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# THE NEW TEXT OF THE SACRAMENTS IN THE SYRO-MALABAR CHURCH

The newly approved text of the sacraments came into use on 6th January 2004. Our aim is to have a general glance at the formation process of the text and evaluate it.

## **Latinization**

East Syrian sacramental texts had been in use among the St. Thomas Christians till the 16<sup>th</sup> century. In 1585 the Goan Council decided to translate the *Rituale Romanum* of the Latin rite into Syriac in order to be given to the Church of Thomas Christians. Fr. Roz S. J. translated it into Syriac with the particularities of the diocese of Braga in Portugal and supplied it to the priests at the Diamper synod in 1599. It was this text which was printed in 1775 and reprinted in 1845 with the addition of some sacramentals that were in use in Malabar till the restoration of the liturgy.

This rite separated confirmation from baptism and limited the power of conferring it to bishops and to the priests who had special permission for the same in accordance with the Latin discipline. Though the rite of baptism for adults was printed in Rome and published, it did not come into use. Mar Louis Pazheparampil translated a new rite for confirmation from the Roman rite and used it. It is believed that the Syriac translation of the Latin rite of the blessing of marriage was of Fr. Roz S.J. The special blessing for the

newly wed was given in it outside the Qurbana. Bishop Leonard-Marcelline Statute of 1879 prescribed that it had to be conferred during the Qurbana- Therefore very often the then newly wed had to go to the Church on the next day of marriage to receive the blessing. This law was made compulsory even before Leonard Metropolitan went to Rome for the First Vatican Council. He translated the *Propria* of the Latin rite of marriage into Syriac, printed it in Rome in thin paper and pasted it in the appropriate place of certain copies of the second edition of the Malabar *Taksa*.

He added the rite of extreme unction which Fr. Roz had distributed in the Diamper Synod, the prayers for commending the souls of the dying to God and the formula of conferring Apostolic blessing to the dying. It was used till the restoration of the liturgy. It was explicitly mentioned in the text that a priest requires the permission of the bishop to impart such an apostolic blessing. The Latin code 468/2 gave this permission to priests who assist the sick. There remained the question whether this common permission was applicable to Malabar priests also. Mar Jacob (1505-1550/2) translated the Latin rite for confession from Latin to Syriac and Mar Joseph made some small changes in that translation .It seems that it was the translation of Fn Roz that was used here till the restoration of the liturgy.

## **Restoration**

It was a historical event that Pope Pius XI on the first of December 1934 gave His historic decision to restore the liturgy of the Malabar Church to its pristine purity. On March 10,1954 a three member committee consisting of Fn Raes S.J., Fr. Cyril Korolovsky and Fr. Placid Podipara C.M.I. was appointed in Rome to restore the text of the liturgy. On November 17, 1965 the Latin translation of the texts of the sacraments of confession, anointing of the sick and marriage with their *notanda* (explanation) and their Malayalam translation were given from Rome.

The SMBC<sup>1</sup> held on Feb. 10, 1966 decided to ask CLC<sup>2</sup> to study the above mentioned documents and to prepare the texts of

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1. SMBC = Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference
  2. Centra! Liturgical Committee

the sacraments, and to request the Holy See to send to it the texts of the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. It also decided that the discipline regarding the administration of the sacrament of Confirmation be revised along with our ritual for the same. For the time being, priests may administer the sacrament only after the children have reached the age of reason as is now the custom. The sacrament may be conferred earlier in case of danger of death. On March 14, 1966 the Chairman of the Episcopal Commission for liturgy sent to all the bishops the draft texts of the sacraments of penance, anointing of the sick and matrimony. The agenda for SMBC dated 23.3.1966 includes discussion on these sacraments. It gives in bracket; "Request has been made to the Sacred Congregation to send all the texts already prepared by the commission in Rome so that they may be studied by our commission and co-ordinated". The SMBC also sought explanation regarding the sources of these texts. It was suggested in the SMBC of 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 1966 that the revision and vernacularisation of the liturgy must be completed within the next three years if possible and that a few priests devote their full time to the work. It was also reported that Rev.Fr. Abel CMI had been appointed General Choir Director and that each Diocese must have a diocesan director of the choir. They all should occasionally meet together and do the needful for the perfection and co-ordination of the liturgical music. A number of suggestions were made for the abbreviation and modification of the draft text of the sacraments of penance, anointing of the sick and matrimony. The suggestions were noted down so that they might be passed on to the liturgical committee which would be making a more profound study of the texts. On 23<sup>rd</sup> March the Convener of CLC sent the texts of the three sacraments to all the members of the CLC. On March 5, 1966 the Oriental Congregation sent the texts of the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation in Latin, their Malayalam translation and the explanation of the texts in Italian. Introduction to the restored texts of Matrimony, penance and anointing of the sick was sent from Rome on 2.3.1966 and was forwarded to the bishops on 12.9.66. The letter of Mar Parecattil to the Hierarchs of the Syro-Malabar Rite on Sept. 12, 1966 states; "Please find enclosed herewith a copy of the proposed text of the ceremonies of Baptism,

forwarded by the Sacred Congregation .A copy of the same has been handed over to our liturgical Committee for their scrutiny, study and comments. It will be good if the ceremonies are examined by other priests and laymen as well, so that our liturgical functions may be acceptable and appealing to all. I believe that final decisions shall be taken only after having carefully assessed the utility and value of the restored texts in the light of the Council Directives".

The explanatory note from Rome on the sacraments of confession, anointing of the sick and marriage says: The Latin text was studied and approved by the Commission in its sessions on 22 and 29 March, 12 and 19 April and 10 May 1955. Since it is the question of sacraments it is opportune to report in particular that which concerns the matter and form of these sacraments.

## **Marriage**

Two things before the marriage are the agreement of marriage and the blessing of marriage dress and of the crowns. These can be done according to the desire of those who marry. There are two parts for the blessing of marriage.

1. Those who get married should express their consent in the present time.
2. They are to be crowned and should receive the imposition of hands.

They are given sweets in the church or in its vicinity after the final blessing or after the Qurbana. A priest should bless this food beforehand.

The papal document on marriage *Crebrae allatae sunt* (Feb.22,1949) canon 85, 86 prescribe that the priest after making sure of the consent of the bride and bridegroom by asking them whether they wish to be bound mutually give them blessing. Two , formulae are given for the rite of betrothal. The first one has been influenced by the Latin rite and the second one was adapted from the Chaldean rite.

## **Confession**

The commission chose one formula from the five formulas of the Chaldean Pontifical which clearly expresses pardon of sins. It is not in the indicative form but in optative form: "Lord, let Thy grace and mercy descend and absolve Thy servant from all sins".

## **Anointing: gingeli**

This sacramental formula was framed taking elements from the Chaldean rite. Matter is olive oil. Since olive oil is not produced in India, coconut oil and gingeli oil are available there; the commission discussed whether it is convenient to prescribe olive oil. They may have to import olive oil as they import wine.

As regards the blessing of oil several documents -Pope Clement VIII ( 1595) -prove that it need not necessarily be blessed by bishop. The celebrant can bless it during the rite of the administration of the sacrament.

The explanatory note dated on March 2, 1966 and forwarded by the bishop of Ernakulam to all the bishops on 12.09.1966 says: "On Nov. 17, 1965 the liturgical commission in charge of preparing the restored text of the Syro-Malabar Liturgy proposed to initiate the reform of the Ritual and with this scope it presented the restored rites of three sacraments: marriage, penance and anointing of the sick. Today the same commission presents the restored rite of two sacraments: Baptism and confirmation, which in Orient are celebrated in one sole ceremony and there the mode of giving it and communion outside the Mass are added".

Such a project was prepared in 1955, as is seen in the words of the meetings of the commission on 15,22, Feb. and 1,8,15,22 March 1955.

At that time an edition of an ordinary rite and of a shortened rite was aimed at the sacraments of baptism and confirmation. Today we are persuaded that only a short rite, still shorter than that which had been prepared may be in the stage of being substituted for that of the Western rite (translated in Syriac) today in use in the Syro-Malabar Church.

However, the characteristics of the Chaldean liturgy have been preserved; thus in baptism the benediction of baptismal water is to be in every ceremony and the benediction of oil is necessary for pre-baptismal anointing. These two benedictions, longest in the ordinary rite, have been abbreviated to the maximum: an epicletical prayer not too long, preceded by a short introduction.

The Chaldean rite has preserved one of the more ancient ways of baptizing. The one who is to be baptized is placed in water or he descends there till his neck, and the priest putting his hand on his head immerses him three times. This way of baptizing is described in the Catechism of Theodore of Mopsuestia and figured in the oriental icons which represent the baptism of the Lord in Jordan. We preserve in the text that way of doing, because it is in the characteristic of the rite. Knowing that now in India with the children of a few days after the birth that way of baptizing is impracticable, we permit to do the triple infusion of water on the head of the baptismal candidates without putting them in the water till the neck.

More difficult problem to be solved is met in the rite of Confirmation. Ancient and genuine rite of Chaldean Church has given always an exceptional importance to pre-baptismal anointing as it appears in the writings of St. Ephrem, of Narsai and others. Only in the 7<sup>th</sup> century after the reform of Patriarch Ishoyahb, a post baptismal consignation on the forehead of the neophytes appears, which in some documents, not in all, is made with oil. Besides, this oil is not holy chrism used in other oriental and occidental rites for the post-baptismal anointing and the formula which accompanies the consignation does not express conveniently the particular grace of that sacrament but appears rather as a general conclusion of the baptismal rite. Special attention is made to the word of the phrase which stands in the past time: "baptized and perfected in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, for ever, Amen".

From the other part, after baptism in the imposition of hands on the neophytes also, while pronouncing a rather long prayer in which some expressions which could signify the sacramental grace of confirmation are found, the priest speaks of truly Christian life: "We confide that your grace (Lord), may protect them (\*neophytes) in

chastity of life and purity of works, that they may present themselves full of faith and justice by the venerable advent of Christ our Saviour". The ecumenical council and the Holy Father could delineate that the matter sufficient for the sacrament of Confirmation be the imposition of hands alone (without the accompaniment of any consignation or anointing and that the sacramental form has been expressed with words it reports) see above.

Such a declaration is authoritative (which had been much desired) and necessitated by long preparatory studies and not by easy procedure. Our commission therefore keeping the imposition of hands has decided to present as sacramental matter of Confirmation the holy chrism blessed by bishop and as form that which is found in the Ritual of the Maronites (Beirut). They are substantially equal to the formula kept in the manuscripts of the Syrian rite and of the Maronite rite collected in Denzinger.

Behold the proposed formula: "By the charity of Christ God, sweet smell of true faith and seal of the fullness of the grace of the Holy Spirit (name) is signed in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, for ever. Amen."<sup>1</sup>

Regarding the rite of giving Holy Communion outside the Mass, it does not make repeat the rite of the Holy Communion during the holy Mass, making it precede the one rubric and making it followed by a conclusion which also is derived from the Mass.

The proposed rites do not present other special difficulties. The commission dares therefore hope that the sacred Congregation accepts the project given for its decision and that a Malayalam version of these ceremonies could be proposed to the hierarchy of the Syro-Malabar Church as has been made for the three sacraments of matrimony, penance and anointing of the sick"

### **The First Draft**

In a letter of Cardinal Parecattil to all the bishops on 8.2.66 he informed that a committee of three under the Msgr. Kurian Vanchipurackal had been appointed to frame the draft of the sacraments. It was mentioned in the SMBC of Feb. 10, 1966 that

the above said committee had not given their report .Therefore on March 30,1967 the work was entrusted to a new committee under Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry with Msgr. Kurian Vanchipura as convener. A text of the sacraments under the title "Liturgy of the Syro-Malabar Church" was printed in Malayalam in 1968 and circulated among the Bishops and others.

### **Comparison with the Latin text**

#### **Latin Text**

##### **A. Holding hands-prayer, Onitha, blessing of dress and crowning.**

##### **B. Rite of marriage**

1. Our Father, Ps 45, prayer, Onitha

2.

3. Asking consent, blessing of Tali, tying of tali Blessing of ring (this is given by bridegroom To bride, bridegroom gives mantrakodi to Bride or puts on her head, crowning

4. If convenient, the priest holding the Malayalam Text crowns and puts them on the table. He says the prayer on the bridegroom, and then on the bride.

5. If there is Qurbana, it begins with Lord of all. Propria are given. If there is no Qurbana, the rite ends with the final blessing

#### **Malayalam Text**

1. Formula agreement. The place of blessing dress and crown is Changed.

Our Father, prayer Ps 45, prayer

2. Kindling candles on the table while "This is the bread which is coming to this world.... Lord of all, readings, Gospel.

3. Blessing of tali, asking consent, priest makes hold their right hand together.Placing urara on their hands prays, tying of tali, blessing of ring, priest gives ring to bridegroom who puts it in her finger. If there are two rings, bride puts a ring in his finger, blessing of mantrakodi, priest gives it to bridegroom who puts it on her head. Instead of chain (mala) flower garland or varanamaliyam is put on her neck. If Crown is used instead mala, it is blessed saying the prayer if they are crowned. At the same time, onita is sung.

4. Karozutha, prayer, blessing, prayerover bridegroom, making sign of the cross on them and sprinkling hanana water on them. The huttamma is different from that of the Latin text.

5. *Propria* of the *Qurbana*

The Latin text gives shortened form of the agreement which is called *kai pidutham* (holding hands). The stewards of the bride and bridegroom come to the parish priest and make the matrimonial agreement before him and before those who are present. This ceremony takes place in the presbytery or in the sacristy of the Church.

On the eve of marriage, *manthrakodi* and other nuptial dresses and the crowns generally of flowers are brought to the house of the parish priest who blesses them. The parish priest can also go the house of the marriage parties and bless these things. The Malayalam text does not give this rite of agreement.

The texts of marriage are as a whole faithful to the Latin text given from Rome. Both texts have made ring optional. The articles for the use of marriage rite are placed on a small table placed in front of *Questroma*. The Latin text says that the spouses come and stand in front of the table, bridegroom on the rite side and bride on the left, facing east. Malayalam text says that they stand there facing the altar. The priest begins the ceremony in the sanctuary facing the altar, comes to the small table at the time of the psalm and continues the rest of the ceremony.

The Malayalam text gives the following instructions which are not found in the Latin text:

1. The rite of marriage can be done with or without the Holy *Qurbana*.

2. If there is *Qurbana* the gifts are prepared on a small table during the *karozutha*. The spouses place the small particles of Host in the paten for their holy communion. Before the conclusion of the *karozutha* the celebrant washes his hands, brings the gifts to the altar and performs the rite of offertory. Holy Communion can be given in two species. Instead of the usual *huttamma* the final prayer of the rite of marriage is recited.

3. *Kalabham and panineer* can be used for the rite of marriage.

4. The parties can choose either *varanamalyam* or crown or Rosary. Two sets of the chosen items should be entrusted to the priest in advance.

5. In order to kindle the light during the *Lakumara*, signifying Christ who is the light of the world, a candle or *koluvilakku* should be placed on the small table.

6. The priest who blesses the marriage should be present in the Qurbana from the beginning, wearing the vestments, if some body else celebrates the Qurbana in Malayalam.

7. If the *Qurbana* is not in Malayalam, it should begin from the beginning and not from the offertory.

8. The hymns are in *Kamatic* tune.

## Penance

The prayers for those who are under censure are left out in the Malayalam draft.

## Anointing of the sick

The Malayalam text has added several prayers such as the prayer before *Lakumara*, scriptural readings, prayers of the anointing the different parts of the body, *karo-zuthas*, blessings at the time of death etc.

1. The rites for the service for the sick are confession, holy communion and anointing of the sick

2. Even if one does not confess, first absolving prayer is to be pronounced. Only after that, Holy Communion or anointing of the sick is administered.

3. If the sick does not die immediately after the anointing, he can be given absolution or prayers for the dying are said over him at the time of death.

4. If there is no oil blessed by the bishop, priest can bless it in the Church. Blessing oil in houses is limited to extraordinary circumstances.

## **Baptism**

Malayalam draft is a faithful translation of the Latin text. But in the Latin text there is giving of candle. There are also no prayers for giving dress and candle. Chrismation is conferred after the procession with the singing of trisagion.

The Malayalam text has added prayers to give dress and candle. The hymn sung during the procession to the sanctuary is new. If the receiver of baptism is a child, the following parts are added to the Latin text. The celebrant says: "peace be with you". In order to show that the baptized is received into the community, others also give peace: "Dear brothers, ...". Thus the *karozutha* and its concluding prayer can be recited. If the baptized is capable of recognizing the Holy Eucharist; it is given to him following the ordinary rite. The *huttamma* is new. Confirmation is not given. The rite of baptism for the dying is also specially given.

The Malayalam draft gives the following guidelines for baptism:

1. The common norm is that the oil of catechumen and water are to be specially blessed for each baptism.
2. Yet, for the sake of convenience the oil blessed by bishop need be used. The water once blessed can be used for several times.
3. If the priest who baptizes blesses the oil, instead of pouring *myron* into the water in the form of the cross, after dipping his finger into the *myron* he makes the sign of the cross in the oil. In the same way, when the water is blessed, instead of pouring oil into it, it is enough that he dips his finger in the oil and makes the sign of the cross with that finger.
4. Baptism is conferred, by pouring water on the head. On solemn occasions, if there is special prescription from the bishop the child can be made to sit in the baptismal pond and pour water on its head or immerse it in water three times to confer baptism.
5. If it is adult baptism, Ps 51 is recited after the epistle.
6. When the priest gives baptism to the children in danger of death, it is good to confer also Confirmation. In that case, it can be

conferred by reciting only the formula for giving Confirmation. For the adult, Holy Communion also can be given.

7. Giving white dress to each child is also to be encouraged.

8. The children baptized at home, if they are out of danger of death, are to be brought to the church and complete the rite of baptism and register its name.

## **Suggestions for a revised text**

Since the first draft did not satisfy many people a new committee was appointed to prepare the text on the basis of the given draft and the Latin text. The committee prepared a revised draft and circulated it for study. Suggestions for improvements and modifications in it were called for. Many dioceses submitted their suggestions. For example we may mention some suggestions from the diocese of Kothamangalam:

## **Marriage**

1. A formula of promise is to be added, in which the bridegroom and bride should, putting their right hands on the Bible, promise marriage fidelity to each other.

2. In the sacraments especially in Baptism and Confession the sacramental formula should be given in indicative form.

3. In the rite of marriage, blessing and giving ring need not be made compulsory. Nothing about them need be mentioned in the text.

4. Instead of *hannana* water, *panineer* may be used. But *kalabham*, *Chandanam*, sweets, crowns, *varanamalyam* (marriage garland), etc. are not to be used. Nothing about them should be mentioned in the text

5. The custom of giving rosaries should be continued. The priest blesses them by saying the prescribed prayers and gives them to bride and bridegroom.

6. The prescription that one who celebrates the Qurbana in

connection with the rite of marriage (if he is not the one who administers marriage rite) should be there from the beginning of the rite and he should be allowed to use the *propria* of the Qurbana for marriage.

7. Nothing is to be mentioned about the newly wed placing host in the paten.

8. There is no need of kindling oil lamp or candle on the small table.

9. Local differences for tying tali and giving *mantrakodi* need not be mentioned.

10. The tune for the hymn Mass should be such that every body is able to sing.

11. Do not reveal the ancient custom of holding hands of the guardians of the candidates of marriage (*kai pidutham*) in the rite of agreement of marriage (betrothal). The rite of betrothal can be thus: The priest wearing *urara* comes and stands in the middle of the Church before the candidates of marriage. He asks them to express their consent and when they have done so he recites the formula of blessing

12. The consent is asked thus "(name) with free mind and full heart, according to the law of Christ and the procedure of the Church (name) do you accept him (or her) as husband (wife)?"

Answer: I accept.

13. The beginning of every rite of sacraments should be "*sthuthi* to God in the highest<sup>1</sup>". It should begin with the prayer "Our Father". This prayer should be the same everywhere.

14. The epistle should be till "flesh of flesh".

15. Before the Gospel reading "The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ written by St. Mathew" should be added.

16. When consent is asked, instead of the address 'brother or sister', he calls the name of the candidate.

17. Psalm prescribed for blessing *mantrakodi* is to be omitted.

## Baptism

1. Nothing need be said about dress. As usual giving of white cloth is enough. Omit the use of *chandanathiri*
3. The rubrics after exorcism should be omitted.
4. Make clear which the official vestments are.
5. Omit in the Gospel reading "go and preach the Gospel in the whole world".
6. In the formula of giving baptism one Amen is sufficient.
7. There should be uniformity in the creed to be said in all the sacraments.

## CLC reconstituted

On the first of January 1968 the CLC was reconstituted by adding one member each from every diocese. Thus a new committee with 19 members was formed. Though they might be perhaps eminent in other fields, most of them were not experts in liturgy. If we evaluate later course of developments in liturgy, the appointment of Abel as Choir Director and the formation of the new CLC can be considered as an important step towards diverting liturgical restoration and reform to a new direction. The remark of Mar A.D. Mattam is worth attending: "The main reason for such a change is that before making any change in liturgy theological, historical and pastoral study had not been done" Each one proposes suggestion without any study. This is also the outcome of having enlarged the CLC by incorporating new members who have no knowledge of the liturgy or who evaluate matters only in the light of Latin liturgy".

The decision No 19 of the SMBC held on 12-14, August 1974 was to appoint liturgical experts instead of diocesan representatives: "To bring more experts into the liturgical committee, the bishops may substitute them in place of the present diocesan representatives according to the precedence followed so far". Mar Januarius writes to Mar Kunnacherry on June 4, 1973 on working scheme for the Syro-Malabar liturgy. The first step suggested is to dissolve the CLC:

"The existing committee for Liturgy should be dissolved since they have played the part and we thank them for their valuable contributions. Any further involvement of this committee is not desirable in the given context as faith in them is apparently vanishing".

In the Roman Synod of 1980 on August 26<sup>th</sup> Archbishop Mar Joseph Powathil spoke thus: "I was a member of that Central Liturgical Committee and I remember how the committee has been unnecessarily expanded some time before 1968 to make the role of the experts very insignificant." Those who have studied their own liturgy and are interested in it should become members in CLC which is the highest body under the synod which deals with important liturgical matters and also in diocesan liturgical committees. It is observed that by avoiding those who have even doctorate in liturgy or oriental theology certain dioceses and religious congregations send as their representatives those who are known for their anti-orientalism or those who find eligibility as friends or supporters of the ideology of the superiors concerned. Instead of framing genuine liturgy such people try to represent the ideology of their superiors. Another cause of the failure of CLC is that the members are very often changed. The new members do not have any idea of what happened till they became members. Since they do not know what has happened before hand, they cause very often objections, disputes and unnecessary discussions.

The main reason why Syro-Malabar Church could not profit from the service of the liturgical experts who hold high academic qualifications is that they are unanimous in their liturgical stand and therefore are seen as opponents by the so-called anti-oriental majority of bishops. This is interpreted to be the reason why they could not find a liturgical expert with doctorate in the board of directors of the newly founded Liturgical Research Centre.

A letter written by Mar Sebastian Valloppilly to Cardinal Philippe, the Prefect of the Oriental Congregation throws light on the same subject: "It is to be said that there are in fact many people who have studied liturgy. All the liturgy scholars have the same idea regarding the reform of our liturgy. But their opinion is not always attended to. Therefore I request the Congregation to examine the texts before approving them".

In spite of all these observations and suggestions on the CLC members, we can notice that the same trend of filling it with members who have no special knowledge of one's own liturgy and very often have aversion towards it continues. The only qualification expected from such members, it seems, is that they should represent the mind of the bishop or superior who sends them. It is not the knowledge and experience that matter but loyalty to the superior. Although several dioceses and religious Congregations have well qualified members with doctorate in liturgy and in oriental matters they are not found in the CLC while some others with no special studies in this field and oppose liturgical renewal according to the teaching of Vatican II are nominated to this committee. We may observe that some well known scholars in liturgy are not seen in any official bodies which handle liturgy or any related matters. If people without sufficient study or oppose liturgical restoration form the majority, CLC can become a channel of anti-orientalism in liturgical and oriental matters. If some body dares to express his view fearlessly and stands firm, he may be slowly eliminated from CLC or cornered in such a way that he is isolated or neglected in the CLC. For many what is important is their career and not what is good for an oriental Church. So it is important to please the superior and to side with the majority who handle the power and award chances of future. It is a sad fact that such an unethical situation exists also in the Church as in any other society.

## **The liturgical Background of Bishops and priests**

The bishops and the superiors of the Religious Orders who sent the members of CLC are responsible for the accusations against the members. Mar Sebastian Valloppilly writes to the Oriental Congregation on 26.08.1980 about the bishops who approved the text of the 1968 Qurbana and the 1969 text of the sacraments: I may add in this connection that of the seven bishops who gave imprimatur: two were ex alumni of the propaganda college, Rome, three including myself ex alumni of the Papal seminary, Kandy and two from the Pontifical seminary Alwaye. In the first two seminaries hardly anything was taught about the Syro-Malabar liturgy and very little in the third one. The new priests coming out from these seminaries

were fully Latin oriented if not entirely Latinized". We should admit with all humility that most of the priests and religious have got Latin formation in seminaries, houses of religious institutes and theological faculties. If the mind of the majority is the criterion of the nature of liturgical restoration and renewal it would be better to introduce the Latin liturgy in the Syro-Malabar Church rather than introducing hybrid liturgy. A good number of such people consider the pre-Diamper liturgy and even the Latin liturgy as the most ideal one for the Malabar Church and therefore to resist the restoration of the original liturgy is taken to be a mark of the love for the Church.

### **The working of liturgical Committee**

The letter of Fr. Chavelil to bishops on 17th June 1968 states: "I hope that Fr. Jacob Vellian has already forwarded to your Excellency copies of the restored sacraments, to be given to the members of the diocesan liturgical committee. Even though this text was meant for public circulation, according to the unanimous opinion of the members, the central committee has decided not to give it out without making some necessary corrections. So a sub-committee was constituted to rewrite certain prayers and to make changes in the rubrics in consultation with diocesan committees. So I request your Excellency to instruct the convener of the diocesan liturgical committees to send to Fr. Vellian the opinion of the committees before the 30th<sup>1</sup> of this month."

On 16.07.68, Fr. Vallamattam writes to the members of Kothamangalam Diocesan Liturgical committee on the rite of sacraments: "I am sending a copy of the newly prepared draft for your study. It is proposed to discuss the issue at the first meeting of the committee to be held at the Bishop's house on 13.07.68". This committee submitted a number of suggestions to the Bishops on 15th July.

On 17.07.1968 Fr. Vellian writes to Fr. Vallamattam<sup>3</sup> "The suggestions on sacraments were sent to Fr. Abel yesterday. The sub-committee for preparing the text of the sacraments was held last week. I gave all suggestions there. Fr. Abel has been asked to

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3 Translation from Malayalam

prepare the new text and print it before the first of August and send it to the members of the committee and the members of the Diocesan committee members. The meeting is on 8<sup>th</sup>. I do not think that it was of any use that the text which I prepared was studied and suggestions were given, since new text is prepared. Let us see whether the suggestions are received when it comes".

The letter of Fr. Chavelil on July 20 1968 says: "The next meeting of Liturgical committee will be held on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> August. The following items are included in the agenda: sacraments, Ash Wednesday, holy Week functions, consecration of the Church and Propria and *karosootha*. Will you please contact diocesan liturgical committee and get the opinion of the members regarding the first four points mentioned above? A copy of the sacraments prepared by the sub-committee will be sent to you before the first of August". On 25 July 1968 Mar Parecattil writes to all bishops: "By the end of this week you will be receiving from Mar Louis Press, Ernakulam fifteen copies of the revised draft of the sacraments which will again be scrutinized by the Central Liturgical Committee, which is to meet on August 8<sup>th</sup> 1968 at the Pontifical Seminary, Alwaye. Before that I should like to know your comments on the same, which please forward directly to Rev. Fr. James Chavely, St. Joseph's Seminary Alwaye -3, so that they may reach him on or before August 5<sup>th</sup>".

## **The text of Fr. Abel**

The text prepared by Fr. Abel contained the rites for child baptism, for Confirmation, anointing of the sick and marriage. As appendices it gives the rite of blessing *saith* (holy oil), the rite of blessing oil for anointing of the sick, the rite for conferring baptism and confirmation for those who are in danger of imminent death, betrothal and instruction on marriage which can be read instead of sermon after the Gospel reading. The promise of fidelity in the marriage rite appears for the first time in this text. The text of Fr. Abel was sent on 03.08.68 to diocesan centres. The response from Palai diocese rejected the draft because of three reasons:

1. It differs from the text given from Rome

2. The present draft does not agree with the early draft.
3. It differs from the Chaldean structure of the sacraments.

Cardinal Parecattil admitted these facts and tried to justify them. On 3.8.68 the diocesan liturgical committee of Kothamanaglam drafted the suggestions for the CLC. The CLC meeting held on 7.8.68 at Alwaye discussed this draft of Fr. Abel. Fr. Valiamattam and Fr. Silas were asked to examine this text. The CLC held on 19, 20 Sept. 1968 at Mangalapuzha presided by Cardinal Parecattil, discussed the suggestions from dioceses and put to vote.

## **Baptism**

Whether question is needed at the beginning of the baptismal rite, Yes 8/18; no 10/18; may be optional 1. Trisagion may be sung on reaching the altar- unanimous.

## **Confirmation**

"May God help you to confess your sins" - 5/18 "May the merciful God bless you" -13/18.

## **Anointing the sick**

*Laku mara* is optional. It is to be printed - 9/18; Not to be printed -8/18; one neutral. Organs to be anointed - unanimous. Special prayer for anointing each organ - 11/18; No - 7/18. There should be special prayers for anointing the organs of priests -12/18; not necessary - 6/18.

## **Marriage**

Ring is made optional. No - 4/18. Varanamalyam is optional. No - 4/18. There is no objection to give either ring or garland or both.

Psalm to be compulsorily introduced after our Father - 10/17. Water blessed early may be used -16/17. No anointing of *mailanchiyideel I* - 10/17; There can be *mailanchiyideel* - 7/17. Add intercessory prayers - 17/17. Adult baptism - certain additional prayers, questions etc. to be followed -17/17.

Fr. Vellian, Fr. Silas, Fr. Valliamattam and Fr. Chavelil examined on 23.10.68 the draft prepared in accordance with the decision of the CLC on 19-20 September.

Fr. Valliamattam and Fr. Silas CMI were appointed to check the text of the sacraments. The 1968 text was accepted despite the objection of several experts. Cardinal Parecattil claims that Fr. Chavelil got the imprimatur of all bishops except of those of Mar Sebastian Valloppilly and Mar Parecattil<sup>4</sup>. It means that SMBC as a body did not approve this text. It was printed in December 1968 and was published by the CLC on 11.02.1969. It began to be used by many without understanding the real nature of it which has not been approved even *ad experimentum* by SMBC or Rome. From 1981 onwards Fr. Abel claimed copy right for this text. Fr. Abel lost his claim for the copy right of the burial services in the legal battle. It was widely believed that he lost the copy rights of all the books for which he claimed the right. Later the CMI Congregation handed over this right to the synod. In the light of the past experience the synod from 28 Oct till 15 Nov. 1996 authorized the curia to obtain the copy rights for all the liturgical texts to be used in the Syro-Malabar Church from the competent civil authorities.

## **Objections raised**

The text was heavily criticized because it did not reflect the genius and theology of the East Syrian sacraments and was different in structure. To use a text without the formal approval of SMBC and of the Holy See was a serious indiscipline.

The diocesan Liturgical Committee of Kanjirapally proposed the following for the SMBC: "It is remarked that the present texts of the Sacraments, Holy Week ceremonies etc. are not according to the real liturgical spirit and traditions of our Rite. Hence, the Bishops' Conference is requested to set right the situation". On CLC it says: "The work of the restoration of our liturgy as envisaged by the Council Vatican II must be entrusted to a Committee of experts in Oriental Liturgy, Theology, traditions, Church History, pastoral Theology etc.

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4 Liturgy as I see it,p.179

Hence, a reconstitution of the present central Liturgical Committee of the Syro-Malabar Church is highly necessary including experts from abroad. For the efficient and quick work of the C.LC, there should be clearly formulated and approved norms". (No. 9).

Bishop Valloppally writes on June 29,1974 on the SMBC of 1974: "Since the subject of the meeting is liturgy, the members of the Liturgical Committee should be invited to attend the meeting at least one day, preferably on the second day. If the present Liturgical Committee is not competent it should be reorganized. Once a committee is appointed their voice should be heard and respected. Since the members of the Conference are not experts on Liturgical matters, some experts should be appointed to advise the Conference on liturgical matters".

## **1974 SMBC**

The request of Mar Sebastian Vayalil to hold a special meeting of SMBC to discuss the liturgy was accepted. As a preparation for it suggestions and opinions regarding liturgy and the evaluation of the liturgical activities till then were invited from dioceses. On this special meeting Mar Sebastian Vayalil writes: "Discussions were held efficiently and zealously. Some members tried to postpone any decision by raising objections. On August 14, the last day of the meeting, I insisted: "Today before we disperse a decision should be taken. Mar Joseph Powathil the bishop of Kanjirapally and the eparch of Satna fully agreed to this appeal. Others also, understanding the situation fully agreed<sup>5</sup>. One of the strong demands of the Fathers was that the text of the sacraments must follow the text given by the Holy See. Hence a thorough revision of the existing text was needed. Some of the relevant decisions of the SMBC were the following:

- Regarding the reform of the liturgy, the Conference decided that restoration, revision and adaptation of the liturgy should go together, keeping the identity of the rite and having in view its organic growth in the light of Vatican decrees.

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•• *Nintee Vazhikal Etra Sundaram 472*

- It was further resolved that hereafter the Bishops' conference alone should give approval for liturgical texts, subject to the approval of the Holy See. The individual ordinaries may publish para-liturgical texts, after hearing the diocesan liturgical committee.

- The Central Liturgical Committee may form sub-committees for a) Holy Mass b) Sacraments and Sacramentals c) Pontifical d) Breviary e) Calendar f) Experimentations in Liturgy. These subcommittees may also co-opt Consultators.

- The findings of the sub-committees should go to the Central Liturgical Committee for their evaluation and presentation to the Bishops' Conference for final approval.

### **A new sub-committee**

Basing on this decision of 1974 August 14, a committee under the chairmanship of Mar Kuriakose Kunnacherry was appointed to prepare a new text of the sacraments on the basis of original sources.

### **The letter of a member**

On 1 January 1977, a member of the inter-diocesan committee wrote to Pope Paul VI. I quote some relevant parts on the sacraments: "After the Council things became worse. Cardinal Parecattil introduces his own reform. In 1968, the Eucharistic Liturgy, reformed by the Sacred Oriental Congregation was again reformed with the result that it became a deformed liturgy... Besides this, the ritual of the other sacraments was also drawn up and the texts of these are not based on the older sources as the Council decree suggests. On the other hand the pre-conciliar practices of the Western Church have found their way into these books. Cardinal Parecattil, acting so it seems, on his own individual initiative and on the advice of a few of his priests, has published many liturgical books in the local language. The other bishops, however, were not and are still not consulted on these matters. I know this as a member of the Liturgical Committee of the Archdiocese of Changanacherry and also of the inter-diocesan committee. Your Holiness can verify this fact and the truth of this statement from the bishops themselves<sup>1</sup>.

In spite of the command of Pope Pius XI to go to the Chaldean traditions, Cardinal Parecattil has drawn up a new Pontifical with many Latin Innovations and it is in such a rite that he uses for ordination and episcopal consecration services.

Further, there is being used in some places another text for the Eucharistic Sacrifice called the "Indian Mass". Some time back the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship forbade the use of such texts and this prohibition had been published by the Secretary of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India. However, the Cardinal encourages the use of such a 'Mass' in the Dharmaram College, Bangalore 29,... For the continued use of this type of 'Liturgy' they argue that since the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship has no jurisdiction over Eastern churches, the prohibitions are not binding on us. But the question is: who gave him permission to use such texts for the Liturgy? Is Cardinal Parecattil competent for it? To my knowledge the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches has never given such permission.

The motive for the 'Indian Mass' is, they say, to adapt to the Indian culture. However this adaptation is very selective and superficial. For example, in spite of the loud and fervent advocations of Indianization nothing so far is done to conform to the spirit of penance and renunciation, so dear to the Hindus.

The blind copying of Hindu practices has provoked derision from the part of the thinking Hindus. Just to give one of many examples, Mr. Soma Varma Raja, a high class Hindu belonging to a royal family and at present Professor and Head of the Department of the Malayalam language at Bharata Mata College, Ernakulam ... spoke to me last year with disapproval of the meaninglessness of such 'external shows' as he put it.

Because of the confusion existing everywhere our bishops sat together more than two years back and made arrangements for the creation of various committees for preparing the texts for the different sacraments. I am working in two such committees. I have, right at the beginning, pointed out that the work of the committee has to be submitted to Rome for approval. The reason for my contentions is

that the Sacred Congregation for the Oriental Churches has already given the texts of the sacraments to our bishops and to outdo the Act of the Sacred Congregation is beyond the power of the bishops. Still, after the setting of the Committees, Cardinal Parecattil published some books of a liturgical nature (e.g. a much contestable Breviary).

On all these problems I have consulted with some of our bishops and eparchs. They are apparently in a difficult and delicate situation and are keeping silent just to avoid confrontation with Cardinal and thus causing scandal...."

### The letter of the Oriental Congregation and the reaction

Probably basing on this memorandum The Oriental Congregation wrote on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1977 to all the members of SMBC as 'reserved matter' regarding the reform of the liturgy. Cardinal Parecattil writes to other bishops on this letter: "I presume it is the result of the complaints gone from some quarters...It may be noted that at the meeting of the Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference held here from 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> August 1974, the Central Liturgical Committee was authorized to form six sub-committees with a Bishop each as "President and Animator". These sub-committees could co-opt consultants who, as such can have no power of voting. A time limit of one year was fixed for the study of the various subjects. However, the calendar was to be prepared within three months; so also the guidelines for the experimentation centers. But, so far only from one or two such committees I have received some reports and I am wondering if the sub-committees are now functioning at all. In any case the time allotted to them has expired.... The slow progress of the liturgical renewal is, at least, partly, due to the fact that the sub-committees, with the exception of the one for calendar, failed to execute the task they undertook.... Regarding the new liturgical texts the resolution of the Conference reads as follows: "It was further resolved that hereafter the Bishops' Conference alone should give approval for liturgical texts, subject to the final approval of the Holy See". He therefore argued that he had not given approval after the 14<sup>th</sup> August 1974 and that all unauthorized liturgical texts which began to be used before that date could continue to be used. An individual

bishop cannot give approval to a text of the sacraments and therefore the decision of SMBC cannot be misinterpreted to allow the continued use of texts of the sacraments which lack the approval of the legitimate authority of the Church which is the Holy See. The question now asked is, if the texts of the sacraments are invalid, what is the validity of their administration? Experts of canon law believe that although the texts are invalid their administration is valid on the ground that the priesthood of the celebrant is valid. So the administration is not legitimate but valid.

Mar Parecattil who was the Chairman of the liturgical Commission throws light on the culpable inertia of the members of the subcommittees who were entrusted with the preparation of the different items of the sacraments. He asks whether the subcommittees function at all. This question could be raised very often throughout the past history of the preparation of the liturgical texts. When the question of the preparation of a text came, a subcommittee for the same was appointed under a convener. After a long time the CLC was again held for some other purpose and another committee was appointed. Thus several committees are appointed and there was often no question whether the committees functioned at all and how much a subcommittee worked. There are certain people who were always made conveners, but never cared to work or made the committee to function. Even if a committee did the work and the text was handed over to the responsible person, there was no immediate discussion on it. After years when the question of the text came, the text already prepared was forgotten or neglected and a fresh one was appointed again to prepare the text. The real reason for such a situation is that the members of such committees are mainly occupied with other duties and offices and do not take the work in the subcommittee seriously. Secondly these members are not duly qualified for the same. The third possible reason is the delaying tactic to hinder the genesis of liturgical texts which will replace the unauthorized ones. The supporters of the unauthorized texts created the impression that they are the best ones and believed that by their continued use and propaganda in favour of them they can gain legitimate approval. For example, take the case of the texts of the sacraments. Although a subcommittee was

appointed in 1974, the draft they prepared appeared only in 1985. Another example is the Pontifical. A committee was appointed under Mar Sebastian Valloppilly to prepare the text. This committee, according to His Excellency, submitted to him only a hand written copy of the Episcopal Consecration till 1981. Since I was asked by him I translated from the Syriac original the rites of ordinations till priesthood ( 1982), the rite of the Episcopal consecration(1983) and the Consecration of Church with related items such as the consecration of *dappa* etc. (1982) and the rite of blessing the Holy Oil (1982). They were printed in four volumes and were sent to all bishops and the members of CLC in 1981 and 1982 and 1983. The hymns for these rites were also printed and sent to them. But we do not hear about them anywhere till the CLC meeting on 13, 14 March 1991, in which a fresh committee was appointed to collect the sources.

### **Anonymous text**

On September 1, 1985 a draft of the sacraments was sent to the members of the Central Liturgical committee. It was really an anonymous text without mentioning the author, place and the date of publication. It seems to be the text prepared by the subcommittee appointed after the 1974 SMBC. Some of the notable points of the texts are the following:

1. For baptism the text proposes one for children and another for the grown up. These two differ chiefly from the beginning of the rite till going to the baptistery

2. Every month a day can be fixed for baptism. Children to be baptized are baptized together with the participation of the parish community. The text proposes the following feast days suitable for baptism: *Denha*, Presentation of Our Lord in the temple, Annunciation, Holy Saturday, Pentecost, Sacred Heart feast, *Dukrana* of St.Thomas, Ascension of Lord, Finding of the Cross, Mission Sunday, All Saints' Day and the feast of Holy Infants.

3. The rite of Chrismation is given separately

4. A text for individual confession and another text for penitential rite are given.

5. Rites for betrothal, baptism at home, blessing the sick, rite for giving Holy Communion to the sick, visit of the sick, giving viaticum and administering anointing of the sick with viaticum are also included in the text

The draft was discussed in the CLC held on 09.10.1985. Since there was nobody to answer the questions raised by the members, it was rejected in the same meeting.

### Another committee

And a special committee consisting of Fr. Jacob Vellian, Fr. Thomas Mannoorampampil and Fr. Thomas Elevelanal was appointed in the same meeting to collect the sources and commentaries on the Syro-Malabar Sacramentary. The report of SMBC on December 3, 1990 ;No 14: The Chairman of the episcopal Liturgical Commission said that he has not received any draft of the sacraments , pontifical etc prepared by the subcommittees which were working on it in the past. The commission was authorized to appoint, if necessary, new sub committees and to proceed with the preparation of the sacraments, pontifical etc."

The convener made available to the CLC the Malayalam texts of Baptism and Matrimony by the Nestorians.

### Joint letter of some CLC members

In the meeting of the CLC on 13.3.1991 some CLC members gave a letter to the Chairman reminding that the convener had promised the following materials:-

1. *Koodasakal* -a printed draft of 108 pages.
2. The text of the sacraments in Latin sent from Rome.
3. The texts in Malayalam of the sacraments of Baptism and Matrimony used by the Nestorians of Trichur.

They made the following observations:

I. *Koodasakal* is a draft which had been rejected in the previous meeting of the CLC in which a new sub-committee was appointed for the preliminary studies and for proposing a new draft.

2. Latin Text: The Latin text sent from Rome is only an abbreviated one in the form of a guideline. Hence, it cannot be taken as a complete text.

3. The texts of the Nestorians of Trichur are inadequate for a proper study. Hence, it would be very useful and proper to provide the Syriac texts by the Chaldeans and Nestorians with their translations and studies.

They gave the following suggestions:

1. The texts of the sacraments have to be prepared in the light of original and authentic liturgical sources. Its original structure, content and theology should not be mutilated or impoverished.

2. The official text should be full and complete in which the possibility for option may be indicated without violence to its basic structure.

3. The Roman directives, the code of canon Law for the Oriental Churches and the texts of the East Syrian Church have to be respected , in the preparation of the new text.

4. In order to speed up the work more effectively the original sub-committee may be divided into three committees opting new members into their competence

5. The *enarxis* and the Liturgy of the Word of all the sacraments should follow a common liturgical pattern of our Syro-Malabar Church.

## Sub-committees

In the same meeting the Chairman Mar Sebastian Mankuzhikary brought to the attention of the members the history of the draft of the sacraments made available to the members. He went through the CLC report of October 1985 which had already made an initial discussion on the draft. Then the house decided to appoint sub-committees to draft the new text of the sacraments Thus,

a) A Sub-committee for Baptism and Confirmation (Fr. Jacob Vellian-Convener, Fr. Silas CMI and Fr. James Chavely),

b) A sub-committee for Matrimony (Fr. Thomas Mannooramparampil-convener, Fr. Abraham Parampil, Fr. Mathew Valiamattam and Msgr. Joseph Veliyath)

c) A subcommittee for penance and sacrament of the sick (Fr. John Theckanath-convener, Fr. Thomas Elevelanal and Fr. Bosco Puthur and Fr. Joseph Perumthottam)

The following terms of reference were fixed for the sub-committees:

a). The sources shall be made available to the respective sub-committee members and the General Convener.

b). The sources are to be translated into English or Malayalam if they are in any other language.

c). A brief commentary on the sources, their variations etc are to be prepared.

d). A draft of the respective sacraments in Malayalam too is to be prepared.

Another sub-committee consisting of Fr. Abraham Parampil (Convener), Fr. Jose Poovannikunnel and Fr. Norbert Edattukaran will make a study on the sacramental theology of our Church and make available their findings to the conveners of the sub-committees and the general convener by the end of April 1991.

This fourth committee did not submit the study on the sacramental theology. The sub-committees had to make the drafts available by the middle of August 1991 to be circulated among the CLC members.

### A new Draft

The subcommittees claimed to use the following sources:

1. Baptism and confirmation. Latin text from Rome, Syriac text of the Chaldeans, Malayalam text of the Nestorians and English translation in G.P. Badger, *Nestorians and Their Rituals*.

2. Matrimony: Latin text (Rome), Italian translation of the Chaldean sacrament of matrimony (P. Jousif), English translation in G.P. Badger, *"Nestorians and Their Rituals"*.

3. Penance: Latin text (Rome). Italian translation of the 'Order of Penance (P. Jousif), Rite of Absolution (Darma), The Liturgy of the Eastern Penance (L. Ligier).

4. Sacrament of the sick: Latin text (Rome) and Antiochean text.

August 12, 1991 Fr. Narikulam writes to Fr. Mannooramparampil, the convener of sub-committee for Matrimony: "According to the decision of the Liturgical Committee held on March 1991 the sub-committee for the sacraments are to submit the draft".

The newly prepared text was discussed in the CLC held in Sept 25-26, 1991. After an exchange of views on the draft of Baptism and of Confirmation, the House took the following decisions:

1. The structure of the *enarxis* and the Liturgy of the Word should be as in the *Qurbana*. However, on certain occasions some elements of the *enarxis* may be omitted.

2. The sacramental action may be placed after the Liturgy of the Word.

3. Texts for child baptism and Adult baptism should be prepared separately

4. The text of Adult Baptism may be prepared in view of incorporating the system of catechumanate.

5. These texts are to be prepared in view of administering the Sacrament of Baptism both alone and within the *Qurbana*.

6. The text of Adult Baptism may be prepared in such a way that the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) can be given together.

After going through the draft of matrimony the members proposed many amendments with regard to the structure, content and language. The crowning ceremony is to be left optional. Regarding the private confession, it was suggested to incorporate the prayers given in the Latin draft sent from Rome. At the same time, the prayers of the present draft also may be retained with certain modifications. The formula for absolving a penitent in danger of death should be

added to the text. The draft of the sacrament of the sick has to be revised in the light of the suggestions given by the members.

### **Adhoc committee**

An ad hoc committee was appointed to prepare the next draft. The members of this committee were Fr. Paul Manavalan, Fr. Thomas Elevelanal, Fr. Domitian Manickathan and Fr. Antony Narikulam. The report says: "Besides, the conveners of the three sub-committees Fr. Jacob Vellian, Fr. Thomas Mannoorampampil and Fr. John Theckanat will join the adhoc committee to prepare the texts of the respective sacraments. The second draft will be circulated among the CLC members for their observations and suggestions. After obtaining them, a third draft will be prepared to be sent to the Bishops for their study and approval".

### **Special Commission for Liturgy**

On March 31,1993 the Oriental Congregation for the Oriental Churches writes: "The Congregation, in fact, is urged to remind the Syro-Malabar Episcopate that, for a more authentic rooting in the tradition and for the necessary adaptation to the demands of the contemporary world, the question of the revision of the liturgical patrimony of that Church, remains as on the primary duties on its path: it is all the more important, given the fact that it has been raised to the status of a Major Archiepiscopal Church. For this reason the Holy See wants to keep up particularly close connection of cooperation with the Bishops, in view of taking the decisions in such matters that are within your competence.

For this purpose it (the Congregation) intends to reconstitute as early as possible a Special Commission for the Syro-Malabar Liturgy, in its own circle, which can stimulate, encourage, follow and evaluate the work of the Major Archiepiscopal Commission for Liturgy.

As soon as the commission is constituted, it will make an evaluation of the general situation and will send a list of priorities, in such a way that the work of reform in the other sectors of liturgy will be done".

## **Second draft and third draft**

But without convening this committee the secretary of the Episcopal commission drew up the expected draft and sent to CLC members and requested to send their suggestions and observations to the Pontifical delegate Mar Abraham Kattumana.

The secretary writes to CLC members on 20.4.93 giving the reason why he did so: "The other day I was asked by the Pontifical Delegate, Archbishop Abraham Kattumana, to make the draft of the sacraments available for discussion in the forthcoming synod to be held on May 20-25, 1993. Since there is no time to convene the ad hoc committee and prepare the draft as per decision of the CLC, I have incorporated the suggestions of the CLC members in the second draft..." The reason given for avoiding the ad hoc committee is not convincing since there was ample time to convene this committee. So the draft was not the work of CLC.

I wrote to the Pontifical delegate on 8.5.93 on this problem: "I find that the texts which have been circulated differ from those which were prepared by the subcommittee. The style of the prayers is not oriental. Their contents differ from the original prayers and are theologically poor. They seem to be the readjustments of the texts which are now in use. The use of the indicative form cannot be justified. Orientals use declarative or optative form. A text for the betrothal has been prepared by the subcommittee. It has to come together with the text for the marriage.

I strongly believe that the texts should be discussed and finalized by the Central Liturgical Committee before they are submitted to the legitimate authority. Since they are defective and therefore unacceptable a few written suggestions may not serve the purpose. "The reply of the Pontifical Delegate actually avoided the real problem of avoiding the ad hoc committee. He wrote to me on May 13, 1993 thus: "As you know, the SMBC liturgical commission is no more competent to prepare the third draft on the sacraments. I preferred therefore to receive the material already prepared by the commission and to circulate among the Bishops so that they can study the texts and make their observations in the synod. In the light of those

observations a new draft will be prepared by the new liturgical commission which will be elected in the forthcoming synod". If the secretary can prepare the draft why cannot the CLC or ad hoc committee? In the light of the proposed changes a second draft was prepared and submitted to the Pontifical Delegate in April 1993 which was sent to the members of the Synod as well as to the members of the CLC. The CLC held on 28-29 July 1993 discussed this draft. The report says: "The second draft of the sacraments was taken up for discussion. Fr. Antony Narikulam, the secretary, explained the genesis of the second draft. After a brief exchange of views the House decided to split into three groups to discuss the drafts of Baptism and Confirmation, Matrimony, Sacraments of Penance and the sick respectively.... Many amendments were proposed in the group and general discussions. Almost all the amendments were accepted unanimously. There was divergence of opinion about the use of the sacramental formula in Baptism and Penance. One group strongly argued for the indicative form and the other for optative or declarative form. Finally it was decided to leave the matter to the Bishops' Synod for a decision. Another point to be cleared is whether the embolism said after the Lord's Prayer is variable or not. The need of conferring the sacrament of Confirmation separately from Baptism is a felt need in our Church. Whether this goes against the canonical regulations or not is a matter to be taken up with the legitimate authorities. The house entrusted an ad hoc committee consisting of Fr. Thomas Elevelanal, Fr Paul Manavalan and Fr. Antony Narikulam to incorporate the decisions and suggestions of the members into the third draft. The sub-committee conveners too will join this ad hoc committee to finalize the third draft of the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, and Matrimony respectively. Experts in Malayalam language may be invited to help the ad hoc committee." An ad hoc committee was again entrusted with the task of incorporating the decisions and suggestions of the members into the next draft. It was this draft which was submitted to the synod.

### **The letter of the Holy Father to the Syro-Malabar Bishops**

Holy Father writes on 25th Oct. 1993: " It is a source of regret to see rekindled controversies against the legitimate Pastors

and even against the Holy See, addressed in a tone quite different from that which befits affectionate sons of the Church.. In particular the liturgy of the Church, which is the source of true communion, cannot be a motive for opposition.

The Supreme Pontiff therefore calls upon the Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church to be always and in every way workers for peace, in order to merit the blessedness promised by the Lord, and to intervene strongly wherever pressure groups may have sown division among Christ's flock.

The directives of the Holy See, worked out in the honest pursuit of the authentic good of the Syro-Malabar Church, should be observed and carried out in a constructive spirit, without unhelpful murmurings or sterile opposition. With humility and charity the Pastors of the Syro-Malabar Church should work together so that the Church can move forward ever more decisively and clearly, in conversion of heart and the sincere search for good, in order to live out the authentic patrimony of Eastern Christianity, with prudence but clarity of objectives, cultivating not with a spirit of division but with impartial attention what the Fathers, the liturgy and the Tradition have preserved as a living legacy....". This letter has helped to hinder open objections and controversies But at the same time, in the preoccupation to make everything unanimous there were only discussions on particular points without voting in official bodies. The result is that texts approved in this way need not and do not do full justice to the original texts, their theology and spirituality. Although all the texts are officially passed as unanimous, they are not in fact unanimous. The best proof for it is seen in the correspondences of bishops with Rome. Some bishops are said to have informed Rome of their objection to certain points in the sacramentary even after having passed it in the synod.

## **Remarks on the draft**

If we compare the draft texts with the Latin text from Rome and other sources like the Chaldean and the Nestorian it becomes evident that the new texts are not faithful to the original. So it is not

a real restoration of our authentic sacramental system. This is against the principles of liturgical restoration. In the preparation of the draft texts sources mentioned are not fully taken into consideration.

The structure is defective. Each sacrament has its own identity and completeness. At the same time all the sacraments are culminated in the Holy Eucharist. The Eucharist begins with *lakumara* after the administration of the sacrament.

. The general tone and style of prayers are Latin. The epicletic form of prayer should be maintained. For example, prayer of blessing and oil of baptism.

## **Marriage**

All the important elements of the Chaldean and Nestorian sources are not included in the draft. For example, ring and crown.

- Structure: Structure is different. In the traditional structure, if there is the Qurbana after the rite of marriage, it begins with the *Onitha d' quanke* or *lakumara*. Enarxis is not repeated. But in the draft the liturgy of the Word is given first and the rite of marriage is added after the *karozutha*. In the Latin rite liturgy of the Word is considered to be a preparation for services. In the Oriental traditions liturgy of the Word is considered to be part of the celebration itself.

- *Qanona of marmitha*, kindling of candles, proclamation of the deacon, joining the hands of the couples, use of the holy water, asking question to the witnesses, making the promise of fidelity, giving the *mantrakodi*, and giving the rosary are not given in the Latin text.

Almost all prayers are free compositions.

## **Confession**

Out of the three blessings in the draft the first two are not given in the Latin in text. The third in the draft is partially faithful to the Latin text.

Out of the three prayers of absolution in the draft two are not given in the Latin text. The third is a part of the Latin text.

- Prayers of absolution for censures given in the Latin text should be restored

Prayer of dismissal in the draft is the development of the idea of the corresponding prayer in the Latin text. *Taksa d'husaya* is to be translated and used in the Church.

## **Anointing of the sick**

The Latin text remains as an independent text without the liturgy of the Word. The new draft begins with the liturgy of the Word. No prayer in the draft is a faithful translation from the Latin text. Sacraments of initiation should be administered together. It is the prescription of CCEO 695. Deprecatory form should be used as in the characteristic formula of the Orientals.

## **Baptism**

- Prayers of the draft are not in conformity with the Latin text.
- Various theological implications are left out in the prayers of the draft when compared to the Latin text.
- The rich symbolism is much lost and the diaconal ministry is much reduced.
- The *onithas* are much abandoned.
- *G 'hantha* prayers before the blessings of water and oil should be reinstated.
- Anointing should be done as is prescribed in the Latin text.
- Use of holy water is not seen anywhere in the Latin text.
- Communion could be given after "Our Father"
- The coronation ceremony is left out.

## **Approval by the Synod**

The texts of baptism and Chrismation were approved in the November session of the synod in 1993. The report of the first

assembly of the Second Synod of Bishops says: "The third main item on the agenda was the draft texts of the rite of Baptism and confirmation. As members of the Commission for Liturgy and resource personnel Rev Drs. Antony Narikulam, Jacob Vellian, Thomas Mannooramparampil and John Theckanath were present for the discussion. As regards the joint administration of the three sacraments of initiation the final decision was to administer baptism and confirmation together while the Holy Communion was to be administered separately for the time being. For the missions, however, a certain amount of freedom was left in the joint administration of Baptism and Confirmation. Regarding the rite of baptism of adults a considerable amount of freedom was left to the local hierarchs. The text was approved by the synod with the proposed modifications. It was also decided not to reopen discussion on the text.

The rite of Confirmation was prepared in such a way that it could be administered either jointly with baptism or separately. It was pointed out that a separate text was necessary taking into consideration the circumstances where baptism may be administered separately as well as the fact that there are many children who are baptised but yet to be confirmed. The text of confirmation also was approved with modifications and with the decision not to reopen discussions on it". The session of the synod on November 25,26,27, 28 and 1 December 1993 "The remaining part of the draft of baptism of infants was discussed and approved with modifications. The questions of the creed in the baptismal rite was decided in favour of recitation by the community. As to the question, if communion also could be administered to the child baptized, the answer of the house was not favourable. The draft of the rite of baptism of adults was taken up for discussion. Though one of the Fathers pointed out that such a ritual was not needed for Kerala the general opinion that a ritual was necessary was accepted by the house. The Fathers from the mission dioceses found the structure, particularly the first three parts, of the text not well suited for their local situations. Therefore they were given freedom to adapt them to the local situations if needed, while the fourth part, namely, the rite of baptism was to be followed as in the draft.

In the afternoon session the draft of the rite of Chrismation was discussed and passed with modifications.

By way of information the pontifical Delegate read out the relevant parts from an instruction of the Holy See which required all liturgical texts, even those to be used *ad experimentum* to get the prior approval of the Holy See. As regards the liturgy of the Hours that is being used *ad experimentum* it was pointed out that the SMBC gave the permission to print it, but without discussing the text in its sessions."

The report of the synod on 22.3.1994 says: "The draft of the sacrament of reconciliation was taken up for discussion. As expert Fr. Antony Narikulam, Jacob Vellian, Thomas Mannoramparampil and Jacob Theckanath were invited to the session. The draft was approved with the decision that it could be incorporated into a longer text for a general penitential service because such a service had existed in the Syro-Malabar Church. Proposals to add general instructions also were accepted. The drafts of the sacraments of the anointing of the sick and of marriage too were discussed and were approved with modification. The texts were considered final except for certain prayers specified for amelioration. "The other sacraments were approved in March 1994. The synod held on October 28 - Nov 15, 1994 again discussed the texts, approved them and decided to send them to Rome for necessary "recognitio". On 6<sup>th</sup> November 1996, the synod gave also its approval to publish the sacraments in a booklet form experimentally as soon as the required permission is obtained from the competent authorities in Rome". On 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1998 in the Synod the Apostolic Administrator shared with the synod members the information he got regarding the text of the sacraments. He was told that there was difference of opinion among the consulters of the congregation in this matter. Therefore a pontifical commission has been appointed to look into the matter. Apostolic Administrator was asked by the Congregation to choose two experts to collaborate with the pontifical commission. The text was sent to Rome on 25<sup>th</sup> November 1997.

## Further Discussions

VI Synod (1998) held 19-20, March 1998 at Nav Sadhana, Varanasi. The Apostolic Administrator acknowledged four documents from the Holy See. The first was a letter from the Prefect of the Oriental Congregation saying: 1). that the full exercise of the faculties foreseen in the *Codex Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium* in liturgical matters be conferred on the Synod of Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church. 2). One of the decisions was "to entrust the commission for Liturgy and two persons from each of the idea groups to study the material already collected concerning the views of the faithful on Liturgy".

The synod held from 3-14 November 1998 says: "As regards the approval of the text of the sacraments submitted to the Congregation for the Oriental Churches more than a year ago the Apostolic Administrator informed the bishops that according to the information he received from the Congregation a Pontifical Commission will soon be constituted to study the matter further -He said also that two experts from the Syro-Malabar Church will be included in this commission.."

## The suggestions from Rome

The special commission finalized the text. As a result The Oriental Congregation sent on March 31, 2000 the following suggestions for the consideration of the synod.

### A. Baptism of infants: General instructions

1 & 3: Should read "previously blessed oil may be used only in case of emergency" instead of "yet taking into consideration the long, standing tradition and pastoral need in the Syro-Malabar Church previously blessed oil may be used".

2 & 4: should read "except in case of emergency the water needed for baptism is always to be blessed on the occasion of the baptism itself.

3&4 should read: ...must be done with the Holy Gospel book". Holy Bible is not the name of a Christian liturgical book in any Catholic tradition of East or West.

## **The Rite of Baptism**

4. Page 3: The traditional first anointing is to be inserted before the procession to the bema. This anointing is done with previously blessed oil from earlier baptisms. The formula is "(Name), you are signed with the oil of anointing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen".

5. Page 4; It should be clearly indicated that following the Trisagion the traditional prayer before the readings (= O Lord Our God, enlighten) is to be recited, as in the 1969 Ernakulam Ritual.

6. Pages 5-6: The traditional eastern response to the karozutha is "Lord, have mercy". The one in the text, "Lord hear our prayer", an obvious latinization, is not to be admitted.

7. Page 6: The karozutha II is to be added and it should conclude with the traditional "prayer of inclination". Though recommended, and is to be preserved as part of the basic structure of the traditional litanies of the Syro-Malabar rite, it need not always be taken, when time is short.

8. Page 6: During the procession to the font it would be suitable to sing the traditional baptismal Onitha d-raze of the rite of baptism "Holy and awesome is His Name, His greatness without limit. Your baptism with water has sanctified our souls".

## **The blessing of the oil and water**

9. Pages 7ff: Change the rubrics where necessary to show that the oil is always to be blessed during the rite, except in emergencies.

10. Page 7: The omission of the traditional *Ghantha* (Preface) and Sanctus destroys the traditional "anaphoral" structure of the rite. It might be considered suitable to include at least an abbreviated form of the traditional, *Ghantha* (= from your grace, O our maker...) plus the Sanctus, inserted after; Deacon: "peace be with us".

11. Page 8: Since the oil is always to be blessed, the rubric and prayer may be omitted.

12. Page 8: In the second prayer over the water, the beautiful and traditional image of the womb, from the baptismal Gospel of

In 3 should be retained as in the original Syriac prayer: "The water which gives remission of sins...and is mixed with the holy oil so it may become a new womb giving birth spiritually through the baptism nl" forgiveness,"

## **Baptism**

13. Pages 8-9: The traditional method of baptism throughout antiquity and in traditions of the Christian East is by immersion. Consequently, the rubrics following the title "Baptizing" are to be changed as follows. The first rubric: "The celebrant pouring "water" thrice, at the name of each Person of the Holy Trinity. Or else the child may be made to sit...poured on the child's head thrice, at each mention of one the three persons of the Holy Trinity". This second way is especially suitable when the child is already several months old and too big to be conveniently immersed by the other method.

14. Page 8: The baptismal formula should begin "(N) is baptized In the name ... unless the Malayalam language requires the inversion as in the text. And "Amen" is to be exclaimed by all thrice, after each name of the Holy Trinity.

## **Chrismation (Confirmation) and Crowning**

15. page 9: After the conferral of the candle , ending : " May Jesus the light ... Amen" , the text of the sacrament of Chrismation (referred to to in the proposed text by the latinizing term "Confirmation", which is to be changed to the correct Eastern term "Chrismation" here and in all instances) is to be inserted, beginning with the karozutha on page 3 in the proposed "Confirmation" text, and ending with the "Amen" on page 5, line 11, of the same text.

16). The form of Chrismation (= proposed form for the "Confirmation") rite, page 5, lines 1-2 must be changed to the traditional East-Syrian and Syro-Malabar formula: Priest "N" has been baptized and is (now) perfected in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, forever. People: "Amen".

17. After Chrismation, the ancient and traditional crowning could be suitably restored, with the traditional formula or some variant

considered suitable to both the Biblical themes of the newly -baptized as bridegroom (bride) baptized into Christ the heavenly bridegroom (Mt.25:1-13) and Indian culture. The traditional formula is: "May the crown of (Name) be unto joy and exultation and for days of rejoicing, now and for ever. Amen".

18. Then the baptismal rite continues as on p. 10 with the rubric "{after the anointing....}" The above correction in Paras16-16 is obligatory and admits of no exceptions whatever, regardless of present custom.

## **Holy Communion**

19. Immediately following the administration of Chrismation i.e., after "Amen" on page 10 of the proposed baptismal rite, line 15, rubrics are to be added to indicate that Holy Communion under both species always and without exception is to be administered to the neophyte(s) with the customary formula, (unless the rite takes place during the *Qurbana* in which case communion is to be first to the newly baptized at the time of communion, before all others communicate) This change, too, is obligatory and admits of no exceptions.

20. In the case of an infant too small to consume even a small particle of the consecrated Body of Christ intincted in the Precious Blood, Holy Communion may be administered by the priest dipping a communion spoon or the index finger of his right hand into the Precious Blood and moistening the infant's tongue with it.

## **B. The Rite of the Sacrament of Penance: General Instructions**

1. P.1. The form and structure of this highly praiseworthy common reconciliatory service cannot be left to the whim of individuals but must be prepared as a common rite, using traditional elements from the Rite of Reconciliation in the east -Syriac tradition and from the Liturgy of the Word of the *Qurbana*. Note that an anointing with blessed oil is a suitable and traditional part of such a rite.

2. P. 4. Omit "Generally" and at the end add this sentence: "For the common reconciliatory service the priest must vest in the

vestments commonly used for the administration of the Sacred Mysteries (baptism, Marriage etc.).

### **C. The Rite of Anointing the Sick: General Instructions**

1. What is said above for the Mystery of Penance regarding the possibility of a common rite is applicable here too, and such an instruction should be inserted into the text.

2. P.2. what was said concerning the Rite of Baptism for Infants here and throughout this and all other texts: "Bible" is not the name of a liturgical book in any catholic rite of East or West, and the corret name (Evangelary or Gospel book or Gospel lectionary) is to be substituted in every instance, here and elsewhere in all texts that have been submitted for Judgement.

3. P.3: should be corrected to read: "It is fitting that the oil for anointing be blessed at each administration of the sacrament, for which the necessary arrangements must be made."

4. P.6: Here too, what was said concerning the karo-zutha II in Rite of Baptism for Infants applies *mutatis mutandis*. Furthermore, if *karo-zutha* I commemorates the Pope before the local eparchial hierarch, it should also commemorate the Major Archbishop.

5. Pp.7 and 12: The text of the form of the sacramental anointing should be exactly the same in both cases, and the reading on p. 12 (".. ,to obtain spiritual and bodily healing.. ".rather than health), is preferable.

### **D). The Rite of Holy Matrimony: General instructions**

1. What has been said already about the term "Bible" applies here too and throughout.

2. P.7. What was said earlier regarding adding Karozutha II in Rites of Baptism for infants and Anointing of the Sick applies, Mutates *Mutandis*, here too.

3 P 9: the prayer of Blessing of the *Mantrakodi* seems rather banal and without any biblical thematic. Perhaps variant prayers could be added, such as the Irditional prayer for the blessing of the crowns (Clothe, O Our Lord and God, your espoused Church with the habit of your glory...").

4. P.10: in the pledge, the word "swear" is too strong, and must be changed. The Christian marriage Rite is a covenant, and does not include an "oath", but rather a "Pledge" or a commitment" or "promise". The word "swear" is too juridical - and furthermore is in no way traditional.

### **E. The Rites of Christian Initiation for adults**

1. What was said above regarding the Rite of Baptism for Children (i.e. the entire Christian Initiation ritual including Chrismation and Eucharist) is, mutates mutandis, applicable here too, especially regarding all corrections indicated in the texts of the formulae.

2. In general, in the present proposed Rite for Adults, the beginning of Stages I,II,III is too abrupt, just as is true in the new and excellent RCIA (or Roman Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults). Since the abruptness is not customary in Eastern liturgical

services, it would be better to preface the present beginning of each of these Stages I-III with some of the usual opening elements of Syro-Malabar services (e.g., "Glory to God in the highest ..." repeated, then "Let us pray. Peace be with us") followed by a moment of silence or an opening prayer - but not the "Our Father", which must not be used until later, after the Lord's prayer has been transmitted to the candidates.

### **Stage One**

3. p. 1; Since one of the first elements of the ancient East-Syriar "Rite of Adult Baptism" comprised the writing down of the candidates' names, it might be suitable for the question to be: " What is your name?" as in the RCIA. Then if new Christian names are to be given to the candidates who already have non-Christian names, the celebrant might respond to the candidate's reply with " You shall henceforth be called N" - of course only after having heard beforehand from the candidates themselves what Christian name they wish to choose.

4. p.5: The ancient opening Rite concluded with a procession to the (closed) doors of the baptistery. Where there is a baptistery or its equivalent in the Church or nearby in a separate building, stage

one might suitably conclude with such a procession, to the chant of an "Onitha or psalm plus refrain with reference to a theme like the "opening unto us of the doors of salvation", and a concluding prayer.

## **Stage Two**

5. As was already noted about the Rite of Baptism for children, the traditional response to the karozutha petitions is "Lord, have mercy", which must be retained here as well.

## **Stage Three**

6. p. 12: What was said about the karozutha (the response; the addition of *Karozutha II*) in the rite for children applies here too.

## **Stage Four**

7. All the corrections will respect to the formulae, etc., already made regarding the Rite of Baptism for Infants, apply here too.

8. p. 18: In the rubric entitled General instructions for the Act of Baptising, what is said above in the Rite for Children (A.P. 13) concerning placing baptism by immersion as the first option is to be applied here too. The same rubric should also contain a reference to the possibility of baptizing adults by immersion in "living water", i.e. in a river indeed, one should envisage the construction of suitable baptisteries, at least in cathedral churches, to permit the baptism of adults by immersion, as had already been done since Vatican II in numerous churches in the West.

9. Nothing is said in a separate way concerning the proposed Rite of Confirmation, because no such rite separate from the other rites of Christian Initiation exists - nor will one be allowed to exist-to the authentic traditions of the Christian East. Chrismation may be administered separately only when some emergency, unusual, or abusive and anomalous situation requires that Chrismation be "*supplied*" to a candidate who should have received the sacrament of Baptism but did not. In such cases the sacrament is administered as indicated above about Initiation of Infants/adults, omitting whatever

pertains exclusively to Baptism, and always including the reception of the Eucharist under both species, as already indicated.

In the session of Synod held from 10 to 22 July 2000 the Major Archbishop made it clear that the Congregation would approve the Malayalam text if passed unanimously by the synod. The synod decided to ask the Major Archbishop to write to the Congregation to give approval for using the texts on an experimental basis.

## **Final Approval**

Integrating the above given suggestions from the Holy See, the synodal commission published a draft for the study and discussion: *Kudasokal* published by Syro-Malabar Synodal commission for liturgy, June 2001. On Nov.5-17, 2001 the synod finalized the text, suggesting five modifications in the Roman document of 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2000. It was sent to Rome for further approval on 14th December 2001. Oriental Congregation approved the text on 22 June 2004. Regarding the suggested modifications the reply of Rome is dealt with in the letter of the Major Archbishop to the bishops on July 10, 2004.

## **The letter of the Major Archbishop to all the Bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church**

Your Grace/Excellency,

I am glad to inform you that the Holy See has given the "prior review" (*recognitio*) to the text of the sacraments which had the consent of the Syro-Malabar Bishops' Synod. With regard to the five points submitted to the Synod held from 5-17 November 2001, the Holy See has decreed the following:

1. To the question whether the previously blessed oil could be used for the first anointing in baptism, the Congregation replied thus: Since the blessing of oil consists in a single prayer, only nine lines long, it taxes the imagination to fathom the possible "valid pastoral reasons" that demand the use of previously blessed oil. But the change is accepted since the Synod desires it.

2. To the proposal of the synod to leave the traditional first

anointing in baptism as optional, the Congregation replied that this anointing is obligatory.

3. To the proposal to retain all three forms of administering baptism, namely, immersion, infusion and pouring water over the head, the Congregation replied thus: "According to the desire of the Synod, the option of baptizing by pouring may be added as a third option. Thus the order of the rubric should be re-arranged as indicated in paragraph 13 of "Observation of the Congregations for the Oriental Church on the revised text of the sacraments in the Syro-Malabar Church", Prot 200/93 of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2000, placing this option in this order a) baptism by immersion -and let the rubric state that this, as the true tradition, is preferred; b) by sitting the child in the font and pouring the water over his/her head) by pouring as in the original first rubric. Thus, to meet the desires of the Synod, none of the three options is forbidden, but their order is re-arranged so as to give precedence where it belongs to the age-old universal tradition of Baptism, in accord with the constantly reiterated insistence of the

Holy See for generations and not to the latinisation of Eastern usage which the Holy See has incessantly condemned.

4. The proposal of the Synod not to ask the Christian name in adult baptism in the first stage, but rather in the fourth stage was accepted by the Congregation.

5). The proposal of the Synod not to have the anointing during the general penitential service was accepted by the Congregation

The final text integrating the amendments from Rome was published by the Major Archbishop through a decree on the first December 2004.

## **Promulgation of the Text of sacraments**

### **Decree**

After due consultation and deliberation in the concerned forums and with the approval of the Synod of bishops of the Syro-Malabar Church in its sessions held from 28<sup>th</sup> October to 15<sup>th</sup> November 1996 and from 5<sup>th</sup> November 2001 and after having obtained the Recognition of the congregation for the Oriental Churches on 22

June 2004, the undersigned Varkey Cardinal Vithayathil, C.Ss.R., the Major Archbishop of the Syro-Malabar Church hereby promulgates the text of the sacraments appended to this decree, namely, Child Baptism and Chrismation, Adult Baptism and Chrismation, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Sacrament of Matrimony and Sacrament of Anointing of the sick, to be effective from 6<sup>th</sup> January 2005 and with the same Act declares that all other texts hitherto in use for administering the above-mentioned sacraments stand abrogated from 6<sup>th</sup> January 2005.

All contrary dispositions, notwithstanding.

Given from the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Curia at Mount St. Thomas on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2004

(Sd)

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

The commission for liturgy has published the *Taksa* of the sacraments. Two separate books for the use of the community are published namely (1) the text of the sacraments of Child Baptism and Chrismation, Sacrament of Reconciliation, Sacrament of Matrimony and sacrament of Anointing of the sick (ii) the text of the Adult Baptism and Chrismation.

## **Observations**

1. The intervention of Rome has helped to retain important oriental characteristics of the texts of the sacraments

2. A comparative study of the texts of the sacraments with their respective sources, Latin text from Rome and the Nestorian and Chaldean liturgy reveals that the present texts are not the true translation but an adjustment. It is not a restoration of the original texts but a free formulation with new prayers and rites. Important prayers that have been used for centuries in the administration of the sacraments have a special significance as part of the heritage of the Church and the source of theology. They are helpful for proper

catechism. Therefore these prayers should not be treated lightly and changed to suit one's own taste or individual way of thinking.

3. The original Syriac text should be the basic text of each sacrament. The complete form of each sacrament should be made available. Even for scientific study and evaluation this is essential.

4. The structure is different. Each text of the sacrament has **its** identity and completeness. To bring all the sacraments under the same pattern, as is done in texts will destroy the structure of each sacrament and distort the symbolisms and genius specific to each. When a sacrament is administered together with *Qurbana*, it begins with 'Lord of all'. But the new text gives the liturgy of the Word first and after the karoza after the Gospel the rite proper begins.

5. The prescription of three readings is not Syro-Oriental

6. Hymns should be in Syriac tone and style, and should be faithful to the original. On 15<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2004, the CD of the songs of the recently promulgated liturgy of the sacraments was given to the members of the CLC. There is widespread complaint that the hymns of the sacraments and the tunes were not discussed in the CLC and the Synod. Neglecting the Syriac tunes the songs are given new tunes with which people are not familiar and are difficult for the ordinary people to sing. When the hymns for the Holy Qurbana were set the understanding was that the hymns of all the items of the liturgy are to be in the Syriac tunes. In the Research seminar on the Liturgical Music of the Church held 19-21,2005, 10<sup>th</sup> the suggestion was to preserve the Syriac patrimony in the Liturgical Music. At the same time there should be provision for Karnatic and Hindustani Music.

7. The use of holy water is not given in the Syriac text.

8. It is a very welcome matter that depreciative form is used in sacramental formulas.

9. The new text encourages that the three sacraments of initiation are conferred together, although a fraction of the church is now happy over it. The oriental Canon Law art.951 ordains that baptism and Chrismation are to be given together. All the oriental

Churches -both Catholic and non-Catholic - follow the tradition of conferring the two sacraments together. Baptism is the sacrament of rebirth and Chrismation that of growth. Chrismation is considered the fulfillment of baptism: "(name) has been baptized and is (now) perfected in the name of the Father, and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen" This formula expresses this idea. The present text says that the Holy Communion is to be given to the baptized as soon as possible after the baptism. This is in conformity with CCEO 697: "Sacramental initiation in the mystery of salvation is the reception of the Divine Eucharist, and thus the Divine Eucharist is administered after baptism and Chrismation with holy *Myron* as soon as possible according to the norms of the particular law of each Church *sui Juris*". The church should be proud that most of the priests try to confer the three sacraments of initiation together. The feeling of the minority is reflected in the report of CLC held on 28-29 July 1993: "The need of conferred the sacrament of baptism is a felt need in our Church. Whether it goes against the canonical regulation is a matter to be taken up with the legitimate authorities".

## **Baptism of the grown up**

This is a new rite. Till now the Church had no such a rite.

1. It is divided into four stages.
2. The recommendation that it is conferred with the participation of the parish community throws light of the communitarian nature of the sacrament.
3. The suggestion for the baptismal fond is praiseworthy
4. All the elements including the crowning have been given in the rite.
5. The three sacraments of initiation are conferred together.

If we examine each text separately we find:

1. Marriage- the structure of the Latin text is not followed.
  - Form of prayer has been changed.
  - Prayers are almost entirely new.

2. Baptism - Prayers of the draft are not in conformity with the Latin text

- Various theological implications are left out in the prayers if compared with the Latin text. *G'hantha* prayers before the blessings of water and oil should be reinstated. Anointing should be done as is prescribed in the Latin text.

Use of holy water is not seen anywhere in the Latin text,

Communion could be given after 'Our Father'.

3 Reconciliation. The draft does not have any conformity with the Latin text except in a very few places.

4 Anointing of the sick. No conformity with the Latin text. The introductory part is an addition. Prayers and psalms etc are entirely different from the Latin text.

English translation of the texts of the sacraments was prepared by the secretariat and was sent to the Fathers of the Synod for observation before the approval in the session of the synod in August 2006. They have also come into use in the Church.

It is very evident that the present approved texts of the sacraments are not at all faithful to the liturgical heritage of the Syro-Malabar Church. Yet, the Church as whole has accepted them as compromise texts with the hope that they will be revised in future so as to recover the lost liturgical identity of the Church. It is also a sad fact that some priests of some dioceses or even all the priests of certain dioceses with the tacit or explicit consent of their own hierarchs continue to use the unauthorized texts of Fr. Abel or the texts of their own creation.

The original Syriac text should be the basic text of each sacrament. The complete form of each sacrament is to be translated and made available. A simple text can serve the ordinary purpose. But this should follow the order and texts of the Latin text from Rome.

Rev. Dr. Thomas Mannoorampampil  
Professors (Emerites), Powrasthya Vidyapittam

## **ST. EPHREM: A GARLAND OF PRAYER SONGS**

### **Prayer Songs on Paradise, 2**

*(continued from page 354)*

12. Noah made the animals live in the lowest part of the Ark; in the middle part he lodged the birds, while Noah himself, like the Deity, resided on the upper deck. On Mount Sinai it was the people who dwelt below, the priests round about it, and Aaron halfway up, while Moses was on its heights and the Glorious One on the summit.

*(continued in page 424)*