached up to the window, he became frightened, by seeing the Metropolitan on his knees, praying with tears in his eyes. The intended assassin fell off his ladder and could not accomplish his deadly assignment. Mar Dionysius used to scold those who were hypocrites in devotional life. He used to read and meditate on the Holy Bible and the Imitation of Christ by Thomas aKempis, without attracting the attention of others. C.F. Andrews, an intimate friend of Gandhi, was convinced of the real holy

<sup>1</sup>Samuel Chandanappally, *Malankara Church Fathers*, Ce Dees Books, Chandanappally, p.268.

life of the Metropolitan; when he met the saint, requested him to place his hands on him and pray for him.

### **Undaunted Courage**

Those who rise to leadership roles may have to face crises in social and spiritual life. The touchstone of their greatness is how they confront and survive them. Mar Dionysius had to meet with several roadblocks on his path, including an excommunication, though unlawful. No other Church leader in Malankara ever faced such grave challenges, both from inside and outside the community. Nevertheless, he stood his ground, and fought for the independence of the Church, braving threats, persecutions and innumerable court cases. Two incidents proved too painful for him: one, his bodyguard was murdered in cold blood; two, Mar Ivanios of Bethany cheating his guru, and deserting his Church 'for pastures new'. Those who plotted to kill his bodyguard wanted to silence and threaten the Metropolitan by their heinous act.

Fr. P. T. Geevarghese was a favourite disciple of Mar Dionysius. He was groomed for serving the Church by the Metropolitan. Fr. Geevarghese was sent for higher studies by Mar Dionysius, who supported him financially. Fr. Geevarghese was the first to earn a Masters' Degree from the Orthodox Community, and had gained respect on that account. With the Metropolitan's blessings and active support, he co-founded the Bethany ascetic community (Bethany Ashram) along with Abo Alexios (Mar Theodosius). But he nursed some curious ideas in mind. He wanted the Church to compromise with and perhaps unite with the Roman Catholic Church as a solution to the problems in Malankara Church.

Openly cheating his Guru, who was his mentor, and also his mother Church, Mar Ivanios joined the Roman Church in 1930, with a few of his followers. There is also a view point that he deserted the Church, because he failed to reach the position of Catholicos. Whatever be the reason, this ungrateful act was heartbreaking for Mar Dionysius. Mar Ivanios called his movement, 'Reunion', which idea was inconsistent with theology and history. The St. Thomas Christians of India were at no time in history under the Roman Church, nor did they ever follow the Roman Catholic faith and traditions. Mar Dionysius had consented to 'contacts' with the Roman Church, like those with other Churches; and he never agreed to the hidden agenda of Mar Ivanios. His move did not bring peace in Malankara; nor could it destroy the Malankara Church. The end result was the birth of yet another Roman Catholic Rite in India. Such divisions were the result of the unnecessary intervention of westerners in India. Yet, Mar Dionysius stood like a rock, undaunted, in all kinds of crises situations. 'Great men do not tumble, even if mountains tumble!' He trusted in God, and won his day.

### **Unconditional Love for All**

Since Mar Dionysius sacrificed his entire life for the independence and welfare of the Church, he earned a lot of friends and foes alike. The number of Metropolitans

was few. However, there was a group of illustrious lay leaders who strongly supported the Metropolitan. They included K.C. Mammen Mappilai, Rao Saheb O. M. Cherian, Advocate E. J. John, Superintendent of Police M. A. Chacko, M. P. Varkey, Journalist Jacob Kurian and E. John Philipose. Their support came as a shot in the arm for the Metropolitan. At the same time, there were others who opposed him. However, even when the co-Trustees turned against him and his beloved disciple deserted the Church at a crucial time, Mar Dionysius kept no ill will or grudge for any one, by thought, word or deed.

Some of his speeches are available to us, and have been collected by Dr. Samuel Chanddanappally in his book, *Malankara Sabha Pithakkanmar* (Fathers of the Malankara Church). At no place in his speeches, or depositions before legal authorities, has he referred to his opponents with disrespect. It is true that he stood for the independence of the Church, but, he never for once did belittle or scoff at those who differed from him. It is great witness that he would not speak a single word even against Patriarch Abdulla, who illegally and uncanonically excommunicated him. Only a true disciple of Jesus Christ, a saint, could behave like this. For this man of God, his life was his message, like Gandhiji. Malankara Church shall never forget this 'martyr' of Malankara, who suffered like no one else, for the sake of the Church.

## Chapter Six

### **Malankara Sabha Bhasuran**

(The Illuminator of the Malankara Church)

Mar Dionysius was like the Sun, which brought light and self-respect to the Church, in its darkest phase in history, risking his very life. Much before this Church Father was canonized on February 24, 2003; he was naturally addressed as *Malankara Sabha Bhasuran*, by popular acclaim. Like the created Sun, which shines by itself and gives light and heat to everything around, Mar Dionysius shed the light of holiness and sacrifices on all. Just as planets revolve round the Sun, the people and events of the times all moved about him.

#### **The Sun of Righteousness which Dispelled Darkness**

During the 'Dionysian Era', the Malankara Church was literally in the grip of darkness. The Church had freed itself from the suffocating embrace of the Protestant Reformists with great difficulty. Before long, it unwittingly fell into yet another bondage. The reformists had differences in matters of faith, so the Orthodox were very cautious, in dealing with them. However, such a caution was not exercised in the relationship with the Patriarch of Antioch, because, the Syrian Orthodox Church also was a member Oriental Orthodox family. In her innocence and decency, the Malankara Church was under the impression that the Antiochene Church would cause then any harm, by interfering in its internal affairs. But this confidence was belied.

The Mavelikkara Padiyola, the charter affirming the Orthodox faith and traditions, thus gave a dignified position to the Syrian Orthodox Patriarch, for the purpose of resisting the Protestant Reformists. It was in this spirit that Chepatt Mar Dionysius, the Malankara Metropolitan, abdicated and handed over the administration to a visiting Syrian bishop, Yuyakkim Mar Coorilos. There was not even a wink of thought that there would ever be an 'invasion' from the 'brethren,' who held the same faith. Literally, the Patriarch who came from Syria, was counted as coming from the Land of our Lord, and as another 'Father in Heaven'. Pulikkottil Joseph Mar Dionysius II, who succeeded Cheppatt Mar Dionysius as Malankara Metropolitan, was an exceptionally able and strong leader and administrator. However, it was during his reign that Patriarch Peter III arrived in Malankara, and arbitrarily interfered in the administration of Malankara Church, by consecrating bishops, and dividing the Church into seven dioceses, without the consent or concurrence of the Malankara Metropolitan and Malankara Church bodies. This high handed act was illegal and unauthorized.

Pulikkottil Mar Dionysius V, who was exceptionally diplomatic, tried his best to curtail the interventions of the Patriarch. But, Vattasseril Mar Dionysius was destined to bear the full brunt of the Antiochene Invasion and the fangs of religious hegemony. He was excommunicated by the thoughtless and greedy Patriarch Abdulla, without any qualm. But, the saintly Mar Dionysius rose to the occasion, corroborating the proverb, "a violent sea creates an able captain." The great Malankara Metropolitan had to tread carefully like Moses who led Israel to the land of Canaan. He fought for the Church undaunted. He relied on the Cross of Christ and ascended his 'Golgotha', bearing the cross for the Church, for a lifetime. The Metropolitan said about the Holy Cross thus: "The Holy Cross is the preparedness to suffer any amount of hardships for the sake of truth and justice". And he was always ready to suffer for the sake of justice and truth.

The darkness which eclipsed the Church was aggravated by the Trustees, along with a section of the people, aligning with the Patriarch, the Syrian Orthodox Church head, who had no business to interfere in the affairs of the Malankara Church. Yet another shock was Geevarghese Mar Ivanios of Bethany, groomed by Mar Dionysius, deserting the Church, for better prospects. Following this, Mar Dionysius chose another M. A. degree holder, Geevarghese Mar Philoxenos of Puthenkavil, who was a blessed orator. In every way, Mar Dionysius was working out the Chinese proverb, "Instead of blaming darkness when it spreads, we should dispel it by lighting a lamp."

### **The Architect of the Malankara Church Constitution**

The independence of the Church could be strengthened by the establishment of the Catholicate, but the Church needed an authentic system of governance supported by a Constitution. The attention of the Illustrious Mar Dionysius was turned toward this. Even before him, a few attempts have been made to codify the principles of Church administration. They culminated in the successful endeavor of Mar Dionysius.

In this respect, it could be noted that Mar Dionysius had synthesized in him the spirit of Mahatma Gandhi and Ambedkar; the Mahatma led India in its freedom struggle; and Ambedkar made the draft of the Constitution of India. Mar Dionysius was the chief architect of the Malankara Church Constitution (1934), though it came into effect after his demise. He was convinced that the independence of the Church becomes meaningful, only when the laity also gets a role in the administration of the Church. Today, the laity of the Church enjoys the right to participate in the election of the Catholicos, Metropolitans and the Trustees of the Church.

The administration of the Church is carried out by the Malankara Metropolitan, the Managing Committee and the Working Committee. The two committees include representatives of the laity. Individual parishes of the Church have the right to take decisions in all temporal aspects, subject to the consent of the Diocesan Metropolitan. It is aberration in history that some other Churches in Kerala too recently assumed the title, 'Catholicos', none of them are independent institutions; they function under overseas Churches. In this sense, there is only one independent Catholicate in India—the Catholicos of the Malankara Orthodox Church, sitting of the Apostolic Throne of St. Thomas.

As we look back today, it looks only too obvious that St. Dionysius was an instrument in the hands of God, in accomplishing these superhuman feats. Thus the appellation, *Sabha Bhasuran* becomes meaningful in every way. Here is a long quote from the oration by His Holiness Catholicos Baselios Geevarghese II, made at the funeral service of St. Dionysius, at the Old Seminary Chapel:

“Mar Dionysius was a great and impeccable spiritual person. Many people have come to know about it. He made no pretensions of his real spiritual life. I have lived with him, ever since my childhood. I have not seen anything contrary to God’s will in his actions. He was a great Malpan...his demise was quite peaceful. His face did not display any expression of agony at the time of demise. The last breath went out of him, like a pendulum of a clock coming to a standstill. We had been chanting prayers at his deathbed. As we completed reciting the Nicene Creed at 12 P.M. on Friday, the very hour of crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ, for the salvation of the World, the soul of Mar Dionysius departed peacefully from the earth...We should identify the holy men of God, the saints, in this way. Our Church has lost a great saint. He had hitherto been protecting us under his wings. Let us seek comfort in the thought that he would intercede for our sake, since he is sympathetic towards us. The prayers of the righteous have great strength”.<sup>2</sup>

Let us thank God for the life and services of the great saint Geevarghese Mar Dionysius, who is in God’s presence, shining like the sun of righteousness. May the intercession of Saint Dionysius be a fortress for the Church.

<sup>2</sup> Samuel Chandanappilli, *Church Fathers of Malankara*, pp. 248-50

