

Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

ACOLYTE'S (ALTAR ASSISTANT'S) MANUAL



Very Rev. Thomas P. Mundukuzhy Cor Episcopa

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(Acolytes in the Orthodox Church)

Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

ACOLYTE'S MANUAL

BY

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Wednesday, November 17, 2004

The Very Rev. Thomas Mundukuzhy Cor-Episcopa
4030, New Castle Road, Schenectady, New York.

My Dear Achen

Thank you for sending me by email the copy of "ACOLYTE'S Manual", a book that will be of great help to young ones who aspire to become Altar Assistants in churches outside Kerala. Though the book, as the title goes is for Acolytes, it greatly helps to disarm the critics who cry foul over the lack of information emphasizing the spiritual significance of the materials used and the symbols employed in Holy Qurbana. As you have rightly pointed out in your introduction, no genuine effort has yet been made from the Church to supply this need. We can hope that the publication wing, started functioning, at the initiative of the Holy Episcopal synod will fill in the void. How inscrutable are ways of God, I wonder whenever I think of you. Were you to stay in Kerala, I am sure, you would not have been able to come out with the kind of books you have authored. Your stay in USA made you aware of the need for the books and fortunately your scholarship came handy to take up the challenge.

May God bless you to come up with more and more publications that will be of help to the Diaspora.

With love and regards

Job Mar Philoxenos

Mar Philoxenos
(Diocese of Delhi)

PREFACE

The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church of India is as old as Christianity, founded by the Apostle St. Thomas in the year 52 A.D. For nearly two millennia, we have been developing and refining our altar service. Our service is very meaningful and colorful. While the clergy learn the meaning of every word and action in seminary, acolytes and laymen are often consigned to absorbing by osmosis. The purpose of this manual is to better explicate the service, to make it more meaningful to both those attending and assisting.

The need for such a manual was necessitated as more youngsters were introduced to serve at the altar with very little training. During my tenure as Sunday School Director of the American Diocese (1980 to 2003), I visited almost all parishes in the United States and Canada. Prior to that, I had visited most of our churches in India, in the 1950s and 1960s. While the interest expressed by our young people was encouraging, it was clear that we were not investing the time needed to properly train them. Based on my experience, I felt the need for a reference manual, to train the growing number of acolytes to perform their duties clearly, faithfully, and uniformly.

This manual addresses several areas in which we must train our acolytes: before, during and after the service.

I am sure everyone will embrace this Manual wholeheartedly as in the past. In 1958, when I was secretary to the late His Grace Mathews Mar Athanasius Metropolitan (later His Holiness Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews 1, Catholicos), I published *Vaidika Mithram (Priest Companion)* in Malayalam and the book was totally embraced by Achens and Thirumenis of that time and has been used ever since. Then I published *Vishudha Shushrusha Sahayi*, a prototype to the current manual, a sort of "Acolyte's Companion", to help the Altar Assistants. Thereafter I published several books before I came to America in 1967. Then I published

some of the English Prayer Books and in 1980, the first edition of *Our Church* (now in its fourth edition). *Synopsis For Sermons And Meditations* was another book I published that was received by many with acclamation.

Currently our church does not yet have a consolidated publication system; the responsibility to write and publish liturgical works for the spiritual uplifting of the community is primarily left to individuals. Nevertheless, it is encouraging to see that several of our clergy and laymen are engaged in composing the invaluable traditional wisdom that we have been passing on from generation to generation. While this is a trend to be encouraged, the need to have a consolidated system at the organizational level to facilitate these initiatives cannot be overemphasized.

This manual is intended to be an invaluable tool to edify our Church and to magnify and beautify our worship services. I hope and pray that our youngsters, and ultimately our Church, will better appreciate and more faithfully and reverently participate in the most solemn and divine worship service. Those interested to study more of the faith, order, discipline, doctrines, dogmas, sacraments and history of our Church may refer to my book *OUR CHURCH*.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When I announced my intention to publish this manual, clergy and laymen from California to Florida to Australia to the Persian Gulf embraced the idea. I wish to thank Rev. Dn. George Mathew, OVBS Director of the American Diocese, who did the spadework for this manual (as headmaster of St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Washington), including preparing many of the pictures in consultation with me in response to my announcement on the Internet for the need of after ".....such a publication." Rev. Fr. M. K. Kuriakose, American Diocesan Council member and the vicar of St. Thomas Orthodox Church, Philadelphia, read the first draft and gave valuable suggestions with the comment: "The document will be of great use to the altar assistants, I am sure. Great job. Well done." Mr. Jose Kurian Puliyeril (Abu Dhabi) volunteered to read the draft and his recommendations and contributions are taken very openly, including the picture of the Oil Lamp. Mr. James Kappil, Syracuse, provided the picture of the Prayer Stand. Mr. Anil Thomas and Dr. Robin Mathew did excellent job in editing the manuscript. I am especially thankful to His Grace Job Mar Philoxenos Metropolitan of our Delhi Diocese, India, for the introduction Kalpana. I would like to thank all of those who encouraged and helped to publish this Manual.

DEDICATION

This MANUAL is dedicated to the growing English-speaking members of our Church, and in memory of
His Holiness Baselios Mar Thoma Mathews 1st
CATHOLICOS OF THE EAST
 (on the 8th Memorial Anniversary day) under whom this author studied, trained and worked as Personal Secretary and the Office Secretary of the Diocese Outside Kerala for a dozen years.

Very Reverend Thomas P. Mundukuzhy Cor Episcopa
 November 8, 2004

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction <i>By His Grace Job Mar Philoxenos Metropolitan</i>	iii
Preface	iv
Acknowledgements	vi
Dedication	vi
PART I WHAT IS ANACOLYTE	1
1. Roles And Responsibilities	2
PART II PREPARING FOR THE SERVICE	5
1. Evening Before The Service	5
1.1. Prayer	5
1.2. Remembering People In The Holy Qurbana	6
1.3. Orthodox Christian Calendar	6
1.3.1. Six Periods	6
1.3.2. Important Dates	7
1.3.3. Readings	7
1.4. Coordination	8
1.5. How To Make The Sacramental Bread-Pt. I	8
2. Morning Of The Service	10
2.1. Fasting And Prayer	10
2.2. How To Dress?	10
2.3. How To Make The Sacramental Bread-Pt. II	10
3. Entering The Church	11
3.1. When To Arrive	11
3.2. The Church Building	11
3.2.1. Sanctuary	11
3.2.1.1. The Sign Of The Cross	12
3.2.1.2. Entrance Prayer	13
3.2.2. Chancel	13
3.2.3. Nave	14
3.2.4. Portico (Vestibule)	15

4. Preparing The Altar	15
4.1. Altar	16
4.2. Cross	17
4.3. Candles And Stands	17
4.4. Altar Cover (Chithola)	19
4.5. White Linen	19
4.6. Portable Altar (Tablitha)	20
4.7. Sacramental Altar Cloth (Virikoottu)	20
4.8. White Decorative Veil (Shoshappa)	21
4.9. Plate (Peelasa/Paten) & Cup (Kasa/Chalice)	22
4.10. Veils (M'kakblana)	22
4.11. Towels	23
4.12. Astarisk (Kavukubo/Star)	23
4.13. Cushion (Gmurtho)	23
4.14. Sacramental Spoon (Tharvodho)	24
4.15. The Washing Cup/Bowl (Mshemoniso)	24
4.16. Thaksa Stand (Book-Holder)	24
4.17. Ark (M'saknsabino)	25
4.18. Altar Step (Derga)	25
4.19. Other	26
5. Preparing The Sanctuary	26
5.1. Canopy	26
5.2. Altar Curtain (Thirasheela)	26
5.3. Gospel Stand/Lectern	27
5.4. Censer (Dhoopakutti)	28
5.5. Incense Bowl And Spoon	29
5.6. Bells	30
5.7. Sacramental Fans (Marbosa)	31
6. Preparing The Chancel	31
6.1. Prayer Stand (Namaskara Mesha)	31
6.2. Microphones, Keyboards	32
7. Preparing The Nave	32
7.1. Oil Lamp (Nilavilakku)	32
7.2. Chairs And Books	32
7.3. Baptismal Font	33
8. Wearing The Surplice (Kuppayam)	33

PART III INDIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WORSHIP	33
1. Symbolism	33
1.1. Themes	34
2. Pre-Communion Service	36
2.1. Standing In The Sanctuary	36
2.2. Morning Prayers	37
2.2.1. When To Light The Candles On The Altar	37
2.2.2. When To Ring The Bells	38
2.2.3. Scripture Readings	38
2.3. Entrance Into The Sanctuary	39
2.3.1. Celebrant Outstretches Hands	40
2.3.2. Times For Veiling Of Chancel	41
2.3.3. Times For Washing Hands	41
2.4. Vesting	41
2.5. Offering Of Bread And Wine	45
2.6. Preparation Of The Altar (Thuyobo)	46
2.7. Censing	46
2.7.1. Times For Placing Incense	47
3. Public Celebration	47
3.1. Opening The Sanctuary	47
3.1.1. How To Shake Sacramental Fans (Marbosa)	48
3.1.1.1. When To Shake The Marbosas	49
3.1.2. Times For Unveiling Of Chancel	49
3.1.3. How To Use The Censer	49
3.1.4. How To Hold The Candle Sticks	51
3.1.4.1. When To Hold The Candles	52
3.2. The Trisagion	52
3.3. Priest Offers Peace	55
3.4. Prayer Of Absolution	55
3.5. Blessing Of The Censer	56
3.6. The Creed	56
4. Anaphora Of The Faithful	58
4.1. Kiss Of Peace	58
4.1.1. Times For The Call To Bow Heads	59

4.2. Celebration Of The Shoshappa	59
4.3. The First Apostolic Benediction (2 Cor 13:14)	60
4.4. Benedictions	60
4.5. Prayers With Uplifted Hands	60
4.6. Institution Of The Holy Qurbana	61
4.7. Invocation Of The Holy Spirit (Epiclesis)	61
4.8. The Great Intercession (Thubdens)	62
4.9. The Second Benediction	63
4.10. Fraction And Commixture	63
4.11. Litany	64
4.12. The Lord's Prayer	64
4.13. The Third Benediction	64
4.14. Elevation Of The Holy Mysteries	64
4.15. Communion Of Saints And Incense Prayers	65
4.16. Holy Communion	65
4.17. Procession Of The Holy Mysteries	66
4.18. Thanksgiving, Hoothomo And Dismissal	66
4.19. Offerings	67
4.20. After The Service	67
APPENDICES	68
1. Calendar	68
2. Passion Week	71
3. Recipes	72

ACOLYTE'S MANUAL



PART I.

WHAT IS AN ACOLYTE

Holy Qurbana (Eucharist/Communion) is the crown of worship and of Holy Sacraments. The Holy Church continues this sacrament with due reverence which unites mankind with the sacrifice of our Lord on the cross, per the commandment of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (Luke 22:19). The deacons and the laymen or acolytes (altar assistants) assist the celebrant (a bishop or a priest) who leads the Service to be inspirational, spiritual, melodious, attractive, effective and rewarding. The Deacons and the Acolytes are in the place of Angels who praise and serve God without break. St. Theodore says, "The acolytes who serve the holy sacraments are

Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

symbols of heavenly angels. They do arrangement for the solemn and holy worship." St. John Chrysostom says "in the sanctuary around the altar we could see a number of angels who are waiting with heavenly powers to respect the one who is present on the altar. The acolytes are in the place of the angels." Acolytes are soldiers in the army of God and should stand erect (not leaning on anything), facing East, in discipline and respond to the prayers of the celebrant loudly and clearly, preferably using a Service Book. The word "acolyte" comes from the Greek word "*akolouthos*" which means "a follower, an attendant." He is one who follows God and is interested in worshiping Him. The table used in the sanctuary of a church to celebrate the Holy Eucharist is known as an altar and is considered to be the Throne of God. Thus, those who serve at the altar are also commonly referred to as "Altar Boys" or "Altar Assistants." Because the acolytes assist the celebrant in setting up of the altar, vesting, readings, holding candles, shaking *marbosas*, ringing bells, censuring, etc., a uniformed and well-defined training of the acolytes is very important to make the Service more tasteful and meaningful to the hearts and minds of all those who participate in the worship. An Acolyte must feel that he is standing in the fire. (Refer the hymn after the reading of the Gospel: "This is fire, and fire serves here....") When an acolyte gets permission to serve at the Altar, at the end of the prescribed prayer, we hear '**the Holy Spirit invites you to His Sanctuary to serve Him**'. All must remember that he is a selected one to serve God in humbleness and holiness. It should not be taken as a means for show.

1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As the definition above suggests, an acolyte serves at the altar during any church services. In general, an acolyte has five main roles:

1. To make sure that the church and the sanctuary are in good condition,
2. To prepare the altar for the service,

Acolyte's Manual

3. To assist the celebrant during the service,
4. To serve as an intermediary between the congregation and the celebrant,
5. To prepare the congregation for worship and call attention to important events during the worship.

Specifically, acolytes perform the following tasks:

1. Setting up and dismantling the altar before and after worship (if not a permanent church). It is also the responsibility of the Acolytes to bring the utensils, etc., from the storage for use during the Holy Sacraments and to return them properly at the right places carefully and neatly after the service.
2. Participating in the Morning and Evening Prayers by reading assigned passages and singing songs.
3. Assisting the celebrant with vesting and censuring.
4. Lighting the candles and holding them during important times during the service.
5. Reading from the Old Testament, the General Epistles, and the Pauline Epistles. While one acolyte is reading, others must listen keenly and reverently.
6. Providing water for the celebrant to wash his hands during the service.
7. Ringing bells and shaking the sacramental fans (*marbosa*) during solemn, prescribed times.
8. Reading specified portions from the Service Book (*Qurbanakramam*). Also they must respond to the exhortations of the celebrant, clearly, meaningfully and with discipline, along with the choir and the congregation.
9. Preparing the church and the sanctuary in a manner befitting the worship of our God Almighty.
10. Arranging everything for the perfect rendition of the service. All Acolytes must be active, energetic, composed, and attentive to the celebrant. He must satisfy the needs conveyed through a

Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

slight gesture without distracting the attention of the congregation. Because acolytes are divinely and spiritually appointed positions, they should uphold a higher moral and spiritual standard. They are role models to the community, especially to the younger generation, and are expected to conduct themselves accordingly. They have a responsibility to mentor the younger generation and train them in the faith and traditions of the Church.

Acolytes assist at the altar in many different ways. Their role is as the angels that minister. Everything should be done in an orderly fashion and with reverence. Procedures for the basic acolyte tasks are listed in this section. Where feasible, demonstrations should be provided.

With such important responsibilities, acolytes should arrive in the church on time and be well prepared with prior prayer and meditation to assist in the service. Like the celebrant, acolytes shall prepare for the service during the previous evening by practicing the assigned Bible readings in prayer and by reverently reading penitential Psalms for personal preparation to receive the Holy Communion.

The life of an acolyte is different than that of an ordinary person. He has been called by the Lord to serve at His altar. He becomes a role model to the congregation. His life should be prayerful and consistent, holding fast to what is proper and good. Coming before the throne of God requires a penitential heart that seeks the forgiveness and blessings of God. There are a number of special prayers that acolytes should learn and recite when doing certain things at the altar. Many of these prayers come from various portions of the Bible. The specific Bible references are provided as applicable.

There are many general readings and Bible portions used during the service. When possible, they should be assigned earlier and practiced before the service to allow familiarity with the words (especially new acolytes should practice at home the previous evenings). The

Reading Lectionary has all the Old and New Testament Bible portions for each Sunday. When reading, an acolyte should read slowly, clearly, audibly and loudly. Make full use of all punctuation. For the best effect, the reading should be chanted. The acolytes assist in the worship service by calling the attention of the congregation to important moments. All readings should begin by saying, *Barekmor* ("Bless, my Lord"). By saying so, he is taking the permission of the celebrant or any other clergy present in the Church and even his own seniors. The acolytes shall familiarize with all such readings from the Service Book and read as assigned by the vicar or by the senior acolyte(s).

NOTE: The acolytes must thoroughly understand the actions, readings and responses during Institution, Invocation, Consecration, and Great Intercessions and adjust the time of reading with the deeds of the celebrant (either shorten the reading or lengthen the reading). Following are some of the things an acolyte should remember during the service.

1. Begin all responses during the service with "*Barekmor*."
2. Always enter the Sanctuary through the right side.
3. If it is necessary to go from one side to the other, go *behind* the altar – never in front.
4. Should remember to sign the cross whenever the word "+*Sleebe*" (*cross*) is pronounced or there is a reference to the Holy Trinity.

PART II**PREPARING FOR THE SERVICE****1. EVENING BEFORE THE SERVICE****1.1 PRAYER**

To us, the day begins at 6 pm the night before the Holy Qurbana. The acolyte should begin this day with prayer and Bible readings.

1.2 REMEMBERING PEOPLE IN THE HOLY QURBANA

The assigned acolyte, in consultation, should prepare the list of people to be remembered during the Holy Qurbana, i.e. birthdays, anniversaries, sick, departed, blessings, etc. The congregation should submit the names to the assigned acolyte. The list shall be neatly written in a small book and must be placed on the altar, on the right side of the Tablitha, just below the Thaksa Stand, before the Morning Prayer. Special prayers are said for these people five times during the Holy Qurbana:

- During pre-communion service (*Thuyaba*)
- During Absolution prayer (*Husoyo... Promion-Sedra*)
- During the recitation of the Creed
- During Great Intercession
- After dismissal, but before post communion and offerings

The congregation should be present in the church when their loved ones are being remembered.

1.3 ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CALENDAR

1.3.1. Six Periods

For uniformity in conducting services, our church follows the Gregorian calendar divided into six periods:

1. **Koodosh-Etho** (Consecration Sunday) – The first period of our liturgical year begins at the end of October or at the beginning of November, on the Sunday between October 30th and November 5th.
2. **Yeldoo** (Birth of Christ) – The second period begins on December 25th marking the Nativity of our Lord.
3. **Kothine or Pethratho Sunday** – The third period begins with the commemoration of the first miracle of Christ (the turning of water into wine in Cana), in preparation for the Great Lent

4. **Kyamtha** (Resurrection) – Easter Sunday marks the beginning of the fourth period of our calendar with our Feast of Feasts.
5. **Pentecost** – The fiftieth day after resurrection is the beginning of the fifth period, remembering the day when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Church and filled it with new life.
6. **Sleebea** (Exaltation of the Holy Cross) – The sixth period begins with the Holy Cross Festival, celebrated on September 14th to remember the finding of the precious and life-giving Cross at Jerusalem.

NOTE: From *Kyamtha* to *Sleebea*, we use the “*Kyamtha*” order; from *Sleebea* to *Kyamtha*, we use the “*Sleebea*” order for morning and evening prayers. The liturgy for the public celebration of the Holy Qurbana does not change.

1.3.2. Important Dates

Each Sunday has its own importance, to the Church as a whole, and to the parish in particular. The acolyte should be aware of the importance of the coming day, so as to be properly prepared. Certain days require special services. An exhaustive list of all Sundays and other important church events in our Orthodox Christian calendar for 2005-2011 is provided in the Appendix. For more details on our liturgical year, please refer to the author's book *Our Church*. Also, if there is a baptism or wedding or other special event, the acolyte should come prepared to participate with due reverence.

1.3.3. Readings

The Church has selected special Bible readings for each special date in the Church calendar. These include Morning, Evening, Old Testament, Epistles and Gospel Readings. [The readings assigned for each day are translated in English in the author's book entitled *Vishudha Vedha Vaayana Kurippu*.] The acolyte should practice the readings for the following day.

1.4 COORDINATION

The senior acolyte should assign and coordinate responsibilities of the other acolytes.

1.5 HOW TO MAKE THE SACRAMENTAL BREAD-PART II

(A few acolytes should be trained to make the bread for the Holy Communion service.)

Like all other Orthodox Churches, we use leavened bread for the Holy Qurbana (Eucharist). In Old Testament times, lambs, calves, doves, and pigeons were offered as sacrifices to God. However, with our Lord Jesus' sacrificial offering on the cross, all sorts of animal and bird sacrifices have been replaced by our Lord's sacrifice. From the time of Ascension of our Lord, we find offerings using wheat flour and wine, as per the command of Lord Jesus to continue the Holy Eucharist until His second coming. People used to bring bread and wine to the Church for the offering. Later, for the sake of convenience, this custom was modified so the church would make the bread and purchase the wine. In many places today, the bread is not made in the church, but rather in the home of a priest, deacon, sexton, or lay person (acolyte).

Bread is the sign of life. When offered on the Altar, we offer ourselves to God. It is the representation of human labor and its fruits. When we receive the consecrated bread (Holy Mysteries), our life is united and identified with Christ, the Bread of Life. The bread used by our Lord for the institution of the Eucharist was leavened bread ("lahmo" in Syriac and "artos" in Greek). Hence, the Orthodox Churches have used leavened bread for the Holy Eucharist since the very early days.

The five main ingredients include water mixed with wheat flour (representing the Holy Spirit inherited through baptism), the sour yeast content (representing true faith), salt (representing love

of God) and olive oil (representing God's kindness towards mankind). Thus, all the four parts of creation, namely earth, air, fire and water are mixed in the bread. There is a tradition that part of the dough used for making the bread was set apart and kept as leaven at the time of the first institution of this sacrament, and that the dough was preserved by the blessed Apostles to be subsequently used as leaven for the next Eucharist. This tradition is continued even today and symbolizes the continuity of the Christian Passover. A new parish must request this yeast or *pulippu* from an existing church, thus keeping the continuity of the history and oneness of Church in the same faith.

The acolyte must take a clean plate on the previous evening of the service and must dilute the sour content preserved from the previous time with drops of water. Then he adds wheat flour and mixes with the sour content. Add few more drops of water enough to mix the dough. Add a small pinch of salt and mix well. If the dough is enough to make two breads, make a ball and divide it into two and make them both as balls. As the final activity, the Acolyte presses the top of both dough balls with the three fingers usually used to make the sign of cross, and then fills the holes with drops of water. These are then set aside covered in a safe place until the following morning.

Two breads are usually made for one service for two reasons: (1) to allow the celebrant to choose the best one to be used for the sacrifice and, (2) to ensure there is sufficient bread for all the participants. On special occasions, like PASSOVER, more than one bread is needed for the communion of all the members of the parish. The celebrant consumes any leftover bread that has been blessed during the Post-Communion Service. Any whole, unused bread is typically blessed by the celebrant and then distributed to the faithful who haven't received the holy communion. This blessed bread is called "*Burksa*."

2. MORNING OF THE SERVICE

2.1 FASTING AND PRAYER

As a general rule, acolytes should not eat or drink before communion. They should fast and come to the church prepared to receive the Holy Communion making sure that the Lord's Meal is the first meal on the first day of the week, the God's day.

2.2 HOW TO DRESS?

In public, properly fitting and tasteful wardrobes are highly recommended. Proper grooming is also necessary. Hair should be combed, neat, and of an appropriate length. Acolytes should bathe and be clean-shaven. The use of piercing (ear, nose, etc.) is highly inadvisable. When coming to the church for services before the throne of Almighty God, it is important and proper to wear clean, ironed clothes. The white albs/surplice (*kuppayam*) used during the service are made from lightweight material, and what is worn underneath an alb can sometimes show through. For this reason, acolytes should avoid bold stripes and designs of any kind that may present a distraction. White is the most appropriate color choice of shirts. Likewise, pants/trousers should also be of a solid color. Church service should be respected with formal dress; casual clothing should be avoided as far as possible. White shirt, black pants, socks and shoes are advised.

2.3 HOW TO MAKE THE SACRAMENTAL BREAD-PART II

Each piece of the dough made in the previous evening is rolled again into a ball. Olive oil is applied on a rounded press with twelve crosses. The balls are then individually placed and spread onto the bottom of the press. The press with the dough is lightly pressed onto a hard surface for the imprinting of the crosses. The circular form of the bread symbolizes the unity of the world. A toothpick is then used to make five holes in the sign of a cross to represent our

Lord's five wounds on the cross. (For practical reason, these holes help to cook the bread evenly). The bread is then baked in an oven or charcoal fire, until it is cooked throughout. The acolyte must do the mixing of the dough and baking the bread by reciting the Lord's Prayer in mind until he is finished. He should not engage himself in unnecessary talks, conversation, or the like during this time. Concentration must be on making the bread for the Holy Eucharist.

3. ENTERING THE CHURCH

3.1 WHEN TO ARRIVE

Acolytes should arrive in the church at least half an hour before the scheduled time of starting the Morning Prayer. This will allow time for preparation for the Holy Qurbana as explained below.

3.2 THE CHURCH BUILDING

The building in which we worship is known as the temple and household of God: "Bethel". (Genesis 28:16-19). King Solomon built a house for God, better known as the Jerusalem Temple (1 Kings 9). We build our churches according to the model of the Jerusalem temple (1 Kings 6-8), with certain modifications, e.g., our church is built in the East-West direction. We go to Church for fellowship, inspiration, and worship. We go there to meet God because it is the house of God.

The Church building, has three essential parts: the Sanctuary, the Chancel and the Nave.

3.2.1. Sanctuary

In a properly constructed church, upon entrance, we will first notice the sanctuary. The sanctuary is an elevated area at the eastern end of the church building. It is referred to as the Holy of Holies, sanctum sanctorum, or *Madbaha*. The Syriac word "*Madbaha*" is derived from the word '*Dbah*' which means sacrifice; thus the *Madbaha* is a place of sacrifice. The *Madbaha* is the symbol of heaven and the center of worship, where people are drawn to the heavenly experience. It is a worldly sanctuary (Exodus 25:8; Hebrews 9:1-

Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

5), with the presence of the Triune God, along with a company of innumerable angels and heavenly hosts. Holy Eucharist, the sacrifice of our Lord on Calvary, is conducted on the altar in the sanctuary. The sanctuary signifies Heaven, where Christ, the high priest, is continuing His priestly intercession (Hebrews 9:12). It also signifies Golgotha, Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:16,25), Paradise, and the Tree of Life (Revelation 2:7). Only bishops, priests, deacons, and those given special permission enter and serve here. Here the entire life of our Lord is presented in a dramatic fashion. The sanctuary is Heaven where the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit along with angels are present (Ephesians 2:1-16). This is like the holy of holies of Jerusalem temple (Hebrews 9:3-5). This is Golgotha (Genesis 14:18) where Melchizedek worshipped (which was close to Adam's sepulcher) where the cross of our Lord for crucifixion was erected. Just as the Mother and the disciples watched the crucifixion and the shedding of blood from our Lord's body, the worshippers watch from the chancel His presence in the bread and wine on the altar in the sanctuary.

3.2.1.1. The Sign Of The Cross

At the entrance door to the church, the acolyte should stand in awe and reverence signing the cross. To the worshipper, the sight of the cross should elicit memories of Christ's passion, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, as well as an awareness of Christ's presence in the worship. Symbolically, the top of the cross stands for love, the bottom for humility, the right side for obedience and the left side for patience. To properly make the sign of the cross, one bows his head slightly, raising the thumb, index, and middle fingers of the right hand held closely together to the forehead. Then, the three fingers are brought down in a straight line towards the chest, over to the left shoulder, and then to the right shoulder. By bringing three fingers from the forehead to the chest we remember the incarnation of our Lord, who

came from heaven to the earth. The move of the fingers from the left shoulder to the right shows the salvation of mankind from the bondage of sins granted by our Lord. When a faithful brings down the fingers to the chest he remembers our Lord's second coming. Many people also bring the joined fingers back to the chest afterward.

The sign of the cross should be made during the following occasions:

- When first entering into the church
- At the beginning of the prefatory prayers ("In the name of the Father...")
- During the *Kauma* ("+Crucified for us")
- At the time of Absolution
- Whenever the celebrant makes the sign of the cross towards the congregation
- Whenever the celebrant or censurer censures towards the congregation
- After kissing the altar
- After kissing the hands of a bishop
- Before and after receiving Holy Communion
- When ever mentions the word "+Cross or *Sleebe*"
- Whenever the Celebrant would offer "peace be with you", the acolytes must turn 45 degrees towards the celebrant and must make the sign of cross
- After receiving the final blessing during *Kaimuth*.

3.2.1.2. Entrance Prayer

Footwear should be removed before entering the nave. The acolyte (everyone entering the church) should then pray:

"In reverence, will I enter Thy house, and offer my vows to Thee."

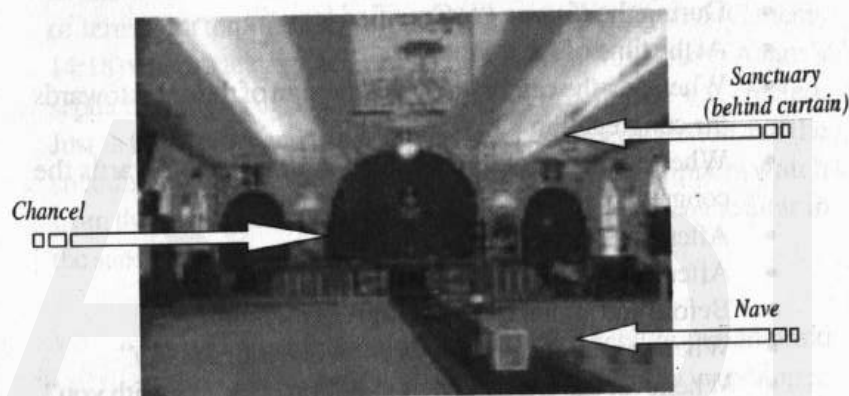
3.2.2. Chancel

The chancel is the part of the Church located just below the

Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

Madbaha (sanctuary) and inside the rails. It is a holy place, and considered to be a prolongation of the Sanctuary. It is also called "Azhicagam." This area is considered equal to the holy place of the Jerusalem temple. Members of the choir and those who render assistance to the chief celebrant use it. This place is used for general prayers during sacraments, weddings, baptismal ceremonies, and similar services. A layman should avoid entering this area. Only those lay faithful, who have undergone the sacrament of Holy Confession, can enter this area.

3.2.3. Nave



The nave is the longest part or the main hall in the church where all the faithful worship. It is also called "Hyk'la" or "Praakaram." The faithful, both men and women, occupy this area. Typically, this main hall is separated in the middle by a Red Carpet, which is laid throughout the length of the hall. Men stand on the left and women on the right side of this carpet during the worship. This path of red carpet has been designated by the Church Fathers as the place where the faithful departed come and attend in the corporate worship; therefore, this area should be kept clear and not be used for standing or sitting.

3.2.4. Portico (Vestibule)

The portico is a location at the front entrance behind the main hall and is an appendix to the main building. It is also called *Poomukham*, Vestibule, as well as Narthex. During the early days of the church, this was a place used by catechumens (those not yet baptized). It was also the place where cultural programs were staged. It is not necessarily found in churches these days.

4. PREPARING THE ALTAR

The acolyte then should prepare the church by making sure that everything is in order in the portico, chancel, nave, and sanctuary, e.g., books, chairs, oil lamp, table, candles, etc. The first priority should be to prepare the altar, so that the priest can begin his preparations. Next, the sanctuary, the chancel, and the nave should be prepared.



As stated, the altar is the most important symbol in the church and focus of our worship. Its setup therefore is very important. All care and respect must be given to all the objects placed on the altar. Everything should be placed and configured as perfectly as possible. As most parishes have their own churches and pre-arranged altars, there may not be a need to set up the altar each week. However, the steps that follow are given to provide a basic understanding of how the various objects used during Holy Qurbana are arranged

*Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church**Acolyte's Manual*

and configured. Again, proper reverence and honor must be given during the set up of the Altar. Avoid cluttering the altar with unnecessary items.

4.1 ALTAR

If the parish owns the church building, once the altar is set up, it may be left as is, to be used for the next service. However, if the parish is merely using space owned by another, it will be necessary to set up the altar before each service. The following are instructions in that case:

If we use a temporary place to worship, place the Altar (or table to be used) with the back facing east. Leave a space between the wall and altar if possible. The Altar is the most important symbol in the Church Building. It is generally about 4 ft. high, 6 ft. long and 4 ft. wide. It is typically constructed of wood or concrete and is placed in the eastern most part of the sanctuary. A space is left between the east wall and the altar to admit passage around the altar. Its positioning in the east enables the priest and congregation to worship facing the east.

The Altar is the Lord's Table (or *Thronos* as it is called in the eastern liturgy). *Thronos* is a Greek word and means "throne or seat of the King of Kings." There are a number of meanings for the altar, based both scripturally and on traditions.

- It is the Table of Sacrifice, as Holy Qurbana, which is a sacrifice, is offered on it.
- It represents the throne of the Lord, as seen in the visions of Isaiah (Isaiah 6:1) and of St. John (Revelation 4:5; 7:10-11).
- It further symbolizes the Heavenly Throne or Throne of the Heavenly Father, where Christ the High Priest, sitting at the right hand of God in heaven is offering himself as a sacrifice and is making intercession for us (Hebrews 1:3, 3:1, 8:1).
- It is the Table of Life, as we place the Bread of Life on it.

- It is also called the Throne of the Lord, as bread and wine placed on it is transformed into the body and blood of our resurrected Lord, in the manner in which the earthly body of our Lord was transformed into the glorious body at the time of resurrection in the tomb.
- It also symbolizes the manger of Bethlehem, Mt. Calvary (Golgotha), the Holy Sepulcher, and Mt. Olives as the Birth, Death, Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord are celebrated on it.

Our tradition is such that only one Holy Qurbana can be offered on the same altar on the same day.

4.2 CROSS

Place a large plain wooden cross in the back, center of the altar. In many of the churches there would be three steps for the altar to keep the cross and the candle stands. There must be a Cross placed at the center of the altar when we celebrate the Holy Eucharist, for it represents the presence of our Lord and Savior. The top of the cross stands for Love, the bottom Humility, the right side Obedience, and the left Patience. The cross reveals the passion and death of our Lord. The cross is the symbol of salvation and our weapon to fight against evil. The Holy Cross is the most significant object in the sanctuary. It is normally wooden but can be ornamental, without any graven image on it. The plain cross signifies the risen Christ and His victory over death. Generally, the cross on the altar is wooden, just as our Lord's cross was wooden. The writing on the cross, "INRI", stands for "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."



4.3 CANDLES AND STANDS

Place three candlesticks of various sizes, arranged by height (tallest to shortest), on each side of the Cross. Place one small candlestick immediately in front of the cross. Be sure that the candle used for

Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

the middle is no longer than one-half the size of the cross. 13 candlesticks may be used with six placed by height on each side of the cross and one in the middle. One additional smaller cross may be placed in front of the middle candle. Lighted candles in the church show that the Christian Church is the continuation of the Jerusalem temple. Candles also represent the illumination of our souls by the Spirit. There may be twelve candles on the altar, as of the Apostles, or seven, as of in the Jerusalem temple. Seven is also our customary sacred number. Even though there are 12 candles on 12 stands on the altar, prior to the starting of the Holy Eucharist we keep a lighted candle in the center of the altar. This one or the 13th one stands for St. Paul. As St. Paul was not with our Lord during the establishment of the sacrament, we remove it prior to the starting of the sacrament. We remove it soon after lighting the 12 candles. During the Holy Eucharist we keep either 12 or 7 or 3 candles lit altogether at a time. The candle stands for the thrones of the Apostles. The historical reason to use at least two wax candles on the altar is the remembrance of use of wax candles in catacombs during persecution. In the early centuries of Christianity, candles were used for lighting an area. Light is the symbol of the presence of God, for God is light and in Him is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5). A lighted candle reminds us of the words of Jesus, "I am the light of the world, and he who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 1:9, 8:12). Light is also a symbol of the angels and saints (Matthew 5:14). Light is an expression of Christian joy, for Christ has redeemed us from darkness and brought us to eternal light. Light also signifies that God accepts worship, with reverence and awe, as God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29).

There were many lights in the Upper Room (Acts 20:8). Candles stand for light. Our Lord is the Light of the world (John 1:8). The light of candles implies the presence of God and His saints (John 8:12; Matthew 5:16). The candle wax, when it melts, is changed into another shape. This is like a person who accepts Christianity;

by rebirth in Jesus Christ, he/she becomes a new creation in Jesus, the Lord. Candles used on the Holy Altar are made of pure wax. Candles made of animal wax are strictly forbidden, as animal sacrifice was stopped with our Lord's sacrifice on Calvary. Therefore, no animal product is used on the Holy Altar. Just as wax is gathered from different types of flowers, similarly those who have believed in Christ and His Gospel are united from different tribes, nations and characters. The burning of candle wax, reminds us that we should be prepared to sacrifice ourselves to lighten others. Our good deeds and actions have to give light, by our burning faith.

4.4 ALTAR COVER (*CHITHOLA*)

The *Chithola* is a colorful, embroidered covering that covers the front of the altar to the ground. The beauty of the *chithola* represents the glory of God's throne. There are three symmetrical sections on the *chithola* that denote the Holy Trinity and are of the same color, signifying the co-equality of the three persons of Holy Trinity. There is a cross in the middle section representing our Lord Jesus Christ. The *Chithola* also represents the seamless garment of Jesus Christ woven in one piece from top to bottom (John 19:23). The *Chithola* signifies the universe and is embroidered with wheat and vine stalks, as the matter for sacrifice is prepared from the wheat and vine.



4.5 WHITE LINEN

There should be a white-sheet on the top of the *Chithola* on the Altar. Placing various linens on it to show forth the glory of God beautifies the altar. The first covering on the altar, the white linen, represents the winding sheet in which the body of our Lord was wrapped. The white linen is also interpreted as the Church - the triumphant, militant and suffering Church.

Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

4.6 PORTABLE ALTAR (TABLITHA)

Arrange the *Tablitha* (normally the clergy does this and the related preparations) on the center of the altar, east to west. Make sure the writing is facing the bottom. This is considered as a small altar. It is a small piece of wood or marble measuring 18"x9" and half inch thick. With a portable altar, Holy Qurbana can be celebrated anywhere (where there is no consecrated church). The paten and chalice are to be placed on top of the portable altar. It is laid under the cup and chalice. If the altar is Calvary (sepulcher/tomb), then the portable altar is the sacred cross where we celebrate. Without the portable altar, the Eucharist Service cannot be officiated. It is also interpreted as the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden. The *Tablitha* is sanctified and blessed with the Holy Oil (*Mooron*) during the dedication and consecration of churches. The name of the Bishop/Catholicos who consecrates it along with the date and the place are typically written on the backside of the *Tablitha*. It is to be handled by priests or with the permission of the priests.



4.7 SACRAMENTAL ALTAR CLOTH (VIRIKOOTTU)

When arranging the altar cloth, unfold the *Virikootu* and center the white (or gold) portion of the *virikootu* on top of the *Tablitha*. The *Virikootu* is a tri-colored altar spread measuring over 32" X 27". It is used to cover the *Tablitha* (portable altar) and extends down the front side of the altar. The front of the *Virikootu* is usually decorated with ornamental embroidered work. It is made of three pieces of different colored cloth — red, green and white. The outer red represents the omnipresence and omnipotence of God. The inner green stands



for the world and represents the grace of God. The innermost white piece stands for the Holy Church, a community of redeemed people. Another interpretation is that three colors stand for the fiery universe, the verdant earth and the Holy Church, symbolizing that our Savior is the Lord of all. The white piece covers the *Tablitha*, and the Paten and Chalice, which hold the Holy Body and Blood, are placed on top. This white portion signifies that our Lord gave His Body and Blood to the Holy Church (made white in the blood of the Lamb; Revelation 7:14). Another interpretation of this tricolor is that the red color stands for the universe, the green stands for the church, and the white stands for the peace and upon this peace only all sacrifices are offered. (It cautions us to maintain peace in the church to continue the heavenly sacrifice).

4.8 WHITE DECORATIVE VEIL (SHOSHAPPA)

The *Shoshappa* is placed on the left side of *virikootu*. The *Shoshappa* is generally white in color with an embroidered cross and sometimes angels or doves. It signifies the swaddling clothes of baby Jesus in the manger (Luke 2:7), the seamless clothes of our Lord (John 20:5-6), the wrapped burial linen in the sepulcher (Mt 27:60), and the stone that rolled against the tomb. It is also considered to be the bright cloud that overshadowed at the time of transfiguration on Mount Tabor (Matthew 17:5). The *Shoshappa* also represents the rock that gave water to the twelve tribes of Israel (Numbers 20:2-11), and the rock representing Jesus Christ who gives Holy Spirit to the new Israel. It signifies that a mysterious thing is going to happen to the bread and wine when they are blessed and the Holy Spirit indwells on them. The *Shoshappa* is used to cover both sacred vessels together. The covering of the holy mysteries by the *Shoshappa* reveals the fact that the Divine Mysteries are hidden



Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

from the understanding of men, that we cannot comprehend how divinity and humanity are united in Christ, as we cannot perceive how the bread and wine become the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. When the mysteries are covered with it, it represents the period in which our Lord was in the womb of the mother St. Mary (His humanity). So it is revered equal to mother of God. St. Mary remains close to God in heaven.

4.9. PLATE (Peelasa/Paten) & CUP (Kasa/Chalice)

When arranging Peelasa and Kasa, unpack the paten and chalice, wipe them with a clean towel, and place on the white portion of the *virikootu*. Place the sacramental bread(s), a small amount of wine, and a cup of water on the left side. The paten and chalice are the sacred vessels in which the Eucharistic elements are kept during the service. They are usually made of silver, gold, or sometimes stainless steel. The principle is that the metal used for making these holy vessels must be solid and everlasting. They signify the golden jar or pot of manna kept in the Ark of the Covenant (Heb 9:4). The Paten (plate) in which the bread is placed has three legs. Wine mixed with water is poured into the Chalice (Cup) as blood and water came from the Lord's side (John 19:34). The paten is placed at the west and the chalice is placed at the east on the white (or gold) colored portion of the *Virikootu* on the *Tablitha*. These vessels are to be handled strictly by priests or with the permission of the priests.



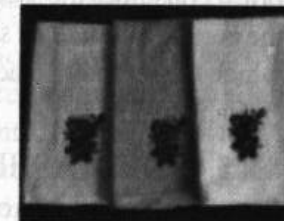
4.10. VEILS (M'KAKBLANA)

These are the names given to the coverings for the Holy Vessels. The name actually means "receptacles." They are square in shape, richly stitched, embroidered clothes, decorated with pendant borders and marked on the top with ornamental cross. It is made

of nice silk and it represents the clouds that shadowed over the Tabernacle (1 Kings 8:10-11). The covering period is compared to the time of our Lord with the Father in the Old Testament. The Holy Elements remain covered in the beginning, to show that our Lord Jesus is with the Heavenly Father during the Old Testament period. The Holy Elements are uncovered during the period of the ministry of Jesus on earth, like during the Institution, Fraction, Commixture, etc. After the Exaltation of the Mysteries and during the Procession of the Second Coming, the Holy Mysteries remain covered, to signify that a cloud hid Him during His ascension and that He will come again in the same way (Acts 1:9-11).

4.11. TOWELS

Small towels are generally used to wipe the celebrant's fingers, having touched the Body and Blood of our Lord. They are also used for wiping the paten and the chalice during the post-communion service. This signifies the more careful handling of the Body and Blood of Our Lord. There is another towel to wipe the celebrant's fingers after washing. Also the celebrant hangs a small towel from the belt on his left side.



4.12. ASTARISK (KAVUKUBO/STAR)

The astarisk is made of silver, gold, or stainless steel in the shape of a cross with the four ends bending downwards and is used to support the veil above the Paten, so that the veil may not touch the Holy Bread. It is the symbol of the star seen over the manger in Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth (Matthew 2:9).

4.13. CUSHION (GMURTHO)

This small, red cushion is about 3 inches long, 1/2 inch wide, and an inch thick. It is compared to the live coal placed on Isaiah's lips (Is 6:1-7). There are two main uses of the cushion. It is used as a

Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

sacramental spoon rest and also to wipe the fingers of the celebrant after touching the body and blood. It is also used to wipe the lips of infants and small children after they receive Holy Communion. In some cases, it is also used to wipe the paten and chalice, signifying a more careful handling of the sacred elements.

4.14. SACRAMENTAL SPOON (*THARVODHO*)

The sacramental spoon is usually made of the same metal as the paten and chalice, either gold or silver. It is used to spoon wine from the chalice to pour over the bread. The celebrant also uses it to pick up the small piece of holy mystery that is placed in the chalice at the time of fraction. It is with the sacramental spoon that the priest consumes the sacred elements and also administers them to the congregation. The sacramental spoon signifies the tongs with which the seraphim placed a live coal in Isaiah's mouth in a vision (Isaiah 6:6-7).

4.15. THE WASHING CUP/BOWL (*MSHEMONISO*)

Place the washing cup on the left side (top corner) of the *Tablitha*. The washing cup is a small cup that is made of silver, gold, or stainless steel. It is kept at the left side of the Holy vessels. It is used for mixing the wine and water during the preparatory service and to keep water to wash the tips of the fingers after the fraction and commixture, as well as at the conclusion of the celebrant's communion. Water is taken in it for the washing of the Holy vessels at the end of the communion. The washing cup represents those who served Jesus during the public ministry. No one else should take the *mshemoniso*, as there might be particles of the Holy Mysteries in it.

4.16. THAKSA STAND (BOOK-HOLDER)

Put the *thaksa* stand on right side of the *Tablitha*. If there is no Gospel Stand, place the Holy Gospel in the lower, right corner of the altar. The list of people to be remembered during the service is placed on the right side of the *Tablitha*, below the *Thaksa* stand.

The celebrant must have these names by the time he ascends the *Derga* (step) after vesting for the intercession and prayers. The Liturgical (*Thaksa*) stand holds the *Thaksa*, which is the text of the Liturgy for the Eucharistic celebration. "*Thaksa*" originates from the Greek word "*taxsis*," meaning "rite". St. James composed the most original, ancient, and venerable liturgy. The *Thaksa* stand is usually placed on the Altar, on the right side of the Celebrant. The *Thaksa* is never leather bound as no animal matter is allowed on the Altar.

4.17. ARK (*M'SAKNSABINO*)

The ark is a beautifully decorated box sometimes placed on the altar to preserve the Holy Gifts that are reserved for the fatally sick, and for the Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts (Hudaya Canon 4:8). It shows that Christ, the Heavenly Physician, lives with us always (Matthew 28:20). If the holy mysteries are kept in it, a lighted lamp/candle must be kept in front of the ark until the Holy mysteries are taken and administered to the needy. Moreover, a priest must cense it in the morning and evening at least during the prayers.

4.18. ALTAR STEP (*DERGA*)

The altar step is a step at the foot of the altar onto which the celebrant stands to arrange the offering and conduct the main part of the service. Only priests and bishops have the privilege to stand on the altar step. Be careful to not to step on this altar step. Even fully ordained deacons are not supposed to step on it. During the service prior to the Nicene Creed, the celebrant offers prayers standing below the altar step. After the recitation of the Creed, the celebrant stands on the altar step to continue the Holy Eucharist.

The altar step is highly symbolic. It signifies that Jesus ascended to the Upper Room to celebrate the Last Supper (Mark 14:15). This step, also called *Derga*, is considered to be the ladder to heaven. The Holy Eucharist is held where ranking angels ascend and descend between heaven and earth.

4.19. OTHER

Fresh flowers may be placed on the altar, typically one on each side of the cross. Pictures of our Lord, patron saints, St. Mary, etc. may be arranged on the altar to provide a point of focus during the service. The picture of our Lord should always occupy the center of the altar, near the cross.

5. PREPARING THE SANCTUARY

5.1. CANOPY

In some sanctuaries, a canopy is suspended over the altar, to represent the heavens outspread over the earth, upon which sacrifice is offered for the sins of the world. Make sure that it is clean and neat. Acolytes should make special effort to keep the canopy and the altar look good.

5.2. ALTAR CURTAIN (*THIRASHEELA*)

Also known as the Veil or Sanctuary Curtain (Genesis 1:8; Exodus 36:16), the Altar Curtain separates the sanctuary from the rest of the church. This curtain signifies the sky between Heaven and Earth. As heaven is hidden from earth, the sanctuary is divided from the main body of the Church by this veil. The congregation remains outside the sanctuary; the clergy and acolytes, the representatives of our Lord and the heavenly angels, remain inside the sanctuary standing and worshiping God together (Hebrews 6:18-20). Just as Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and intercedes there for humanity, the priest stands inside the sanctuary on the other side of the veil and intercedes for the congregation. The curtain (veil) represents the damaged body of Christ on the cross, through which the faithful would get an entry to heaven (Hebrews 10:20). At the time of our Lord's Crucifixion, the curtain of Jerusalem Temple was torn down the middle to show that heaven was now opened to all. Prior to that, only Levites were allowed to enter and serve at the altar. In this symbolism, the curtain is the sky that is opened for public celebration. The curtain is opened when the priest and the

congregation worship God together; thus "Heaven and Earth" are joined in worshipping and praying. As there was darkness at our Lord's death on the cross, the sanctuary is closed/veiled during the time of Fraction and Commixture. The sanctuary is opened after the fraction and also during the second coming.

5.3. GOSPEL STAND/LECTERN

This is a specially shaped table so as to hold the Holy Gospel in a position to be read. It is typically covered with colorful clothing. In the front, on the top, it also has a place to keep two candle stands with candles, one each on the right and left of the Gospel. Besides the altar, this Gospel stand is treated as the most sanctified object in the sanctuary. The Gospel, the Living Word of God, symbolizes our Lord Jesus Christ and the stand symbolizes God's Throne. Some Church Fathers have symbolized it with St. Mary, who bore Lord Jesus in her womb, just like the stand also carries the word of God. (The word of God only incarnated and took flesh from the mother of God). The Holy Gospel is kept at the right side of the Altar, since Jesus Christ who is the Word, sits at the right side of God. For this reason, veneration and sanctity is attached to this Table. The priest or deacon entering the sanctuary kisses the Gospel stand before kissing the four corners of the Altar. When the Gospel is opened for reading, the candles are lit, recalling the words of the Psalmist; "Thy Word is a light unto my feet and light unto my path" (Psalm 109:105). It is God's word that is read and it is the Good News that is proclaimed. Additionally these two candles reminds us of the angels who are with our God always.



Bringing of the Gospel stand to the western side of the sanctuary shows our Lord's act of teaching the multitudes. He often volunteered to go to their midst. The Gospel is read after the reading of the Epistles. And this shows that it is the only way of salvation.

The Lectern is moved to the center of the Sanctuary for reading the day's lessons from the Word of Life, the Gospel. This symbolizes the everlasting continuity of the words and deeds of the Lord, and also the everlasting presence of the Lord. It also tells us that the Gospel is for all — for Jews and Gentiles alike. The need for a believing attitude of the congregation is emphasized here in the words of the priest and the response of the congregation before the Gospel reading. The general hymn that follows emphasize the urgency for doing valiant work in the vineyard of the Lord as a result of listening to the Gospel (Luke 12:37).

5.4. CENSER (*DHOOPAKUTTI*)

The Censer is a highly symbolic object used for burning incense. Traditionally, the censer symbolizes the universe. The bowl of the censer symbolizes the earth and the lid symbolizes heaven. Four chains hold the bowl together. These four chains represent the four corners of the earth and also for Holy Trinity. The first chain represents God the Father, the second and the third for God the Son (His divine and human form), and the fourth chain represents the Holy Spirit. The conjoining chain on the circular disc at the top with the hook represents the unity in Trinity. The 70 links that make the chains stand for the 70 evangelists. Each link in the chain represents a generation. The links also represent ecumenicity in time and space. The twelve bells (trinkets) stand for the 12 apostles and the sound of the trinkets reminds us of the apostolic voice ringing in the Church.

Within the bowl of the censer is placed black charcoal, which is used to represent sinners. Once lit, the fire represents the Holy Spirit. We believe that as the charcoal glows and shines with fire, in the presence of God the Holy Spirit, the sinner is transformed. Another interpretation is that the censer is the blessed virgin Mother and the fire is the blessed divine child.

On top of the charcoal is placed incense, which is the life

and prayers of believers, rising as sweet fragrances in the presence of God. In Old Testament times, perfume was made out of sweet spices and burned every morning as a sweet-smelling sacrifice (Exodus 30:7, 34-48; Num 16:6). It reminds us of the Lord's sacrifice, which is a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God and perfumes the whole world (Ephesians 5:2). The burning incense also represents the prayers of the community of saints who are always present with us (Revelation 5:8, 8:4). Incense was an inevitable item in the temple (Hebrew 9:4; Revelation 8:3-5). The general assumption is that as the incense burns, its smoke rises upward to Heaven and along with it goes our prayers (Psalm 141:2). In the early century during the persecution period, incense was used in caves where people hid. All churches used incense for Eucharist and special services until the sixth century.

Symbolically, the censer stands for the Church. Also, the coal is interpreted as the Blessed Mother (the sinful people), fire as Holy Spirit (or God), smell as Christ, and smoke as Prayer. By the presence of God, the sinner is changed into fire. The censer with incense is also symbolical of the gifts offered by the wise men to the Infant Jesus: gold (royalty), myrrh (prophet), and frankincense (priesthood).

When the censer is waved, it is proper to bow down and make the sign of cross to show veneration. It shows the sign of acceptance of the blessings from God. This is because, as Christ dwells in us, all believers proclaim that we are partakers of His divine body. When we bow and make the sign of cross, we are to remember all these events and pledge to sacrifice our lives for Him.

5.5. INCENSE BOWL AND SPOON

The incense bowl is the container for the incense and the spoon is used to put the incense into the censer. As stated, incense plays an important role in gaining proper mood for worship, attaining spiritual communication with the invisible spiritual power, and permeates an

Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

atmosphere of internal spiritual purification.

5.6. BELLS

During ancient times, in the early church, striking a piece of wood was used instead of bells. Bell sounds recall to the faithful, the death of our Lord Jesus on the wooden cross. When we hear its sound, we are to sign the cross and saying "Barekmor" (i.e., "Bless my Lord"). There are two kinds of bells used.

THE CHURCH BELL:

Bells are rung to summon the faithful to assemble for worship and prayer at the church. Bells were used in the past for solemn or joyous feast day and for calling attention, to emergency situations or special announcements for all of us to hear. Continuous ringing of bells is used during exaltation of Holy Fathers (Bishops). Single stroke bells are sounded to show the passing away of the faithful of our Church. A set of two or three strokes is sounded to tell that it is time to assemble for worship and so on. Generally it is an alarm for the faithful to get ready for prayer. This is a big bell, made of an alloy of brass, rung by pulling on a rope. This bell is used before the start of the worship, at the start of the worship, when the Qurbana starts publicly, at the elevation of the paten and chalice, and at the procession towards the west with the paten and chalice. Also When a Bishop visits a church or leaves the Church, we ring the Church bell.

**HAND BELLS:**

Small hand bells are shaken during the Eucharist's worship to draw the attention of the worshippers to solemnity of the important and sacred occasions, reminding them to pay careful attention and to unite in prayer and, at times, to make the sign of the cross. It is rung

at the start of the Morning Prayer, the start of the Holy Qurbana, at the time of the reading of the Holy Gospel, blessing of the censer, celebration of *Shoshappa*, during waving of the hands over the chalice and paten, blessing of the holy mysteries, inviting the brooding of the Holy Spirit, elevation, procession, etc. The music of the bells and fans creates a sense of angelic presence around the altar.

5.7. SACRAMENTAL FANS (MARBOSA)

The sacramental fans are made of silver or some metal and are always used in pairs. In the center of the fans, the seraphic face and wings are represented (Isaiah 6:14; Revelation 4:8). The rim of the fan is full of small round bells, which jingle as the fan is shaken to produce a pleasant sound. The fan and its rattling signify the angelic community, particularly the Seraphim and the flutter of their wings, in our worship and around the mysteries. They represent the adoration of the angels. They are carried in procession and shaken at most solemn occasions of the Holy Qurbana. When the Holy Mysteries are brought down signifying the Second Coming of our Savior, the sound of the fans proclaims the trumpet sound (1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16).

**6. PREPARING THE CHANCEL****6.1. PRAYER STAND (NAMASKARA MESHA)**

It is normally a wooden table, kept in the center of the Chancel. It symbolizes Mount Sinai upon which the Ten Commandments were given by God, and the wooden platform from where the priest Ezra read from the Book of Law (Nehemiah 8:4). It also symbolizes the seat of Judgment



from where God passed the verdict to punish the first parents, Adam and Eve. On this table is kept a Holy Bible, representing the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and a Cross representing the Tree of Life. The two candles signify the two cherubim placed on the East of the Garden of Eden with the flaming sword swinging back and forth. These lit candles signify light and are kept on either side of the cross or Bible.

6.2. MICROPHONES, KEYBOARDS

All other logistical support items should be set up during this time.

7. PREPARING THE NAVE

7.1. OIL LAMP (NILAVILAKKU)

In the center of the Nave is an oil-lighted lamp. Light signifies the presence of God, who is light Himself. Normally, this lamp has twelve wicks symbolizing the departed belonging to the twelve tribes. Another interpretation is that the 12 wicks represent the twelve months of the year for which the 12 Apostles are caretakers. Some lamps have seven wicks, signifying the seven lamps seen blazing before the Throne of God (Revelation 4:2-6). The seven wicks represent the seven days of the week and the seven important sacraments of the Church. This lamp also symbolizes the golden lamps on the golden lamp stand of the Tabernacle (Leviticus 24:3-4) and shows that our church is in continuation with the Jerusalem temple. The oil poured in the lamp signifies the prayers offered by the living for the faithful departed. The light also symbolizes the illumination of the souls of the departed.



7.2. CHAIRS AND BOOKS

Should be arranged for the congregation.

7.3. BAPTISMAL FONT

Sometimes, there is a room on the south side called the Baptismal Room. If there is no baptismal room, the baptismal font is placed within the Chancel or Nave. As the faithful takes re-birth from the font, it has a similar position of the Mother of God, and therefore must be treated with reverence.

8. WEARING THE SURPLICE (KUPPAYAM)

After ensuring everything in the Sanctuary, Chancel, Nave, and Portico is in order, the acolytes should wash their hands.

There is typically a room on the northern side of the *Madbaha* called Vestry or *Bethgazo* room. This room is for keeping essential things for the Eucharist and for vesting. The acolytes must put on and remove their white surplice (*Kuppayam*) in this room. Before entering the *Madhbaha*, the acolyte should put on the surplice while praying:

"O Lord God, clothe me with the robe of incorruption through the power of Thy Holy Spirit. O Father, Son and Holy Spirit, grant me that with a pure and upright life, I may be guided in the true faith, all the days of my life, now and always, for ever - Amen."

The white surplice represents purity, cleanliness, brightness and modesty, qualities expected from the acolyte.

PART III:

INDIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

1. SYMBOLISM

Orthodox Christian worship is full of solemn divine mysteries. Symbolism and the active participation of conscious, subconscious, and unconscious minds make Orthodox worship special. It is a complete form of worship synthesizing repentance, praise, thanksgiving, and dedication, embodying all the events from Christ's

birth through Ascension. In the Holy Qurbana, the holy sanctuary is a replica of Heaven (Ephesians 2:6), with the priest representing the Lord, candles representing the saints and altar assistants the angels. There are four occasions during the Holy Qurbana that depicts the opening of heaven. Holy Qurbana is a heavenly worship where even the faithful departed souls partake. There are responses, silence, meditation, and singing that makes our worship contemplative as well as it is symbolic. Every expression and symbol in our worship therefore offers ample food for thought that helps us experience heaven on earth.

1.1. THEMES

The themes that form the foundation in the design of the Holy Liturgy reflect on the prodigal son, Isaiah's vision, and the life of our Lord.

The priest represents the prodigal son by wearing the black robe prior to entering the sanctuary signifying repentance of his sins, the kissing of the corners of the altar represent the embrace with his father upon his return, the vesting of the priest signifies the glorious probing of the prodigal son (Luke 15:22), and the feast of the Holy Qurbana reminds us of the feast prepared for the prodigal son (Luke 15:23).

Isaiah's vision is composed of the Glory of God and the sinful human condition. The altar represents the "high and exalted throne" (Isaiah 6:1) on which the Lord is seated, surrounded by seraphs. In verses 6-7, live coal from the altar was laid in Isaiah's mouth to purge his sins; the Holy Qurbana corresponds to this live coal that was given to Isaiah. During several portions of the service, we are reminded of Isaiah's vision, e.g., during the time of Fraction and Commixture when the narration of Isaiah's vision is sung ("*Srappikale kandeshaya...*").

The Holy Qurbana is the divine reenactment of important events in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Holy Qurbana Lord Jesus Himself is the celebrant, represented by the priest (Bishop).

Specifically, we see the following representations of the life of Christ during the public celebration:

- **Birth and Baptism** – The public celebration begins with the opening of the Heavens (the veil removed) and the presentation of the birth of Christ. The altar at this time represents the manger in Bethlehem, the acolytes as shepherds, and the congregation as the whole world. It can also be thought of as the priest representing the visit of the shepherds and the wise men, the deacon in front with the lighted candle as John the Baptist, and the congregation as angels singing hymns.
- **Public ministry** – The teaching and healing ministry of Our Lord is celebrated in the readings of the Epistles and the Holy Gospel. The Epistle lessons are read on both sides of the sanctuary, representing the mission to both the Jews and the Gentiles. The Gospel is read from the center of the sanctuary, indicating that the Gospel is for all alike. The lit candles on both sides during the Gospel reading remind us that the Word of God is light. The general hymn that follows the reading emphasizes the urgency for continuing the work of our Lord.
- **Washing of feet** – During the recitation of the Nicene Creed, the priest washes his hands as a final touch of cleansing symbolizing the washing of the disciples' feet in the Upper Room (John 13:1-20).
- **Transfiguration** – The celebration of the *Shoshappa* signifies the Transfiguration of the Lord (Matthew 17:1ff). Just as the Holy Spirit descended upon our Lord, the Holy Spirit comes upon the Holy Mysteries while the *Shoshappa* is being waved over them.
- **Institution of the Holy Qurbana** – The blessing of the bread and wine along with the Invocation of the Holy Spirit

transform the offerings into the Body and Blood of our Lord.

- **Passion, death, and resurrection** – During the Fraction, Consignation, and Commixture of the communion bread with the wine, the sanctuary veil is drawn closed, reminding us of the night Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane praying alone as well as the darkness at the time of His crucifixion. The ringing of the bell during the hymn proclaims the resurrection of our Lord.
- **Ascension** – The elevation and the adoration of the Holy Mysteries commemorates the ascension of our Lord with ringing of bells, lit candles, and the announcement of the deacon to watch with fear and trembling.
- **Second coming** – The raising up of the spoon and tongs after the Institution represents the second coming of our Lord. Also, after the Holy Communion is given, there is a procession with the priest coming down from the sanctuary step with the chalice and the paten in both his hands, proclaiming the second coming.

1.2. PARTS OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN LITURGY

As the acolyte is an integral part of the Holy Qurbana, it is important that an acolyte have a fairly good understanding of the Holy Qurbana in order to have a more meaningful participation. For more detailed explanations on the parts of the Holy Eucharist service in the Orthodox Christian Liturgy, please refer to Chapter 14 "Our Liturgy" in the author's book entitled *Our Church*.

The Holy Eucharist service is divided into three parts: Pre-Communion service, Public Celebration, and the Anaphora of the Faithful.

2. PRE-COMMUNION SERVICE

2.1. STANDING IN THE SANCTUARY

It is a privilege to be chosen to serve at the Altar of the Lord. Therefore, one must not take this calling casually. As the focus of

the congregation is the altar and those assisting, acolytes must not cause unnecessary distractions. Acolytes should stand in two rows, one on each side behind the celebrant facing east, concentrating on the altar and the service. The correct order is junior acolytes in the front with more senior acolytes standing behind them. The rows should be straight. Hands should be either placed by the sides, folded on the chest in prayer, or holding a *Qurbana Kramam* (Service Book). Whenever the celebrant turns to face the congregation (i.e., during times of censuring or benediction), the acolytes should also turn 90-degrees to face the celebrant and signs the cross..

2.2. MORNING PRAYERS

Just before the Morning Prayer, a candle must be lit and placed at the center of the altar and the hand bell is rung while the chancel is unveiled. This candle is removed before Holy Qurbana begins.

2.2.1. Times To Light The Candles On The Altar

There are certain times when the candles on the altar need to be lit:

1. Before the Morning Prayer, a candle must be lit and placed at the center of the altar and the hand bell is rung and opens the sanctuary by moving the altar curtain. This candle is removed before Holy Qurbana begins.
2. For the evening prayer, a candle must be lit and placed at the center of the altar; at the time of Compline (*Suthara*), the center lighted candle shall be moved to one side of the altar and another lighted candle shall be placed on the other side of the altar. This shows that we have completed the evening prayer and entered the *suthara*. As it is dark outside, the brightness of our Lord grants us light from our both sides.
3. Before the Holy Qurbana, when we sing, "**By Thy light we see the light....**", all the 12, or 7, or, 3 candles on the altar shall be lit.

*Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church***2.2.2. Times To Ring The Bells**

Acolyte should remember to ring the hand bells at the following occasions

1. When the chancel is unveiled to announce the beginning of the Morning Prayers
2. At the beginning of the Public Celebration
3. During Trisagion, when we say, "+Crucified for us..."
4. During the procession before the Gospel reading
5. During the blessing of the censer
6. During the celebration of the *Shoshappa*
7. While the celebrant waves his hands over the bread and wine
8. During the Institution of the Holy Qurbana
9. During the Invocation of the Holy Spirit
10. At the time of fraction (not compulsory)
11. During the Elevation of the Holy Mysteries
12. During the Procession of the Holy Mysteries.

The celebrant and the assistants stand in front of the prayer stand and start the Morning Prayer. The reading of Psalms during the prayer shall be orderly and reverently. While the priest is conducting the preparation service, the Morning Prayers continue with devotional hymns about the prophetic fulfillment of the coming of the Lord and angel Gabriel's message to St. Mary; this ends with Old Testament readings by one of the acolytes or by one of the assigned Scripture Readers.

2.3.3. SCRIPTURE READINGS

Old Testament lessons are read standing below the Chancel on the northern side (when facing the congregation, this is the right side) by the side of the Prayer Stand. A sample of what the acolyte should say before the readings is given below. Each lesson should end by saying "*Barekmor*" (Bless me, O Lord).

Before the Old Testament lessons:

READER: The song of glory and salvation, in the tabernacle of the righteous, the Holy Spirit through David did sing.

RESPONSE: Glory be to the Lord of the righteous, and His mercy be upon us forever.

Before the Lesson from the Pentateuch:

READER: The lesson from the (first, second, third, fourth, or fifth) book of Moses, the first among Prophets. Barekmor

RESPONSE: Glory be to the Lord of the Prophets, and His mercy be upon us forever.

Before a Lesson from a Prophet:

READER: The lesson from the book of the prophet (e.g., Jeremiah, Amos, Zechariah, etc., except Isaiah). Barekmor

RESPONSE: Glory be to the Lord of the Prophets, and His mercy be upon us forever.

Before a Lesson from the Prophet Isaiah:

READER: The lesson from the book of Isaiah, the glorious Prophet. Barekmor

RESPONSE: Glory be to the Lord of the Prophets, and His mercy be upon us forever.

At this time, all of the acolytes enter into the sanctuary with prayer. The celebrant or other clergy members give absolution to those who came prepared to receive the Holy Communion. While singing the prescribed hymns, all the candles on the altar are lit readying to start the Public Celebration. The acolytes should be ready for the public celebration with the censer, bells, and *marbosas*.

2.3. ENTRANCE INTO THE SANCTUARY

The priest shows his human sinful nature by wearing a black robe over his regular dress. At a certain time during the Morning Prayers,

Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

the celebrant moves and stands in reverence before the central door of the sanctuary. He says the opening prayer and prayer of repentance. He kisses the hand of the bishop (if present), asking permission to leave. He then asks forgiveness of priests by giving the hands of peace, and then outstretches his hands to the whole congregation, bows and asks them to pray for him so that the Lord may accept his offering on their behalf (*shubkono*).

The celebrant enters the sanctuary with prayers (Psalm 43:4), and bows his head before the altar with penitence; one or two of the acolytes follow him for assistance.

2.3.1. Celebrant Outstretches Hands

There are three times during the Eucharist service where the celebrant outstretches his hands to the congregation asking them to pray for him:

- At the beginning when he enters into the sanctuary
- During the Creed
- During Intercessory hymns indicating that Holy Qurbana is of peace, love and reconciliation.

During these times, the acolytes as well as the congregation also should outstretch their hands showing acceptance.

All the acolytes must enter the sanctuary from the right side and leave the Sanctuary from the left side (as he faces west, i.e., the congregation, it will be his right side). While entering the sanctuary for the first time in the day, acolytes should recite the following prayer:

“I will go unto the altar of God, to the God who makes me joyful with the joy of my youth.” (Psalm 43:4)

The chancel is then veiled and the celebrant and the accompanying acolytes walk around the altar, starting from the right, kissing the corners, with praise and thanksgiving (Psalm 118:26-29) and also the Gospel stand. *Acolytes are not supposed to touch the altar*

without a proper reason. While bowing at the four corners of the altar, acolytes should not rest their hands on the altar; instead just allow their foreheads to touch the corner of the altar while praying:

“O Lord, our God, enlighten us and bind our festival processions as an unbroken chain, even to the horns of the altar. Thou art my God, I will give thanks to Thee. Thou art my God, I will glorify Thee.” (Psalm 118:27-28)

2.3.2. Times For Veiling Of Chancel

The chancel is veiled at the following times:

1. After the celebrant enters the sanctuary and bows to the congregation
2. During the Fraction and Commixture
3. While the celebrant and those in the sanctuary receive the Holy Communion
4. After Holy Communion is given to the congregation
5. After dismissal of the congregation

2.3.3. Times For Washing Hands

Acolytes assist the celebrant to wash his hands a number of times during the service. Water and a towel are taken to the celebrant during the following times:

1. Prior to vesting
2. After giving Absolution (*Hoosoyo*)
3. During Creed

2.4. VESTING

There are eight pieces of vesting for priests, ten pieces for Cor Episcopas (archpriests), and thirteen pieces for bishops). The vestments are “for glory and for beauty” (Exodus 28:2). If the celebrant is a bishop or Cor Episcopa, he removes the black cassock and one of the assistants get it and either hangs it or folds it and places it at the designated place. After preliminary prayers and preparations, another acolyte brings the water and the washing towel

to the celebrant for washing his hands. After that they help the celebrant put on the sacramental vestments ("for glory and for beauty" Exodus 28:2) one after the other in the proper order.

Black Hat: Priests and deacons wear a black hat, the "helmet of salvation" (Ephesians 6:15) with seven sections, signifying the seven sacraments of the Church, as well as the seven steps of ordination to priesthood. "In the Syrian Church, this skull cap is called *Elbishto d'Kurobo*, the cap for offering the sacrifice, and it is also called *Phiro d'Kohnutho*, the Fruit of Priesthood."

Black Robe: This denotes the sinful nature of man. As Lord Jesus bore the sins of the mankind, the priests/bishops bear the sins of the mankind and do beseech forgiveness from God Almighty. Black is always worn for repentance, while white (surplice) for holiness, and Kappa (Cope or Chasuble) is for glory. A confessed sinner receives holiness and glory. The acolyte or deacon gets the black robe from Cor Episcopos or Thirumenies before washing hands and folds it or hangs at a secure place and returns it after the service.

White Surplice: The white robe symbolizes incorruption by the purification of the Holy Spirit; it denotes purity and holiness (Revelation 3:5, 7:9). It should be brought to the celebrant to be blessed before wearing (to be demonstrated how to do this).

Stole: The stole is draped over the front of the body. It is to gird the celebrant with strength in defeating the enemies (Psalm 18:39-40). It is also considered the breastplate of righteousness (Ephesians 6:14) and is a form of armor (to be demonstrated how to bring for blessing).

Deacons wear the black hat, black robe, white surplice, and stole in different format according to their rank:

- Singers (*m'zamrono*) wear the *kutino* without the *uroro* (stole).



- Readers (*koruyo*) wear the *uroro* in the form of a Cross.
- Subdeacons (*Yauphadyakno*) wear the *uroro* folded around the neck.
- Deacons (*mshamshono*) wear the *uroro* over the left shoulder, on either side like wings.
- Archdeacons (*archedyaqno*) wear the *uroro* round the neck. They also wear a *zenoro* and *zende* similar to priests.]



Girdle: The girdle is a belt that is fastened around the waist. It is the sword of triumph (Psalm 45:3) and signifies truth (Ephesians 6:14). It shows the readiness and dedication to do the will of God. Some celebrants drape a towel from the girdle to represent the sword of a soldier, "the sword of God" (Ephesians 6:17). It should be brought to the celebrant to be blessed (to demonstrate).

Sleeves: The sleeves are worn to make the hands instruments of righteousness and good works (Psalm 18:34-35). The left sleeve is placed first and then the right sleeve. They are additional armor (to be demonstrated how to bring to be blessed).



Chasuble or Cope (Kappa): The cope is a sleeveless outer garment that is draped around the back of the celebrant. It symbolizes the robe of Aaron, the mantle of Elijah (2 Kings 2:13), and the purple robe of Jesus (John 19:5). It is the robe of glory and righteousness (Psalm 132:9-10). The acolyte must hold the cope's both belts (on the top) together with the right hand and must lift the cope with the left hand. After the celebrant blesses it and kisses it, the acolyte hands over the belts of the open cope to the right and left arms of the celebrant (to be demonstrated).



Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

Shoes: The shoes are worn and symbolize the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15). They represent victory over the powers of evil. They are to keep serpents, scorpions, and all the powers of the enemy under the feet, as well as to cast underfoot all pride exalted against God (2 Corinthians 10:5).



Arch-priests (*Cor Episcopa*), in addition to the above, wear **Epigonation**, an oblong piece of brocade with artistic stitching. A white gown with red or purple girdle is his regular dress. He wears a purple or red robe under the white surplice during Holy Eucharist and at certain occasions. *Cor Episcopa* also uses golden chain and cross (to be demonstrated how to bring for blessing).

Bishops also wear:

Head Cover (*Masnaf*): All monks wear this, rather than the black hat. This embroidered large hood signifies the crown of thorns worn by the Lord. There are thirteen crosses on this head cover, representing Jesus and the disciples. This shows that the bishop is properly a monk.



Sheelmudi: This oblong, embroidery is draped over the head as a veil. It is the crown of glory. The acolyte must hold the *Sheelmudi* open with both arms and present it to the Bishop for blessing. Then he must put it properly on the head of the Bishop (to be demonstrated). At times, during the service, this sheelmudi is set back from the head.



Pallium (*Batrasheel*): It represents the ephod of Aaron (Exodus 28:6). It hangs down in front and back from around the neck, over the cope. This indicates protection in the shadow of the tabernacle (Psalm 27:5) and the administrative power of the



bishop. When presented to the Bishop for blessing, the acolyte must hold the front side of the *Pallium* on top of the back portion and must help the Bishop to wear it properly.

Pectoral Cross: Bishops as well as *Cor Episcopas* wear a cross around the neck. This signifies the crucified Christ. (The prayer when the cross is being put around the neck reflects Psam 34:5, 44:5). The Catholicos, the Supreme Head of the Church, wears, along with the pectoral cross in the middle, two icons, that of St. Thomas on the left and St. Mary on the right.

Crozier (Pastoral Staff): This is the scepter of God's power out of Zion (Psalm 110:2), designed from the shepherd's crook. It is significant of the bishop's office as one who cares for and protects his flock. The serpent on the staff is the symbol of our crucified Lord (John 3:14). During the beginning of the public celebration, the censurer holds this staff in his left hand and the censer in his right hand. At the end of procession, he hands over the staff to place at a secure place and instead holds the lighted candle in his left hand. During benedictions, this staff has to be brought to the bishop when blessing. During the great intercession, the acolyte who recites the intercession has to hold this staff in his left hand and some one else should hold a lighted candle standing near him. During Gospel Reading and Elevation and Procession of the Holy Mysteries, the senior priest/deacon/acolyte should hold this pastoral staff. At the dismissal benediction, it should be brought to the bishop to hold and to bless the congregation (All these must be demonstrated).

Hand Cross: The hand cross symbolizes the victory over the power of the evil spirits and enemies. The bishop always makes the sign of the cross using the hand cross. Acolytes and the faithful kiss this cross for blessings through bishops.

2.5. OFFERING OF BREAD AND WINE

After vesting, the celebrant ascends to the Altar step where he arranges the chalice, paten and other items. The special leavened

Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

bread is placed in the paten; the wine is poured into the chalice and mixed with water in the cup (*m'shemoniso*). This action reminds us that the divinity and humanity are mixed in our Lord Jesus Christ; that our Lord mixed wine and water at the Last Supper; and that blood and water came out when He was pierced at His side on the cross. Blood and water washed away the sin of all creation.

2.6. PREPARATION OF THE ALTAR (*THUYOBO*)

The priest kneels before the altar and says inaudible prayers asking for forgiveness and for resistance against temptations as a means of self-offering so that he may be given the gift of the divine mysteries. He kisses the altar, ascends the altar step, and removes the covers from the mysteries with special prayers asking that he and the congregation be worthy enough to be a sacrificial offering. Then the priest makes intercession for the living and the departed with paten and chalice held in hands crossed against each other. After a general prayer, the priest requests intercessions especially of St. Mary and the patron saint of the church, and makes special prayers for them as well as the sick, the penitents, the departed, and relatives (including the parents and other family of the celebrant). The congregation must submit names of those to be remembered for the day's Qurbana before this. The celebrant then places the Mysteries on the altar and covers it with the *Shoshappa*. In this preparation, the priest commits himself, the gifts and the whole world.

2.7. CENSING

After the chalice and paten are covered with the *Shoshappa*, the priest then descends from the altar step. The censurer shall then bring the censer with the burning charcoal and the incense bowl to the celebrant who places incense with prayers, and continues the intercessory prayers for the sick, the living and the departed and also in remembrance of Virgin Mary, holy prophets, apostles, martyrs, the religious doctors, priests, the just, the righteous, the holy Church and for all her children. This censuring is concluded with the

adoration of the Compassionate Father, Merciful Son, and the Merciful Living Holy Spirit. Up to here, the Old Testament times and the Messianic prophecies are remembered. The celebrant, after this prayer of intercession with incense, concludes this inaudible service, with Trisagion, Lord's Prayer, and the Nicene Creed.

This service symbolizes the offerings Aaron and his sons mentioned in the written Law. The left corner of the *Shoshappa* is also folded at this time to show the Godhead and human hood of Jesus, as well as to remember the seal on the tomb of Christ.

2.7.1. Times For Placing Incense

Only bishops and priests (and very seldom full-deacons) place incense in the censer (Numbers 16). Remember that the censuring starts from the altar and it must end at the altar, in the meaning that the origin of the blessings is from God and it ends in God.

- During Prumion Readings by the acolyte or deacon
- Censing by celebrant during Pre-Communion service
- Censing by celebrant at the beginning of Public Celebrant
- Before Gospel reading
- During the prayer of Absolution following the Gospel reading
- During the blessing of the censer
- During the Elevation of the Holy Mysteries
- During the Intercessory Hymns
- During the Procession of the Holy Mysteries
- During Memorial Prayers

3. PUBLIC CELEBRATION**3.1. OPENING OF THE SANCTUARY**

The Public Celebration of the Holy Communion Service begins by remembering both the birth and the baptism of our Lord, through which God manifested Himself to the world. The censurer brings the censer to the celebrant (varies with the presence of other clergy

Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

or bishop); one acolyte stands in front with *marbosa*, the censurer with a lit candle just behind him, then the celebrant and then another acolyte with the *marbosa* just behind the celebrant; and some of them with the hand bells remain at their standing spot. The priest burns incense and censes the Table of Life. The veil (curtain) is drawn open. The priest goes counterclockwise around the altar censing and kissing the four corners of the altar. The bells are rung. John the Baptist, the forerunner of our Lord, is represented by the deacon who goes in front of the celebrant with the lighted candle; the celebrant will hand the censer to this server after censing the congregation. The altar helpers shake the sacramental fans (*marbosa*) representing the angels who are fluttering their wings.

The opening of the sanctuary by unveiling the curtain at the beginning of the public celebration signifies the opening of heaven and the revelation of our Lord through Incarnation. At this time, the *Thronos* is the manger; the servers are the shepherds; and the congregation represents the whole world. Another interpretation is that the altar represents the manger; the priest censing and kissing the corners of the altar in procession represents the coming of the shepherds and the wise men; the deacon (server) in front with lit candle is John the Baptist, the forerunner to our Lord; and the whole congregation singing the hymn represents the angels. After censing the congregation, the celebrant hands over the censer to the censurer who then stands behind the celebrant and continues censing.

3.1.1. How To Shake Sacramental Fans (*Marbosa*)

The *marbosas* represent the angelic community during the worship. When using the *marbosas*, the Acolytes should stand behind the celebrant, with the fans just above the head of the celebrant, one to the left and one to the right. The *marbosa* should be held at a 45-degree angle pointing towards the celebrant precisely just behind the head of the celebrant, when shook. One hand should be placed below the top base, and the other hand near the lower base. Shak-

ing occurs by rotating the lower hand clockwise and then counterclockwise. When properly done, the top of the fan does not rotate during shaking. The acolytes must feel that he is presenting the angelic presence by holding the *marbosas*.

3.1.1.1. Times To Shake The *Marbosas*

Acolyte should remember to shake the *marbosas* at the following occasions

- At the beginning of the Public Celebration
- During Trisagion, when we say, "+Crucified for us..."
- At the time of the Gospel reading
- During the blessing of the censer
- During the celebration of the *Shoshappa*
- While the celebrant waves his hands over the bread and wine
- During the Institution of the Holy Qurbana
- During the Invocation of the Holy Spirit
- During the Elevation of the Holy Mysteries
- During the Procession of the Holy Mysteries

3.1.2. Times For Unveiling Of Chancel

The chancel is unveiled just before the Morning Prayers; there are also four other occasions in the Holy Qurbana when the chancel is unveiled, signifying the opening of heaven:

- Beginning of the Public Celebration of the Holy Communion Service
- After the Fraction and Commixture of the bread and wine
- At the time when Communion is given
- During the procession of the Holy Mysteries

3.1.3. How To Use The Censer?

The censer is one of the important objects used during worship. In the absence of a deacon, an acolyte is allowed to take the censer. The censer is held in the right hand with the metal clasp resting on the index finger. The center chain has a ring at the top, which is

used to raise and lower the top cover. That ring should be placed on one of the other fingers of the right hand (whatever is comfortable) that allows the flexibility to raise and lower the top cover when the celebrant places incense.

The incense bowl must be filled before the starting of the worship, not during the sacraments, and should not be placed on the altar.

The proper place for the censurer to stand is immediately behind the celebrant, to the left with the left hand placed on the chest to express that he is controlling his inner feelings. When incense is to be placed in the censer by the celebrant, the censurer should place incense in the spoon and hold the spoon with the thumb to have a grip on it so it does not fall down. The censurer should then take the incense bowl with spoon in the left hand and the censer in the right hand to the celebrant (or bishop or other priests if more than one is present). When presenting the censer and the incense bowl to the celebrant, be sure to hold the bowl to the top level of the lower bowl of the censer. He must hold the censer up, raising the top cover of the censer to expose the charcoal. The celebrant blesses the incense by signing the cross over the incense bowl and places a spoon of incense over the burning charcoal. The censurer receives blessings from the celebrant by kissing the hand of the celebrant (or cross if it is bishop) before he starts censuring, as the acolytes/deacons are actually censuring for and on behalf of the celebrant/clergy.

Censing begins on the right side of the altar by waving the censer three times towards the altar, bowing the head in reverence, kissing the right side of the altar, and then waiving the censer another three times and once again bowing the head in reverence. The censurer then slowly moves to the left side of the altar and performs the same actions. The censurer then moves to the center of the altar and censes the celebrant. If the celebrant is a bishop,

the censurer should specially cense him, receive his blessings, and then proceed. The censurer then censes the right side of the sanctuary, beginning with the Gospel stand and then the altar assistants, and then rotates to the left side of the sanctuary. If there are two side altars in the church, the left altar should be censed first, followed by the right altar. While censuring the side altars, he must stand at the back of the sanctuary, (western side) exactly behind the celebrant. Next, the congregation is censed, beginning with the men on the right side, followed by the middle where the faithful departed reside, and then the women on the left side. When the Acolyte censes the congregation, he must cense the baptismal font also with due respect. The censurer rotates one last time and returns to where he began. It is important that censuring be done slowly with reverence.

NOTE: When the celebrant puts incense in the censer, he blesses the censurer; when he receives the censer from the celebrant, he kisses the hand (cross if the celebrant is a bishop) of the celebrant. When the censurer moves to the western side of the church to cense the congregation, he must face to the left and right sides of the nave equally and must bow to the faithful who would make the sign of cross. The censurer must cense the altar first from his right side. Turn little back and cense the gospel stand, left and right sides, and the left and right altars and come down to the chancel and continue censuring. If the celebrant is there in front of the altar, he must cense from both sides. If the holy mysteries are arranged on the altar, he must cense them from right and left sides.

3.1.4. How To Hold The Candle Sticks

The candlesticks are used during solemn occasions. An acolyte holding a candle should stand reverently holding the candlestick above his chest with two hands. Be careful to not allow the wax to fall onto the floor below or on anyone else assisting in the altar. When the candlestick is returned to the altar, one should return it to the place from where it was taken and then kiss the altar, and make

the sign of the cross. It is advisable that the senior acolytes should hold the candles on important occasions.

3.1.4.1. Times To Hold The Candles

There are certain times when the acolyte(s) may need to hold the candles during the service:

- At the beginning of the public celebration, the censurer who goes in front of the celebrant holds a candle to represent John the Baptist.
- During the Epistle readings, the censurer holds a candle in his left hand.
- During the Gospel Reading, the acolytes either hold the candles or place them on the Gospel Stand.
- During the Elevation of the Holy Mysteries
- While the Holy Communion is administered to the recipients

During the Procession of the Holy Mysteries

3.2. THE TRISAGION

The tradition is that, at the time of the burial of our Lord in the newly erected sepulcher, angels and archangels descended from heaven and held the body of Christ, our Lord, one group after another, praising the Lord saying, "Holy art Thou, O God! Holy art Thou, Almighty! Holy art Thou Immortal!" When Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and all other followers witnessed the solemn scene, they praised with the angels, saying, "Crucified for us, have mercy upon us." St. Ignatius added this latter portion to the prayer, so that the Trisagion is addressed to our Lord, not to the Trinity, affirming that the Christ crucified is God, Almighty and Immortal. Bar Sleetbi added the Trisagion to the Communion Service; this particular event is recorded and repeated at the very beginning of the Holy Communion service, and the whole congregation makes the sign of the cross when it recites the prayer "Crucified for us, have mercy upon us." As this truth is repeated, the bells and *marbosas* are rung. Reciting Kurielaison Three Times

Three times we recite Kurielaison (Lord have mercy) repeatedly:

- After Trisagion
- After Invocation, i.e. immediately after "Answer me Oh Lord"
- After the 6th Great Intercession.

Epistles and Gospel Readings

The teaching and healing ministry of our Lord is celebrated in the readings of the Epistles and Gospels. There are three readings from the New Testament – one from the book of Acts or from the Catholic (General) Epistles; one from the Pauline Epistles, and the final from the Holy Gospel (by the celebrant).

The Acts of the Apostles or a General Epistle is read on the right side (north) of the sanctuary, representing that the mission work of the Apostles was first to the Jews (the selected people of God). The reader has to first kiss the northern side of the altar and then the kappa of the celebrant (the cross if the celebrant is a bishop) and then stands on the chancel step on the right side facing the congregation. The censurer holds a lit candle in his left hand while censuring the reader.

READER: The lesson from the (Acts of the Holy Apostles – OR- General Epistle of St. (N)). Habeebai, Barekmor (My beloved ones, Bless me, O Lord

RESPONSE: Glory be to the Lord of the Apostles, and His mercy be upon us, forever.

The reader reads the Epistle and ends the lesson by saying **Habeebai, Barekmor.**

The Pauline Epistles are read standing on the left side (south), representing the mission to the Gentiles. The reader has to first kiss the southern side of the altar and then the kappa of the celebrant (the cross if the celebrant is a bishop) and then stands on the chancel step on the left side facing the congregation. The censurer holds a lit candle in his left hand while censuring the reader.

READER: The lesson from the Epistle of St. Paul, the Apostle to the " (Name of the Epistle). **Aahai (My brethren), Barekmor** This reading reminds the mission work among the Gentiles.

RESPONSE: Glory be to the Lord of the Apostles, and His mercy be upon us, forever.

The reader reads the Epistle and ends the lesson by saying **Aahai, Barekmor.**

The Lectern (Reading Desk) is moved to the center for the reading of the day's lessons from the Word of Life, the Gospel. This symbolizes the everlasting continuity of the words and deeds of the Lord, and the everlasting presence of the Lord. It also tells us that the Gospel is for all — Jews and Gentiles alike, showing that all human beings are equal before God's love, justice and salvation. The Bible has a central position in the Orthodox service. Bible Reading is at the center during Holy Qurbana.

The Holy Gospel is read by the celebrant (or bishop, if present). The celebrant holds the Holy Bible in his hands; two acolytes stand on both sides of the celebrant, and two others with the *marbosas* just behind them and while waving the *marbosas* and ringing the hand bells go to the Gospel Stand in a procession. Acolytes either hold the candles or place the candles on the Gospel Stand. After incense is placed, the censurer stands on the step below the sanctuary on the northern side and says the following exhortation:

"Barekmor, With calmness and reverence and with tranquility, let us give heed and listen to the Gospel of the life-giving proclamation of the word of God, from the Holy Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that is being read to us."

The need for a believing attitude of the congregation is emphasized here in the words of the deacon, the priest and the response of the

congregation before the Gospel reading. The celebrant ends the Gospel reading by saying "Peace be to you all." The general hymn that follows emphasizes the urgency to dutifully carry out the Word of God. At the end of the hymn, the censurer says aloud **"STHOUMANKALOS"** (Let us stand well) and the response is **"KURIELAISON"** (Lord, have mercy).

3.3. PRIEST OFFERS PEACE

There are six occasions when the priest turns to the congregation and says **"PEACE TO YOU ALL"**, reminding us of the greeting of the resurrected Lord:

- Before reading the Holy Gospel
- From the Altar step before the Prayer of Peace
- Before the song "Hearken Gracious..."
- After Lord's Prayer
- Before Elevation
- After Thanksgiving

In response, the acolytes as well as the congregation shall sign the cross.

3.4. PRAYER OF ABSOLUTION

Following the Gospel Reading, there is a prayer praising the Holy Trinity. After this, the celebrant places incense in the censer and the deacon proceeds to cense both sides of the altar, celebrant, other clergy, and the congregation. The priest makes special prayers of absolution for the living and the departed, makes special exhortations along with the offering of incense, requests the Holy Spirit to descend on the bread and wine, and prays that the recipients of the Holy Qurbana become worthy for its awesome blessings. At this time, the left corner of the Shipshape is unfolded to emphasize that after incarnation only one Person exists. Throughout these prayers, the deacon is swinging the censer demonstrating that our prayers are being lifted up to heaven just as the perfumed fragrance from the censer.

3.5. BLESSING OF THE CENSER

At this time, the censurer brings the censer to the celebrant with the bowl of incense; the celebrant puts incense in the censer; the censurer stands in front of the celebrant holding up the censer and the celebrant blesses the censer three times, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Each time, the bells and *marbosas* are rung to call attention to the adoration of the Holy Trinity. This invocation of the Holy Spirit reminds us of the baptism of our Lord. The first chain represents God the Father, the second and the third for God the Son (His divine and human form), and the fourth chain represents the Holy Spirit.

The blessing of the censer stands for service. The celebrant censes the altar, the divine elements, and the people present. The congregation accepts this by signing the cross and bowing their heads. As the fragrant incense from the censer goes upward, our petitions shall also be well pleasing to God.

3.6. THE CREED

The celebrant, after censing the altar and the congregation, hands over the censer to the censurer. The deacon/acolyte calls the congregation to listen and respond to the celebrant's prayer, the celebrant begins the Nicene Creed, and the censurer censes the altar. The congregation continues the recitation of the Creed, with the designated acolyte starting each paragraph of the Creed.

Here we publicly acknowledge, accept, and announce the faith of the Church instituted at the first ecumenical Synod of Nicea in 325, developed at Constantinople in 381, and finally established in 431 at Ephesus. The Creed declares the fundamental faith and doctrines of our Church. The service of the faithful actually begins only with the recitation of the Creed, not before. The Creed must be recited in order for one to be deemed worthy to receive the Holy Communion, as it emphasizes the need for faith when we celebrate the Holy Eucharist. Therefore, communion is not given to

non-believers. Conviction is more important than convenience. As a matter of principle, a service or prayer is incomplete without the recitation of the creed.

WASHING OF HANDS

During the recitation of the Creed, symbolizing the washing of the disciples' feet in the Upper Room, one of the acolytes brings water to the celebrant to wash his hands and a towel to wipe as a final touch of cleansing before the Holy Eucharist. This is also a spiritual preparation as he prays silently for purification. This is a symbol of the purity of the celebrant to celebrate the heavenly sacrament. The celebrant then turns toward the clergy and congregation and with outstretched hands asks the people to pray for him that his oblation may be accepted. He then kneels toward the altar and prays for himself, the congregation, and especially for the people to be remembered.

At this time the censurer goes out of the sanctuary censing the congregation from one end of the church to the other. It is an old custom to signify the end of the Service of the Catechumens (those yet to be baptized), thereby announcing their departure, thus preparing for the service of the Faithful. Similarly our Lord brought only the twelve Apostles to the Upper Chamber where He instituted the Holy Qurbana. The censing deacon also represents the prayer of the faithful being taken to the altar before the Almighty God. Thus, the whole congregation is being prepared for the sacrificial feast; so all those faithful who are in attendance should receive it. It also reminds us of the coming of our Lord from heaven to earth to save mankind from sin.

The censurer returns to the chancel and waits on the chancel step for the priest to finish his private prayers, holding his left hand firmly around all the chains of the censer together and lifting the censer in the level of his right hand. After the Nicene Creed and the hymn that follows, the censurer says "**Barekmor.**"

Sthoumenkalos” (Let us stand well). Thus he is giving a report to the celebrant that he has seen the entire congregation united together in the holy faith. The congregation responds with “*Kurielaison*” (O Lord, have mercy upon us).

4. ANAPHORA OF THE FAITHFUL

The service of the faithful begins hereafter. The celebrant ascends the altar step, which represents the Upper Room of the Last Supper as well as the stepping ladder to heaven (the sacrifice is being offered in heaven where angels ascend and descend), and says special introductory prayers to the kiss of peace for peace and reconciliation.

4.1. KISS OF PEACE

The priest turns to the congregation and declares peace to all. The censurer approaches on the right side of the celebrant for the kiss of peace. He first kisses the altar and stretches the chains of the censer before the celebrant who kisses the altar (to show that the peace comes from God) and then kisses the stretched chains of the censer. The censurer then kisses the hand of the celebrant (hand cross if bishop) and he again kisses the altar and cope of the celebrant and then goes to the left side of the celebrant and kisses the altar. With both hands, he then passes the kiss of peace (if a priest is present, he blesses the censurer) to the acolytes on that side. He passes the peace to the members of the congregation. He then comes back to the sanctuary and passes the kiss of peace to the acolytes on the other side. He then goes back to the left side of the sanctuary behind the celebrant and continues censuring. The whole congregation joins in this act by passing the kiss of peace from one person to another. This is done for reconciliation with everyone, an expression of love (agape) for one another, and a sincere prayer for peace. Thus, the peace that comes from God through the priest is given to all.

The deacon/acolyte then calls the congregation to humbly bow their heads to receive the blessings of God. The hymn during

this time echoes the solemnity of the occasion. This ceremony corresponds to the sum and substance of the themes explained in verses Matthew 5:24; John 13:34, 14:27; and 2 Corinthians 13:12.

4.1.1. Times For The Call To Bow Heads

There are a few times during the service when the deacon/acolyte calls the congregation to bow their heads while the priest says a prayer of blessing:

- After the Kiss of Peace
- Before the Third Benediction
- After receiving the Holy Mysteries

4.2. CELEBRATION OF THE SHOSHAPPA

The next ceremony is the celebration of the anaphora veil (*Shoshappa*). It signifies the revelation of the Lord (Transfiguration) as the Son of God at the time of His Public ministry. As the Holy Spirit descended upon our Lord, the Holy Spirit comes upon the holy mysteries, as the priest lifts and waves the *Shoshappa* over the Holy Mysteries. *Shoshappa* reminds us of the rock from which water comes out (Exodus 17:5-6), the glory of the Lord that fills the universe (Exodus 24:15-18; 1 Kings 8:10-11; Psalm 72:19, 97:6; Isaiah 6:1-3), the large stone rolled at the tomb (Matthew 27:60), and the spiritual Rock (1 Corinthians 10:1-4).

During this time, the deacon calls the congregation to stand in reverence and attention, contemplating the Holy Eucharist being offered before them. Two acolytes stand behind the celebrant holding the *marbosa* waving. All the hand bells are also to be rung. At this time, we remember the task of evangelization on the church level and individual level. We must seek the grace of God to proclaim gospel to others.

If the celebrant is a Bishop, his head cover (*Sheelmudi*) will be set back to show respect for the main part of the Qurbana.

After the celebration of the *Shoshappa*, the celebrant keeps it beside the holy vessels, on his left side. The censurer folds the

same *Shoshappa* after the diptychs. Prior to this, he seeks the intercession of all those in the sanctuary by kissing the hands of the clergy and passing the kiss of peace to the deacons and acolytes. Then he turns to the congregation with open hands and bows before the congregation to get the grace to touch the holy cloth and washes his own hands. Then he folds the *Shoshappa* and keeps it under the *Kablana* on the left side of the celebrant. This act is considered as good as arranging the seat of St. Mary, Mother of God, near our Lord God. When it is removed, it represents the period of the intercession after His Resurrection and before arrival in heaven.

4.3. THE FIRST APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION (2 COR 13:14)

The priest turns to the congregation and says a benediction originating from the *Tableetha*, signing the cross three times in the name of the Father (John 3:16), Son (John 1:14,17; Mark 10:45), and Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17; Romans 5:5; Galatians 5:22-23). This reminds us of the voice from heaven on the Mount of Transfiguration, and at the river Jordan (Matthew 3:16-17).

4.4. BENEDICTIONS

First benediction is in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the second benediction is in the name of our Lord, and the third is in the name of the Holy Trinity. The first originates from the *Tableetha*, the second from the Paten, and the third from the Chalice. The final benediction of dismissal reminds the congregation of their spiritual journey and requests them to pray for the celebrant.

4.5. PRAYERS WITH UPLIFTED HANDS

When the priest lifts up his hands for prayers, he is petitioning for the needs of the congregation and requesting God's grace. Everyone is united in Christ and praises God together with the angels (Isaiah 6:1-5; Hebrews 12:22-24; Revelation 4:1-11). The celebrant is also identifying with the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross, where His hands were outstretched. Now heaven is opened

and it is about the time of our Lord to come down upon the Holy Mysteries, when the priest asks the congregation to lift up their hearts to heaven. This reminds us of the occasion of the blessing of the bread by our Lord (Matthew 14:19; Mark 6:41; Luke 9:16). We see our Lord on the right hand of the Father when we raise our eyes up to heaven (Acts 7:55-56). The waving of the hands over the bread and the wine signifies the coming down of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove (Luke 3:22). The priest and the congregation along with the angels offer praise and thanksgiving to the Lord while bells and *marbosas* are rung.

4.6. INSTITUTION OF THE HOLY QURBANA

After this, the priest narrates what our Lord did during the Last Supper, and blesses the bread and wine by signing the cross over them three times each, with bells and *marbosas* rung. Thus, they become the Body and Blood of our Lord. We believe in the special and personal real presence of the Lord on the altar and in the communion.

After the Institution, the priest raises the spoon and cushion as a reminder of the Second Coming of our Lord and Savior (Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19-20).

4.7. INVOCATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (EPICLESIS)

This invocation to transform the offerings in to the Body and Blood of our Lord is unique to the Orthodox Church. Bells and *marbosas* are rung while the deacon proclaims the solemnity of the occasion; the celebrant waves his hands while praying silently. The priest then earnestly prays aloud three times to God to answer his prayers by sending the Holy Spirit (1 Kings 18:36-39) upon the mysteries and the congregation. The celebrant then consecrates the bread and wine by praying and making the sign of the cross three times over them.

4.8. THE GREAT INTERCESSION (THUBDENS)

As our Lord prayed in His great high-priestly prayers in John 17, we also pray for all the living and the departed. The first three prayers are for the living and the last three are for the departed.

During the Great Intercession, the congregation may be seated. The censurer reads the first and sixth diptych. The acolyte begins the reading by saying "Barekmor". If the celebrant is a bishop, the acolyte must hold the bishop's crozier in his left hand while reading the *Thubden*, and then passes it on to the next reader. After reading, he has to first kiss the side of the altar and then the kappa of the celebrant (the cross if the celebrant is a bishop).

1. **For the Living Spiritual Fathers:** We pray for the Patriarch of Antioch, Catholicos of the East, bishop of Jerusalem (as it was the cradle and center of our Christian Church from the first century onwards), diocesan bishop, and all other bishops in the Church. The censurer reads the first diptych. Here, he must remember the name of the Diocesan bishop (s). If a bishop is present, just say "**OUR FATHER THIS MOST REVEREND BISHOP**".
2. **For the Living Faithful Brethren:** We pray for all the living laymen, women, and children who are sick, needy, troubled, and suffering.
3. **For the Living Faithful Secular Rulers and Administrators:** The prayers are for all faithful political rulers and authorities.
4. **For the Mother of God and the Saints:** We remember Mother Mary, all the saints, apostles, martyrs, and especially St. Thomas our patron saint of our Mother Church.
5. **For the Departed Spiritual Fathers and Doctors of the Church:** We remember all the great ecclesiastical leaders who worked for the establishment of the faith and teachings

of the Church, and ask for their intercessions for our day-to-day Christian life. In addition, the three ecumenical synods and the names of bishops, deacons, and monks are mentioned in this fifth and longest intercession, including Mar Baselios Eldo Catholicos entombed at Kothamangalam, Mar Gregorios entombed at Parumala, Mar Dionysius of Vattasseril, and any newly proclaimed saints of the Church.

6. **For all the Faithful Departed:** In the last intercession, we remember the faithful departed, especially the ones whose names are given for the day. The censurer reads the sixth diptych as well.

4.9. THE SECOND BENEDICTION

The second benediction originates from the paten and is in the name of our Lord (Titus 2:11ff). We now meditate His passion.

4.10. FRACTION AND COMMIXTURE

At this time, the chancel is veiled. This reminds us of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane in the night praying alone (Matthew 26:36ff). In addition, there was darkness at the time of His crucifixion (Luke 23:44). The priest performs fraction, consignation, and commixture (of the communion bread and wine). This action represents the passion, death and resurrection of our Lord. The bread is cut in different shapes according to particular periods of the liturgical calendar. At this solemn occasion, the acolytes stand together in a row behind the celebrant, from north to south in the sanctuary. The congregation and the altar helpers sing a penitential hymn, or the hymn based on the vision of Isaiah 6. Here everybody is supposed to meditate before the Lord. Walking around or changing the candles, etc., should not be done at this solemn occasion.

One of the acolytes should be ready to briefly ring the bell in the midst of the hymn, when the communion is lifted, announcing the resurrection of our Lord. If the celebrant has not finished the commixture, then the prescribed alternate hymns or litanies should be recited.

4.11. LITANY

The deacon/acolyte says prayers for compassion and mercy on those in need and for both the living and the departed. The chancel is then unveiled. This reminds us of the rending of the veil of the Holy of Holies of the Jerusalem temple at the time of crucifixion and symbolizes the appearance of our Lord to the disciples after His resurrection. Thus, heaven is thrown open to the whole world.

4.12. THE LORD'S PRAYER

The Lord's Prayer that follows reminds us that we are born again, through the sacrifice of our Lord, and the consequent sending of the Holy Spirit; as children of God, we are worthy to call God "our Father" (Matthew 6:9-13; John 3:3-5; Galatians 4:4-7; Ephesians 2:11-22; 1 Peter 1:3-5).

After the Lord's Prayer is the Prayer for the Worthy Reception of the Sacrament, and then the salutation "Peace be to you all" followed by another call to the congregation by the deacon to bow their heads before receiving the Holy Qurbana while the priest prays for their worthiness, and then again the celebrant declares peace to all.

4.13. THE THIRD BENEDICTION

The third benediction originates from the chalice and is in the name of the Holy Trinity. It refers to the blessing of our Lord with uplifted hands at the time of Ascension (Luke 24:50-51).

4.14. ELEVATION OF THE HOLY MYSTERIES

Incense is placed in the censer at this time. The elevation of the Holy Mysteries is the most important time of adoration in the Holy Qurbana. Ringing bells and *marbosas*, lit candles, and the announcement of the deacon/acolyte to watch with fear and trembling reveal the solemnity of the occasion. The lifting of the paten and the chalice commemorates the ascension of our Lord, who went inside the veil to offer intercession for us (Hebrews 9:7).

Two senior acolytes hold lit candles on the left and right side of the altar and place them back after the celebrant places the chalice and paten back on the altar. Then they reverently kiss the altar and go back to their places. The two standing on either side with lit candles resemble the two men who stood in white apparel, at the time of ascension, saying: "Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven?"

4.15. COMMUNION OF SAINTS AND INCENSE PRAYERS

The intercessory hymns with incense are especially for St. Mary the mother of God (Psalm 45:9-11), the patron and other saints, (Psalm 92:12,14), the departed clergy (Psalm 132:9-10), and departed faithful (Psalm 103:13,15). This section of the Holy Eucharist was introduced in the 12th century. The Bishop (celebrant) would at this point descend from the altar step, put on the head cover, and take the crosier and hand cross.

At this time we remember our Lord's ascension to Heaven as explained in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

4.16. HOLY COMMUNION

The priest turns toward the congregation with outstretched hands and asks them to pray for him. The sanctuary is then veiled. The priest kneels to say special prayers. After that, he and those in the sanctuary receive communion. The Bishop removes the head cover when he receives the Holy Qurbana and gives to others.

The chancel is then unveiled and the reconciled members receive communion. In order to be properly disposed to receive communion, communicants should be conscious of all sins and should be seeking to live in charity and love. Those conscious of grave sin must be reconciled with God and the Church through Confession and in a state of devotion and preparation.

One senior acolyte shall hold a supporting container beneath the mouth of the communion recipient, if it is given from the cup, so

Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

that the elements are not accidentally dropped; another one shall stand with a lit candlestick; and a third one must be ready with water to be given to those who receive the Holy Communion. After receiving the Holy Qurbana, water is given so that no part of the Holy Qurbana is left in the mouth.

The chancel is veiled again and the deacon leads a prayer of worship and praise of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

4.17. PROCESSION OF THE HOLY MYSTERIES

The unveiling of the sanctuary represents the opening of heaven at the glorious second coming of our Lord. During this time incense is placed and all the acolytes shall stand in order on both sides in the sanctuary with lit candles, ringing bells, etc., all meant to honor the Holy Mysteries. The celebrant, carrying the paten in his right hand and the chalice in his left hand, turns about from the left hand side towards the people. With special prayers, the Holy Mysteries are brought through the aisle. The descent of the priest from the sanctuary step with chalice and paten tells us of the second coming of our Savior. Here the lighted candleholders standing in two rows remind us of the angels, and the sounds of the bells and the fans (*marbosa*) proclaim the trumpet (1 Corinthians. 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16).



4.18. THANKSGIVING, HOOTHOMO AND DISMISSAL

The mysteries are taken back to the altar. The priest offers special prayers and thanksgiving. The deacon/acolyte calls the congregation to bow their heads after having received the Holy Mysteries. The celebrant prays to Jesus Christ to aid both the living and the departed to be steadfast in love and faith. The celebrant then sings a concluding hymn particular for the day, to which the congregation responds with a hymn seeking God's blessings.

Then he dismisses the congregation with a final benediction

saying to go in peace. The celebrant tells the congregation that they are now committed to the grace and mercy of the Holy Trinity with blessings of grace and mercy and spiritual food, requesting forgiveness of sins for those far and near, living and departed, who have been saved by the cross and sealed with the seal of baptism, and then with humility, humbleness, commitment, and the acknowledgement that he himself is weak and sinful, the celebrant asks the congregation to pray for him.

In response, the congregation responds with a prayer. The chancel is veiled at this time while the priest kneels and says special prayers for himself, for the congregation, and for those whose names are specially given to pray and remember. This is followed by post communion, announcements, sermon (here or earlier), and prayers for those who are celebrating birthdays, wedding anniversaries, death anniversaries (with incense) and so on.

4.19. OFFERINGS

The congregation brings offerings to the altar, which expresses our gift of self to God in Jesus, after kissing the cross or hand of the priest for blessings so they can depart in peace and contentment. The Bishop holds the crozier in his left hand at this time.

During *kaimuthu*, the blessed bread (*Burksa*) is given to those who haven't received Holy Communion but wanted to partake in the holy meal, by one of the acolytes. This is a continuation of the tradition of sharing the bread brought by the faithful to the church in the early days. They used to share and eat from the Church.

All the acolytes shall stay in the sanctuary after *kaimuthu* and must participate in the concluding prayers.

4.20. AFTER THE SERVICE

After this, the acolytes must help the celebrant in changing and folding the vestments (should be demonstrated) and making sure everything in the sanctuary is placed in order. Then they can change their *kuppayam* (surplice). They should take stock of any items that need to be replenished, replaced, cleaned or repaired, and do the needful.

APPENDICES

1. CALENDAR

For dates 2012 forward:
<http://www.stgregorioschurchdc.org/cgi/cal.cgi>

To find the significance of a given day, locate the date under the respective calendar year in the following chart:

Event	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
<i>Kudosh Etho</i> (Church Calendar Begins)	Oct30	Nov5	Nov4	Nov2	Nov1	Oct31
Feast of St. Gregorios, Parumala	Nov2	Nov2	Nov2	Nov2	Nov2	Nov2
<i>Hoodosh Etho</i>	Nov6	Nov12	Nov11	Nov9	Nov8	Nov7
Annunciation to Zechariah	Nov13	Nov19	Nov18	Nov16	Nov15	Nov14
Annunciation to St. Mary	Nov20	Nov26	Nov25	Nov23	Nov22	Nov21
St. Mary's Visit to Elizabeth	Nov2	Dec3	Dec2	Nov30	Nov29	Nov28
Fast of the Advent Begins (25 days)	Dec1	Dec1	Dec1	Dec1	Dec1	Dec1
Birth of St. John the Baptist	Dec4	Dec10	Dec9	Dec7	Dec6	Dec5
Revelation to St. Joseph	Dec11	Dec17	Dec16	Dec14	Dec13	Dec12
Sunday Before Christmas	Dec18	Dec24	Dec23	Dec21	Dec20	Dec19
1 st Sunday after Christmas	Jan1	Dec31	Dec30	Dec28	Dec27	Dec26
Commemoration of the Praises of St. Mary	Dec26	Dec26	Dec26	Dec26	Dec26	Dec26
Massacre of Children	Dec27	Dec27	Dec27	Dec27	Dec27	Dec27
Circumcision of our Lord	Jan1	Jan1	Jan1	Jan1	Jan1	Jan1
2 nd Sunday After Christmas	Jan8	Jan7	Jan6	Jan4	Jan3	Jan2

Feast of Epiphany (<i>Danaha</i>)	Jan6	Jan6	Jan6	Jan6	Jan6	Jan6
Day of St. John the Baptist	Jan7	Jan7	Jan7	Jan7	Jan7	Jan7
1 st Sunday after Epiphany	Jan8	Jan7	Jan13	Jan11	Jan10	Jan9
2 nd Sunday after Epiphany	Jan15	Jan14	—	Jan18	Jan17	Jan16
3 rd Sunday after Epiphany	Jan22	Jan21	—	Jan25	Jan24	Jan23
4 th Sunday after Epiphany	Jan29	Jan28	—	Feb1	—	Jan30
Fast of Nineveh Begins (3 days)	Feb6	Jan29	Jan14	Feb2	Jan25	Feb14
Presentation of Infant Jesus (<i>Mayalitho</i>)	Feb2	Feb2	Feb2	Feb2	Feb2	Feb2
5 th Sunday after Epiphany	Feb5	—	—	—	—	Feb6
6 th Sunday after Epiphany	—	—	—	—	—	Feb13
Sunday of the Departed Clergy	Feb12	Feb4	Jan20	Feb8	Jan31	Feb20
Sunday of all Faithful Departed	Feb19	Feb11	Jan27	Feb15	Feb7	Feb27
<i>Kothene/Pethratha</i> Sunday	Feb26	Feb18	Feb3	Feb22	Feb14	Mar6
Great Lent Begins (50 days)	Feb27	Feb19	Feb4	Feb23	Feb15	Mar7
2 nd Sunday of Lent Mar13	Mar5	Feb25	Feb10	Mar1	Feb21	
Remembrance of St. Dionysius of Vattasseril	Feb 23	Feb 23	Feb 23	Feb 23	Feb 23	Feb23
3 rd Sunday of Lent	Mar12	Mar4	Feb17	Mar8	Feb28	Mar20
4 th Sunday of Lent	Mar19	Mar11	Feb24	Mar15	Mar7	Mar27
5 th Sunday of Lent	Mar26	Mar18	Mar2	Mar22	Mar14	Apr3
Annunciation to St. Mary	Mar25	Mar25	Mar25	Mar25	Mar25	Mar25

6 th Sunday of Lent	Apr2	Mar25	Mar9	Mar29	Mar21	Apr10
Palm Sunday	Apr9	Apr1	Mar16	Apr5	Mar28	Apr17
Easter	Apr16	Apr8	Mar23	Apr12	Apr4	Apr24
1 st Sunday after Easter	Apr23	Apr15	Mar30	Apr19	Apr11	May1
2 nd Sunday after Easter	Apr30	Apr22	Apr6	Apr26	Apr18	May8
3 rd Sunday after Easter	May7	Apr29	Apr13	May3	Apr25	May15
4 th Sunday after Easter	May14	May6	Apr20	May10	May2	May22
5 th Sunday after Easter	May21	May13	Apr27	May17	May9	May29
Ascension of Our Lord	May25	May17	May1	May21	May13	Jun2
Sunday before Pentecost	May28	May20	May4	May24	May16	Jun5
Pentecost	Jun4	May27	May1	May31	May23	Jun12
1 st Sunday after Pentecost	Jun11	Jun3	May18	Jun7	May30	Jun19
Fast of the Apostles (13 days)	Jun16	Jun16	Jun16	Jun16	Jun16	Jun16
2 nd Sunday after Pentecost	Jun18	Jun10	May25	Jun14	Jun6	Jun26
3 rd Sunday after Pentecost	Jun25	Jun17	Jun1	Jun21	Jun13	Jul3
Remembrance of Sts. Peter and Paul	Jun29	Jun29	Jun29	Jun29	Jun29	Jun29
Remembrance of 12 Apostles	Jun30	Jun30	Jun30	Jun30	Jun30	Jun30
4 th Sunday after Pentecost	Jul2	Jun24	Jun8	Jun28	Jun20	Jul10
Mission Sunday	Jul2	Jul1	Jul6	Jul5	Jul4	Jul3
5 th Sunday after Pentecost	Jul9	Jul1	Jun15	Jul5	Jun27	Jul17
6 th Sunday after Pentecost	Jul16	Jul8	Jun22	Jul12	Jul4	Jul24
7 th Sunday after Pentecost	Jul23	Jul15	Jun29	Jul19	Jul11	Jul31
8 th Sunday after Pentecost	Jul30	Jul22	Jul6	Jul26	Jul18	—
9 th Sunday after Pentecost	—	Jul29	Jul13	Aug2	Jul25	—
10 th Sunday after Pentecost	—	Aug5	Jul20	—	Aug1	—
11 th Sunday after Pentecost	—	—	Jul27	—	—	—

12 th Sunday after Pentecost	—	—	Aug3	—	—	—
Fast of the Assumption Begins (15 days)	Aug1	Aug1	Aug1	Aug1	Aug1	Aug1
Transfiguration/Tabernacle Day	Aug6	Aug6	Aug6	Aug6	Aug6	Aug6
1 st Sunday after Transfiguration	Aug13	Aug12	Aug10	Aug9	Aug8	Aug7
2 nd Sunday after Transfiguration	—	—	—	—	—	Aug14
Assumption of St. Mary	Aug15	Aug15	Aug15	Aug15	Aug15	Aug15
1 st Sunday after Assumption	Aug20	Aug19	Aug17	Aug16	Aug22	Aug21
2 nd Sunday after Assumption Aug28	Aug27	Aug26	Aug24	Aug23	Aug29	—
Day of St. John the Baptist Aug29	Aug29	Aug29	Aug29	Aug29	Aug29	—
3 rd Sunday after Assumption	Sep3	Sep2	Aug31	Aug30	Sep5	Sep4
4 th Sunday after Assumption	Sep10	Sep9	Sep7	Sep6	Sep12	Sep11
5 th Sunday after Assumption	—	—	—	Sep13	—	—
Exaltation of the Holy Cross	Sep14	Sep14	Sep14	Sep14	Sep14	Sep14
1 st Sunday after Exaltation	Sep17	Sep16	Sep21	Sep20	Sep19	Sep18
2 nd Sunday after Exaltation	Sep24	Sep23	Sep28	Sep27	Sep26	Sep25
3 rd Sunday after Exaltation	Oct1	Sep30	Oct5	Oct4	Oct3	Oct2
4 th Sunday after Exaltation	Oct8	Oct7	Oct12	Oct11	Oct10	Oct9
5 th Sunday after Exaltation	Oct15	Oct14	Oct19	Oct18	Oct17	Oct16
6 th Sunday after Exaltation	Oct22	Oct21	Oct26	Oct25	Oct24	Oct23
7 th Sunday after Exaltation	Oct29	Oct28	—	—	—	—

2. PASSION WEEK

- On Passover and Holy Saturday, the *Kauma* of the day is sung instead of the Trisagion and also during the Blessing of the Censer.

- On Passover Thursday, the words *Habeebai* and *Ahai* are not used during the Epistle Readings.
- There is no Kiss of Peace on Passover and Holy Saturday, as these are days of mourning. Because there is no Kiss of Peace on Passover Holy Qurbana, instead of the two readings, the reading acolyte just says, "Let us bow our heads before the merciful Lord."
- During the Passion Week prayer times, candles are not lit at the altar but on the Gogultha placed outside the sanctuary. Also Gospel Reading and Censuring are all done in the Nave; there is no censoring in the altar, only at the Gogultha.

3. RECIPES

During most of our Feasts and Church Festivals, we use special foods after the Holy Qurbana. The following recipes are from the ICON NETWORK FORUM (IndianOrthodox@yahoogroups.com)

A. Pesaha Appam (By Mrs. Elcy Yohannan Sankarathil, N. Y.)

(For One Deep Dish):(10-12 pieces.)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Rice Flour | 2 Cups |
| 2. Cream of Rice | - ½ cup (Option: Soak 2 cups, i.e. 1 pound long grain rice in water for 3 hrs, grind coarse, |
| 1 cup grated coconut. Use the coconut water to grind the rice.) | |
| 3. Coconut, grated | - 1 cup (Blended) |
| 4. Dark Brown sugar | - ½ cup (More for more sweetness) |
| 5. Yeast + Sugar | - ¼ Tsp + 1 tablespoon sugar in ¼ cup warm water |

(Instead of yeast, save the coconut milk with 1-tablespoon raw rice grains, 1-tablespoon sugar, keep it in a warm place for a day; use that mixture to grind the rice. Also, if vellom (*chakkara*) is used, no yeast

is needed. Or, one cup (pressed, not loose) of the crust-free soft bread could be used in place of yeast.)

6. 1 Tablespoon farina boiled in ½ cup water (*Paavu kachi*).
7. Salt - ¼ tablespoon or enough to taste
8. Cumin powder - 1 tablespoon
9. Red or small onion - 1 tablespoon (blended)

Grind the mixture 1-4, to an *Iddli* consistency, add the warm farina porridge (*paav kachi*), and keep in a warm place for 6 hrs. Place ¼ tablespoon yeast and 1 Tablespoon sugar in ¼ cup warm water, the solution will froth in 5 minutes, (or the substitutes) add it to the mixture, keep warm for 4 more hours. Before cooking, add the salt and cumin powder, onion paste, pour into a greased pan, cook in a steam bath for 20 minutes, or till it is firm, test with a toothpick. Raisins and cashews could be sprinkled on top of the *Appam* before cooking, for more taste and decoration. Usually the first *Pesaha Appam* is made plain (without the nuts and fruits). Use the multiples of the measure for more pans of *Appam*. Usually 2 cups (200ml.cup) or one pound is enough to make one *kinnam appam*. Instead of dark brown sugar, if white color is preferred, use ½ cup sugar or more for more sweetness. This is the way the *Pesaha Appam* is made in the southern side of Kottayam, Kerala.

B. Pesaha Appam (By Mrs. Elcy Yohannan Sankarathil, N. Y)

Rice powder (not roasted)-1 cup

Urad dal(*uzhunnu*)-25 gm

1/2 coconut grinded (medium) pinch of cumin

Soak the *uzhunnu* for a few hours. Grind well.

Grind well the coconut + a pinch of *jeera*(cumin).

Add everything together and make a dough of *idli maavu* consistency. "Keep only for 1/2 hour to ferment."(To remind of *Pesaha*)

Grease preferably steel plates of medium round shape. Pour batter in

Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

one, and make a cross of palm leaf obtained on Palm Sunday on it. Steam till well done.

Make all other *appams* same way but with no cross.

Makes about 2 or 3 medium *appams*.

C. Paalukurukku by Annie Thomas, Hyderabad

Roasted rice powder-1 cup

Sarkkara (molasses)-1 cup

Cardamom powder-coconut-1

Please use freshly grinded coconut for making this; otherwise the taste won't be good. Take the juice of coconut. You can put the grinded coconut in mixi and add some hot water to grind for 30 seconds. Now the juice comes out easily. 1st milk should be kept separately. Take 2nd and third milk also. These two should equal 1 litre of milk. Take molasses and put them in a saucepan, add some water and heat well while boiling lather forms. This should be cleaned away. Then add cumin and *chukku* (dried ginger). Now sieve this through a strainer and you can see lot of stones and dirt in it. This liquid form of molasses should be used in your recipes. I have seen lots of people use molasses directly in recipes, without first melting them. Remember, all these dirt and stones are dangerous, especially for kids. This commonly happens when we prepare *aval vilayichathu*, where we use it directly. But be sure to melt it first. The consistency can be achieved by adjusting the amount of water added to it. Take the 2nd and third milk, molasses syrup and roasted rice powder, bring to a boil. Stir continuously, otherwise lumps will form. Mix cardamom powder with 1st milk and add it last. Also add a piece of palm leaf. Before it boils, take off the stove. As the tradition goes, the head of the family cuts the *appam* and gives it to other members, oldest to youngest respectively, after dipping in *paalukurukku*. This is done in great reverence and pious atmosphere.

D. Pesaha Appam (Mrs Alice George – London, U.K.)

Rice 2 cups

White *Urad dal* 1cup (slightly roasted)

Desiccated/fresh coconut 11/2 cups

Garlic 3 cloves

Jeera 1/2 teaspoon

Salt to taste

Slightly roast the *urad dal*. Soak the rice and *dal* in water until soft.

Grind rice, *dal*, and rest of the ingredients coarsely. The mixture should not be runny but like the consistency for a cake. Pour it into a dish and steam.

For the syrup/sauce

Fine Rice Flour

Coconut Milk

Cardamom/*jeera* to taste

White/brown sugar to taste

Add a bit of water to the rice flour and cook it until it thickens.

Add rest of the ingredients and cook it over the flame.

E. Neyyappam (By Elcy Yohannan Sankarathil)

Neyyappam is the customary delicacy for the memorial feast of the departed ones of the Orthodox Christians. The recipe displayed below is experimentally proven to be a good one. One pound flour yields 15 normal size *neyyappams*.

Ingredients:

1. Rice flour - 2 pounds (4 Cups)
2. Cream of Rice - 1 Pound (2 Cups)
3. All Purpose Flour - ½ Pound (1 Cup)
4. Dark Brown Sugar - 13/4 Pounds (Instead of dark brown sugar, if *chakkara* (vellom)

Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

is substituted, the dough will rise faster and the finished product would have full, thicker and softer body).

{The proportion R:C:A: or #s 1:2:3: = 2:1:1/2 = 3 1/2 lbs. And b.sugar or *chakkara*, i.e. 1/2 of the total wt. of the three flours.

(For one lb. Flour add 1 1/2 cups fluid, i.e. 3/4 cup coconut milk and 3/4 cup warm water}

5. Coconut milk - 1 1/2 cans (3 cups) – 200 ml. cup
6. Luke warm water - 2 1/4 cups
7. Ripe banana - 1 (blended in the fluid)
8. Coconut - 3/4 cup (thinly sliced) {Fry the coconut in the ghee to slightly}
9. Sesame seeds (*Ellu*) - 3 Tsp brown color, add 9 & 10; towards the end.
10. Cumin (*Jeera*) - 3 Tsp Add it to the batter with the remaining
11. Ghee - 3 Tsp ghee just before the *neyyapam* frying}
12. Onion slices fried - 3 Tsp (crumbled to coarse powder)
13. Cardamom powder – 1 Tsp (Optional)
14. Cumin Powder - 2 Tsp
15. Salt - A pinch Tsp = Tea spoon
16. Baking Soda - 1/4 Tsp
17. Fresh oil - Enough for frying

Procedure:

Mix all the dry ingredients 1-4 in the coconut milk-water mixture and banana. Keep the batter in a warm place for 12-24 hrs. If *chakkara* is used the dough will rise faster, otherwise more time is required. Prior to the frying, mix the batter to an *Iddali maavu* consistency, adding all the other items except oil. If more fluid is needed, add accordingly. Baking soda is added at installments, i.e. Do not mix it in one batch. Make a stock solution with the baking soda and 3 Tbsp of

the batter, keep it aside, take 1/3 of the batter, mix 1/3 of the stock, see if more or less baking soda /concentration/dilution is needed for the right doneness without cracking. In a 12' frying pan of boiling oil, first drop one large spoon of batter at the center to check the right temperature of the oil, the *neyyappam* will rise to the top, if it cracks a little more fluid may be added, if it spreads flat, reduce the fluid. Always try first with 1/3 of the batch, then increase or decrease the fluid. A few at a time could be poured in with out touching each other. Fry to the right doneness (brown color), flipping over once. One pound of dry flour yields 15. Good Luck.

F. Rice Payasam (by Mrs. Eley Yohannan Sankarathil)

(Rice *payasam* is an indispensable delicacy of the obituary feasts, birthday feasts, special occasions, etc. of the Hindus and the Christians as well in Kerala. And if made right, it is so delicious too)

Ingredients:

1. Rice (Long grain white): 1 pound I e. 2 cups (1 cup == 250 ML. or cc)
2. Chowwari 1/2 Cup
3. Dark Brown sugar 1.5 pounds
4. Molasses or *Tharisarkkara* 1 cup
5. Water 11 cups
6. Milk 4 cups
(Substitute milk for coconut milk, if the latter is not handy)
7. Coconut milk 3 cups
8. Cashew nuts cut to pieces 1/4 cup
9. Raisins 1/4 cup Brown 8,9, & 10 in the ghee i.e. #11
10. Coconut, cut to sm. Chips 1/4 cup
11. Ghee 1/4 cup
12. Cardamom powder 1 tsp

Malankara (Indian) Orthodox Syrian Church

13. Cumin powder 1 tsp
14. Ginger powder 1 tsp
15. Bay leaves (*Vashanayila*) 2
17. Salt 1/8 tsp

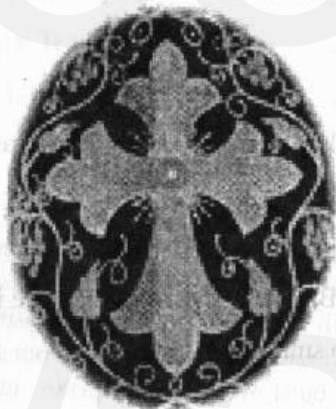
Procedure: Boil the 11 cups water and 5 cups (both) milk in a thick bottomed, wide opened pot, add the cleaned rice and *chowwari*, cook for 10 minutes, then add the sugars, the ghee balance from the fry or another Tbsp. ghee (prevents charring at the bottom of the pot) now, cook for 15 minutes, stirring well. Add #s 12, 13, & 14 mixed in the remaining 2 cups coconut milk (or milk). Add the *vashanayila*. salt, cook for another 10 mts. and finally the nut mixture, i.e. #s

8,9, &10. Stir for 5 mts. Turn the heat off. Cooking time 40-45 mts.

Yields 14 cups delicious *paayasam*.

For 1 cup of rice, 8 cups+ of fluid is needed to get the right consistency.

1 hour is needed even if bigger quantities are made. For increased amount, increase the amount of ingredients accordingly. Stir the *payasam* from the start to finish, lest it should char at the bottom of the pan.



AUTHOR'S OTHER PUBLICATIONS

1. VAIDHIKAMITHRAM/ PRIEST COMPANION
2. CATHOLICA SIMHASANA SABHA CHARITHRA SAMGRAHAM
3. MOKSHA YATHRAADHAVA MARANA VEETIL
4. VISHUDHA SHURUSHA SAHAYI
5. VAZHI THIRUVILA VELLU VILIKAL
6. KALAM CHEYTHA BHAVATHIRUMENY
7. PATHRIYARKA SIMHASANAVUM CATHOLICA SIMHASANAVUM OTTA NOTTATHIL
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