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Supplementary Reader

St. Geevarghese Mar Dionysius Vattasseril



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Unit 4

History of the Church

Chapter 16

Reformation Movement

Learning Objectives: Let's try to learn about the Reformation movement which changed the course of Church history across the world. Let us also develop a correct approach towards Reformist ideas.

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

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

Introduction

We need to react against the evil elements found in the Church and the society. We can see selfish schemes and machinations in the Church and the society around us even today. They can be corrected only through meaningful interventions. A great historical event of this kind came to be called ‘Reformation.’ Let us learn about this Reformation movement in this chapter.

Reading Passage

Reformation was a religious revolution founded in Western Europe in the 16th century. This movement had its origins in Germany. A Catholic priest named Martin Luther founded it and it grew out into one of the most significant events recorded in world History. Let us examine this movement in detail.

Courses of Reformation

1. The influence of books and art forms containing Reformist thought.
2. Geographical and scientific discoveries
3. The dispersal of the Holy Bible among the common folk as a result of the invention of printing press.
4. The popular clamour for Nationalism.
5. The supremacy and excesses of Papacy.
6. The superstitions, evil practices and corruptions that plagued the Catholic Church.

Reformation

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

Growth of the Reformation movement

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

Principles of Reformation

The Principles of Reformation questioned the fundamental dogmas of faith conserved since the period of Early Church through Christian theology, sacraments and rituals. Some of the subversive Principles of Reformation are given below:

- a. The foundation of Christian life and faith should be the Holy Bible and not the rituals and ecclesiastical hierarchy.
- b. The only sacraments of the Church should be the Last Supper and Baptism.

- c. All lay believers are entitled for priesthood. Hence selective priesthood is irrelevant.
- d. We need to be justified only before God.
- e. The doctrine of Communion with saints and prayer for the departed are meaningless.

Our Church doesn't subscribe to the above principles

Counter Reformation

The Catholic Church soon realized that some of the fundamental causes of Reformation were substantially true. Hence it resorted to self-correction which could prevent the growth of reformation movement and purify its life of faith. This movement for self correction that originated in the Catholic Church is known as 'Counter Reformation.' The goals of Counter Reformation could be realized through the Trent Council held from 1545 to 1654. The Catholic Church could reinstate its tradition and faith with certain revisions and corrections through this council. Ignatius Loyola and the monastic order 'Jesuits' founded by him stood at the forefront of the Counter Reformation. In short Counter Reformation helped the Catholic Church to regain some of its lost image.

Let us think

1. What are the causes of Reformation?
2. What is the importance of indulgences? How did Martin Luther react to it?
3. Name the leaders of Reformation movement.
4. List the major principles of Reformation. Are these principles relevant for our Church?
5. Explain counter Reformation.
6. "The Reformation movement was a major event in World history." What is its relevance today?

Activities

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

Let us Ponder

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

Hymn

(Akhilam Njan Aaranjittum...)

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

Our Decision

We would remain steadfast in the faith of the
Church and lead a life of goodness.
We would try to keep away from Reformist ideas.

Let us Pray

(Prayer after reading the Holy Bible)

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

Further Reading

Read and meditate on the biblical passages scheduled for this week.

Chapter 17

World-wide Dispersal of the Church during Colonial times

Learning Objectives: Let us learn about the world wide dispersal of the Christian Church during the later ages, that is, during the colonial period.

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

Introduction

We are familiar with the evangelical activities of the disciples of Jesus Christ and their successors. They had obeyed the commandment of Jesus Christ to bear His witness throughout the world. In the later ages, dispersal of the Christian Church assumed new dimensions and levels of meaning. Christians who migrated under various circumstances to foreign countries, focused upon spreading Christian faith in the immigrated lands. Let us learn about this dispersal of Christian faith.

Reading Passage

We have seen that the Reformation movement of the 16th century was a turning point in Church history. After Reformation, both the Catholic and the Protestant Churches strived hard for their respective existence and propagation. Both of them integrated evangelism with colonization for expanding their ecclesiastical authority. Let us examine the evangelical methods and movements which helped in the dissemination of the Church.

Colonisation and Evangelism

Countries like Portugal, Spain, France, Holland and Britain were the pioneers of colonization. They reached other countries for trade and commerce. Gradually they

wrested political control over these lands. This phenomenon is called colonization. Portugal and Spain led other countries in colonizing others between AD 1500 and AD 1800. Later other countries also became colonizers.

Catholic Evangelism

Catholic evangelism mainly depended upon the rulers of Portugal and Spain as well as the Pope of Rome. Pope allowed the rulers of these countries to evangelise the lands they conquered. The Catholic Church adopted two main ways of evangelism.

1. Pedro Ado Mission: This was evangelism carried out with the help of the rulers of Spain and Portugal.
2. Propaganda Mission: This form of evangelism was carried out directly by the Catholic Church.

Protestant Evangelism

The 17th century was a period of self-preservation and institutionalization for the Catholic Church. The growth of British, French and Dutch colonies led to the growth of Protestant evangelism as well. Protestant Evangelism focused mainly on Pacific islands and the contents of Asia and Africa. Their missionary activities could make much head way because the reformation carried out in the fields of education, health care and social upliftment as well as their focus on translating the Holy Bible into vernacular tongues.

Important Missionary Societies

The important protestant missionary societies included the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS), London Missionary Society (LMS), Church Mission Society (CMS), British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS), American Baptist Missionary Society (ABMS), Basel Mission (BM) and Presbyterian Foreign Mission Society (PFMS).

Evangelism in India

We know that the first man to evangelise India was Apostle St. Thomas. The Christian Community that developed subsequently in this land was the one founded on indigenous traditions. However the advent of Catholic evangelism turned the tables. The indigenous Christians were weaned away towards alternate Christian faith and traditions.

Catholic evangelism was carried out in India mainly under the auspices of Catholic monastic orders like Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites and Jesuits. The

stalwarts of Catholic evangelism were Francis Xavier, Robert de Nobilie, Fr. Britto and Fr. Besky.

In India, the evangelical activities of the Catholics were succeeded by Protestant evangelism. The important missionary societies that worked in India were the Danish Mission, Baptist Missionary Society, London Missionary Society, Church Missionary Society, Basel Mission etc. The main protestant missionaries included Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg, Heinrich Pluetshaw, William Carey, Thomas Norton, Benjamin Bailey, Joseph Fenn and Henry Baker.

Evangelism of the Malankara Orthodox Church

Malankara Orthodox Church has from its earliest periods given significant contribution to evangelism in the Indian soil. The early Church Fathers of Malankara realized their mission through precepts and examples of model living. However an organized evangelical movement was begun in the Malankara Church only during the period of St. Gregorios of Parumala. The processes of evangelism initiated by St. Gregorios of Parumala gathered momentum through the missionary work of H. G. Pathrose Mar Osthathios. Gradually the church established its official missionary organ which could bring the light of the gospels to various parts of India. Our Church Fathers like H. G. Gheevarghese Mar Osthathios and Stephanos Mar Theodosias gave leadership to these missionary activities of the Church.

Consequences of Evangelism

Evangelism caused great changes in the Christian world as well as in the social scenario. The consequences of evangelism are listed below.

1. The expansion of the Christian Church
2. Vernacular translations of the Holy Bible
3. Spread of Modern education
4. Developments in health care
5. Eradication of Social evils
6. Founding of charitable institutions

Let us think

1. What is meant by colonization? How is colonization connected with evangelism?
2. What are the features of Catholic evangelism?
3. Explain Pedro Ado and Propaganda Missions.

4. Compare the early Catholic evangelism with that of the modern age.
5. 'Protestant evangelism was part of their struggle for survival and self-preservation.' Explain.
6. Which were the methods of Protestant evangelism?
7. List the important Protestant missionary organizations.
8. Who gave leadership to evangelism in India?
9. Explain the evangelical activities of the Malankara Orthodox Church.
10. What are the consequences of evangelism?

Activities

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

Let us Ponder

“There are limits to faith. But love for God is limitless” – Gheevarghese Mar Osthathios.

Hymn

(Taathanmare panditharam....)

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

Our Decision

We would undertake evangelical activities for
building up the kingdom of God.

Let us pray

(Prayer after reading the Holy Bible)

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

Chapter 18

Malankara Church from the 17th to the 19th centuries

Learning objectives: Let us learn about the decisive events that happened in the Malankara Church between 17th and 19th centuries.

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

Introduction

The period from 17th to 19th century was a golden age for the Malankara Church. During the period, the Malankara Church witnessed a lot of developments. Let us learn about these developments in this chapter.

Reading Passage

From the 17th century onwards Malankara Church could take decisions independently and implement them without external compulsions. After the Koonan Cross Oath Malankara Church became conscious of its identity. But it had to encounter a lot of troubles during this period. Let us learn about these problems in this chapter.

Malankara Church after the Koonan Cross Oath

Malankara Church was liberated from foreign domination with the Koonan Cross Oath of 1653. Thereafter Malankara Church was governed by locally elected bishops who assumed the designation ‘Marthoma Metropolitans.’ Malankara Church approached various churches, including the Persian Church with which it had liturgical and ecclesiastical relationships in olden days, for meeting its liturgical needs and maintaining its Apostolic tradition. However only the Church of Antioch responded

to our plea for help in 1665. Thus the Malankara Church could retain its Syrian tradition desired with the help of the Church of Antioch.

Altogether nine Marthoma Metropolitans reigned in Malankara between AD 1653 and AD 1817 (However Marthoma IX could not execute his authority in office because of the circumstances prevailing in those days. In 1815 Itoop Ramban of Pulikkottil became metropolitan and took the name 'Mar Dionysius.' Through a royal proclamation he assumed the throne as 'Metropolitan of Malankara' which was equivalent in status and authority to the title of 'Marthoma'). After the age of 'Marthomas' Malankara Church was led by 'Metropolitans of Malankara' who took the titular name 'Mar Dionysius.' It was during the period of 'Metropolitans of Malankara' especially in the 19th century, that several decisive and critical events in the history of Malankara Church took place. Let us examine these events in detail.

Vattippanam or Fixed Deposit given for interest

About 3000 Poovaraham (Golden or star pagodas) equivalent to 10500 rupees collected by Marthoma VI was deposited by his successor Marthoma VII in the British East India Company at a rate of 8 percent interest per annum. This fixed deposit was known as 'Vattippanam.' The annual interest acquired from this fixed deposit was meant to be spend on social welfare projects of the Church.

Founding of Orthodox Theological Seminary

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

Mavelikkara Padiyola (1836)

Malankara Church had a cordial relationship with CMS missionaries during the initial phase. But later these missionaries tried to impose Reformist ideas in the liturgical tradition of the Malankara Church and as a consequence, the relationship became strained. In 1835 the Anglican bishop of Calcutta, Bishop Wilson came over to Malankara with his six point suggestions. In order to deliberate and decide over

these suggestions, Mar Dionysius IV (Mar Dionysius of Cheppad) convened an assembly of Church representatives at Puthiyakavu Church Mavelikkara on January 16, 1836. This assembly decided to reject the suggestions of Bishop Wilson and remain steadfast in the Syrian traditions they had been following. The inscription of the decisions taken at this assembly is known as 'Mavelikkara Padiyola.'

Synod of Mulanthuruthy (1876)

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

Mar Athanasius returned to Malankara in 1843. He influenced the rulers of those days and asserted his position as Metropolitan of Malankara. As a result Mar Dionysius IV had to abdicate his throne. But the followers of Malankara Church sent Father Joseph of Pulikkottil to Antioch and got him consecrated Metropolitan in 1865. Mar Dionysius V returned to Malankara in 1866. Even though he tried to affirm his position as 'Metropolitan of Malankara' he couldn't succeed.

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

Division of Malankara Church into Dioceses and consecration of bishops

In one sense, the Synod of Mulanthuruthy was an admission of the supremacy of the Patriarch. However Mar Dionysius and his followers did not submit themselves to the Patriarch in their subsequent activities. The Patriarch realized the insubordination and without the consent or knowledge of Mar Dionysius, divided Malankara Church into seven dioceses and consecrated six new metropolitans to these dioceses. The new dioceses were Kottayam, Thumpamon, Angamaly, Niranam, Kandanad, Kochi and Kollam. The newly consecrated Metropolitans were Paulose Mar Athansius, Gheevarghese Mar Yulios, Gheevarghese Mar Coorilos, Gheevarghese

Mar Gregorios (St. Gregorios of Parumala), Paulose Mar Ivanios and Shemavoon Mar Dionysius.

Royal Court Verdict (1889)

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

Let us think

1. Who gave leadership to Malankara Church after the Koonan Cross Oath?
2. Explain 'Vattippanam.'
3. How did the activities of CMS missionaries become both gain and loss to the Malankara Church?
4. Was the Synod of Mulanthuruthy a success or a failure? Explain.
5. Name the dioceses established by the Patriarch.
6. Name the Metropolitans consecrated by the Patriarch.
7. Summarise the Royal Court Verdict.

Activities

1. 'The 19th century was a decisive period for the Malankara Church.' Write your response to this statement.
2. Collect more details about Orthodox Theological Seminary and Synod of Mulanthuruthy.
3. Prepare and album of the decisive events of the Malankara Church.

Let us ponder

We cannot claim that all the great things that happened in our Church are the products of our intellectual vigour and administrative skill. -Paulose Mar Gregorios

Hymn

(This hymn is recited during the Matins on Friday in Sheema Prayer)

(Sabhaye Nityam Nin...)

Holy Church your – gate – keeper's vigil
Protects you ever – from the Evil One
Simon laid the base – St. Paul sculptured it
Beloved Yuhanon – rendered great service
Haleluiah – vu – Haleluiah
King David is the – harp of Lord's Spirit

Our Decision

We would remain steadfast in the faith of the
Church and would support the Fathers of the
Church in hours of crisis.

Let us Pray

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

(This Prayer is recited while lighting a lamp.

It is given in Pambakkuda Book of Prayer Page 404)

Chapter 19

History of the Catholicate

Learning Objective: Let us understand more about the Catholicate, the administrative centre of the Malankara Church.

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

Introduction

The nerve centre of any administrative system is the ruler or the administrator. Both democracy and totalitarianism have a particular person as the centre of authority. Let us learn about the administrative centre of Malankara Church; the Catholicate, in this chapter.

Reading Passage

We know that the headquarters of Malankara Church is the Catholicate Palace at Devalokam and the head of the Church is H. H. the Catholicos. The Catholicos reign upon the throne of St. Thomas. Let us examine the history of the Catholicate.

The Throne of St. Thomas

We claim the heritage and tradition of Christ’s disciple St. Thomas. This heritage is known as the ‘faith and tradition’ of St. Thomas. The heritage and authority of St. Thomas inherited from the earliest times is considered as the throne of St. Thomas. The administrators of Malankara Church during various periods of history including ‘Vedathalavan’ (Head of Scriptures) ‘Jaathikku Karthavyan’ (Head of Caste), Arch Deacons, Marthoma Metropolitans, Malankara Metropolitans and the Catholicos are the inheritors and successors of the throne of St. Thomas.

Catholicos

The designation 'Catholicos' is given to heads of churches outside the Roman empire. The word means 'administrator.' The title of Catholicos was first used by the Metropolitan of Seleucia – Stesiphone in the Persian Empire. The Persian councils held in AD 410, 420 and 424 determined the rights and authority of the Catholicos.

Catholicate

During the early ages the dispersal and expansion of the Church was local. The title 'Catholicos' was used for the first time in Malankara in 1912 with the founding of the Catholicate. The administrators who reigned over Malankara Church prior to 1912 too executed an equivalent administrative responsibility. The position of authority from 'Vedathalavan' to Catholicos gradually evolved through history.

Founding of the Catholicate

The Catholicate was founded in Malankara on 15 September 1912. The immediate cause of founding an independent Catholicate in Malankara was the prohibition issued to the then Metropolitan of Malankara Mar Dionysius VI (St. Dionysius of Vattasseril) by Mar Abdulla, Patriarch of Antioch.

When Patriarch Abdulla censured Mar Dionysius VI, people of Malankara communicated with his predecessor Patriarch Abded Messiah and convinced him about the need to found an independent Catholicate in Malankara. Patriarch Mar Abded Messiah had been politically ousted from authority because the Sultan of Turkey had withdrawn his consent for him. Patriarch Abded Messiah understood the crisis in Malankara and arrived here in 1912. He consecrated Paulose Mar Ivanios Murimattathil as Catholicos under the title Mar Baselius Paulose. The consecration took place at Niranam Church. Thus the Catholicate, which is a symbol of an independent ecclesiastical administration, was realized in Malankara.

When Mar Dionysius VI passed away in 1934, the posts of Metropolitan of Malankara and the Catholicos were merged and vested with a single person. The first Catholicos to hold both these posts was the third Catholicos Mar Baselius Gheevarghese II. Thereafter all the succeeding Catholicoses held both the posts simultaneously.

In 1934, Malankara Church drafted and adopted its constitution. This constitution of the Church was adopted sixteen years before the constitution of independent India was adopted. Malankara Church could uphold its identity and independence through this constitution. It declared unequivocally that the Catholicos was the spiritual and the material head of the Malankara Church. Just as Catholicate

and Maphrianate were founded in Persian Selucia and Tigris respectively in accordance with the specific circumstances prevailing there, the specific circumstances in Malankara too necessitated the founding of the Catholicate here. The Catholicate of Malankara exists today as a golden lamp in our Church history.

Let us think

1. What is meant by the throne of St. Thomas?
2. Explain the position 'Catholicos.' Who is the present Catholicos of Malankara.
3. Bring out the significance of the Catholicate in Malankara Church.
4. How was the Catholicate founded in Malankara Church?
5. What are the benefits earned by Malankara Church from its constitution?

Activities

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

Let us ponder

"We entrust with you the responsibility to conserve the Catholicate which you sincerely believe, along with us, as inevitably essential for the preservation, wellbeing and progress of our Church and which we together had hither to been conserving amidst several hardships" – The last decree of St. Dionysius of Vattasseril.

Hymn

(Marthoma Simhasanathil...)

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

The grace of Priesthood granted by
Jesus of Nazareth to his disciples
Has passed on down through centuries

And is lighted as thousand lamps
In this Holy Father (2)

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

Our Decision

**We would remain steadfast under the
Catholicate in order to preserve the identity,
uniqueness and independence of the Church.**

Let us pray

(Prayer to the saint)

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

Unit 5

The Holy Eucharist: A study

Chapter 20

Maniso (Anthem) of Mar Severios

Learning objectives: Let us understand the meaning and significance of the anthem of praise known as 'Maniso of Mar Severios.' Let us recite this prayer during our morning worship. At the beginning of the public celebration of the Holy Eucharist, we should participate in the recital of this hymn with devotion comprehending its meaning.

Verse to be memorized: "My soul magnifies the Lord. And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour" (St. Luke 1:46, 47).

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

Introduction

Children... Can you say which is the hymn recited at the beginning of the public celebration of the Holy Eucharist? Yes. It is the hymn beginning with the line 'By Thy Mother's earnest Pray'rs.' Can you say the name of this hymn? You may refer to the Book of Holy Eucharist, if needed. This hymn is called 'Maniso of Mar Serverios. Let us recite this hymn together... This is a solemn hymn in which we commemorate Mother of God, Saints, Christ's Birth, Passion and Crucifixion. We also rely upon the Holy Trinity through this hymn. Today we are learning this hymn as well its meaning and significance.

Reading Passage

Maniso of Mar Severios

The prose version of this hymn is given in the Pambakkuda Book of Prayer. It begins with the line “One who is deathless by nature...” But the word to word translation of the Maniso is given in the liturgical book of the Holy Eucharist.

What is Maniso?

The Syriac word ‘Maniso’ means ‘praise’ praises used in our worship are composed in invitation of the praises or hymns used in the Holy Bible and in the liturgy of the Early Church. St. Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians says “Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord. Giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:19-20). Three types of songs used in worship are mentioned by St. Paul. They are Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual songs. The song beginning ‘By Thy Mother’s earnest Prayr’s’ belongs to the second category. This hymn is grater in status than just a song. They are occasions to declare the creed of the Church. Mar Severios sings about the mystery of Incarnation of Jesus Christ. When we examine the theme of this ‘Maniso’, we understand that it is proclamation of the creed of the Church along with being a hymn to God.

Mar Serverios of Antioch (AD 465-538)

Mar Severios was one of the great fathers of the Oriental Churches. He was born into an affluent family in the city of sozopolis of Pisidia in AD 465. He was trained in language and oratory at Alexandria which had been a great cultural centre. Later he went to Beirut and became well versed in Roman law. It was during his stay in Beirut that he came to know about the Cappadocian Fathers and became a Christian. Mar Severios took vows of monasticism. Even though he was an expert in law, he preferred to reside in Jerusalem and lead the life of an ascetic. He donated his family wealth to the poor. He not only sang about the Incarnated Christ but also testified Christ through his life.

After the council of Chalcedon there arose a dispute regarding the unity of Christ’s Nature. Mar Severios expounded and defended the belief in One Nature of Christ and staunchly opposed Two Nature theorists. His treatises and epistles and debates with the heretics enlighten us in Christology. In AD 512 he was consecrated the Patriarch of Antioch. In his first speech on assuming the throne, he extolled the creed of the Great Councils of Nicea, Constantinople and Ephesus and rejected the heretics of the council of Chalcedon. In those days the Non-Chalcedonians were

cruelly persecuted. Mar Severios also suffered a lot and had to flee to Egypt. He passed away in AD 538. He is the author of several great writings including the hymn “By Thy mother’s earnest Pray’rs...” He is described in the Fifth Diptych as “the crown of the Syrians, the eloquent mouth, the pillar and the doctor of the Holy Church of God as a whole, the meadow abounding in blossom, who preached all the time that Mary was undoubtedly the God-bearer.”

An analysis of By Thy Mother’s earnest Pray’rs

We have learned in the lower classes that our worships and liturgies are occasions for proclaiming our creed. The first instance of proclaiming our creed during the public celebration of the Holy Eucharist is the hymn “By thy mother’s earnest prayers...” This hymn contains the mystery of Incarnation of Lord Jesus Christ as well as the events from His Crucifixion to Resurrection. This is a versified rendering of the teachings of Mar Severios regarding Christology.

1. Introductory part of the hymn

When the Chancel is unveiled for the public celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the priest censes the Altar and recites the Ekba beginning ‘Mariam Deelethok...’ (Mary who bore Thee; John who baptized Thee, May they be to Thee; supplicants for us; have mercy on us). This Ekba might originally have been the prologue of our hymn. Later this prologue might have been extracted out of the hymn as a separate prayer. Nevertheless this prayer is repeated with a minor alteration in the hymn recited by the people as well.

“By Thy Mother’s earnest Pray’rs

By Thy Saint’s entreaties...”

Instead of specifying the name of St. John the Baptist along with St. Mary, we commemorate all saints in this hymnal rendering.

2. The Christological teaching in the hymn

The teachings in this hymn regarding Jesus Christ, “Who being in the form of God did not consider it robbery to be equal with God. But made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men” (Philippian 2:5-11), can be divided into two parts.

- a. The first part expounds the following ideas regarding Jesus Christ.
 1. Jesus Christ in his true Nature is free from mortality.
 2. He incarnated for the salvation of the entire mankind out of his tender mercy.

3. Even though Jesus Christ took human form from St. Mary who is “glorious, chaste and pure”, His True Nature remained unaltered.
 4. He was crucified for the sake of all of us who believe in Him.
 5. I adore Lord Jesus who is Lord and King, Word and Father’s Son.
- b. The second part expounds the following ideas regarding the Resurrection of Jesus Christ and His position in the Holy Trinity.
1. Jesus Christ by virtue of His death, trampled upon the power of death over us (Romans 6:4-6).
 2. Lord the Son is one of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. He is worshipped and praised equally along with God the Father and the Holy Spirit (St. Matthew 28:19, 2 Corinthians 13:13).

The Maniso of Mar Severios and the other creeds we use

It would be better if we learn the maniso of Mar Severios comparing it with the second paragraph of the Nicean creed and the Pauline teachings in the Epistle to Philippians (Philippians 2:5-11).

In the Maniso of Mar Severios, only the events from the Birth till the Resurrection of Jesus Christ are mentioned. On the other hand the Nicean creed states about Christ’s Ascension, the state of Him being seated on the right hand side of the Father and His second coming. St. Paul states that at the name of Jesus, who got crucified and Resurrected “every knee should bow, of those in heaven and of those on earth and of those under the earth” (Philippians 2:10-11). God the Father would be glorified through Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

In short the public celebration of our Holy Eucharist begins with the commemoration of the salvific work of the Incarnated Lord Jesus Christ. Like the angels, shepherds and the wise men who bowed to Jesus when He was born in Jerusalem, we too bow before the Lord at the beginning of the Holy Eucharist. This is ritually indicated through the priest encircling the altar and censing the altar and the people. The people who cross themselves and bow to the censing confess this gospel and their faith in Jesus Christ.

Activities

1. Explain the ‘Maniso of Mar Severios.’
2. Explain the importance of Mar Severios of Antioch among our Church Fathers.

3. Describe the significance of the hymn 'By Thy mother's earnest Prayr's' in the life of a believer.
4. List the creeds in the Maniso of Mar Severios.
5. Compare this hymn with the second paragraph of the Nicean Creed.
6. Identify the similarities between the theme of this hymn and the Pauline ideas listed in the Epistle to the Philippians.

Hymn

(Dhanya Mathave...)

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

Our Decision

We have understood the meaning and significance of the solemn Maniso of Mar Severios.

We would recite this hymn, comprehending its meaning; during our morning worship at home during the Holy Eucharist and on all other occasions.

Let us pray

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

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

Further Reading

Read and meditate on the biblical passages prescribed for this week.

Chapter 21

The ministration of Fraction, Consignation and Commixtion

Learning objectives: Let us understand the features of the ministration of Fraction, consignation and commixtion done during the Holy Eucharist.

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

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

Introduction

The Diptychs is a solemn part of our Holy Eucharist. We have learned about the Diptychs last year. (Class IX, Unit 5).

After the reading of the Diptychs, the Chancel is veiled and we recite the Catholic Hymn beginning ‘Hearken, gracious Lord, we pray...’ The secret ministration performed in the veiled Holy of Holies at this time is known as the ministration of fraction, Consignation and Commixtion. Jesus Christ who founded the Holy Eucharist took bread, blessed, broke and gave it to his disciples on that occasion our Holy Eucharist is often divided into four parts based on these four acts of Jesus Christ. The act of ‘taking’ indicates the preparatory ministrations and the lessons from the Holy Bible, ‘Blessing’ indicates the ministrations performed by the priest standing upon the altar step. This ministration ends with the Diptychs. What follows is the ministration of fraction, consignation and commixtion which is the act of ‘breaking.’ The part of the Holy Eucharist from Lord’s prayer till the Holy Communion is the ‘giving’ part. Now let us examine the various components of the ministration of Fraction, Consignation and Commixtion.

Reading Passage

The second Benediction

There are three Benedictions given during our Holy Eucharist. After the second Benediction, the chancel is veiled and Catholic Hymn of ‘Hearken, gracious Lord,

we pray...’ is sung. While the other two Benedictions are given in the name of the Holy Trinity, the second Benediction is given in the name of Lord Jesus Christ. It says “May the grace of Jesus Christ, the exalted God and our savior be upon you, my brethren, forever.” This Benediction is similar to the benedictions given by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 16:23 and Galatians 6:18.

Catholic Hymn

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

1. The hymn beginning ‘Hearken, gracious Lord, we pray...’

The syriac version of this hymn begins with ‘Bithar’vo Deelok Hanono.’ It is a simple hymn to be recited meditatively. It begs mercy from our Lord when the Holy Eucharist which indicates the flesh of Jesus Christ is fractioned. It is the moment when we beg mercy from our Lord Jesus Christ who was crucified for our sake.

2. The hymn ‘Seraphim of fiery line...’

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

The ministration of fraction

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

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

The ministration of fraction is done secretly. The priest recites a prayer written by the Church Father Bar Sleebey on this occasion. It is not just a prayer, but another declaration of the creed of the Church.

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

- a. Through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, God the word was wounded and sacrificed for the sake of man’s salvation.

- b. Because of the death on the cross, Jesus Christ did not lose God's Essence from either his body or his soul.
- c. Jesus Christ died on the cross for the remission of sins of the entire creation. Through crucifixion, we sinners (people inclined to the left) are transformed into a clean lot (people inclined to the Right).
- d. Through crucifixion, Jesus Christ reconciled heaven and earth. Thereafter He resurrected on the third day. The offering of Christ on the cross was a divine ministration for the reconciliation between heavenly hosts mankind, Jews and gentiles. This prayer secretly recited by the priest ends with the statement. "We believe in and confess what we have said. We affirm what we have said."

Litanies

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

Conclusion

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

Let us think

1. What are the four acts pronounced by Lord Jesus Christ when he founded the Holy Eucharist? How do we categorise our Holy Eucharist into various parts according to these four acts?
2. What is the special feature of the second Benediction given during the Holy Eucharist?
3. Which benediction given in the Holy Bible is equivalent to this second benediction?
4. What does the word Catholic hymn mean?
5. What is the biblical basis of the hymn 'Seraphim of fiery line...'
6. List the three events happening during the ministration of fraction.
7. "The secret prayer recited by the priest during the ministration of fraction is yet another declaration of the creed of the Church? Substantiate.
8. What are the features of the litanies recited at the end of this ministration?

Activities

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

Hymn

(Agnimayanmaar aare nokki...)

The one on whom – fi-e-ry an-gels trembling gaze,
That one as Bread – and wine upon-the altar see;
As angels clad – in lightning are – enflamed by Him,
So those who eat – them have their fa-ces made as bright
The secrets of – the Son are for – the angels fire;
So witnesseth – Isaiah too – who them perceived;
Those mysteries – within God's bo-som deep concealed
For Adam's sons – dispensed upon – the table, see!

Our Decision

We have understood the features of the ministration of fraction of the Holy Eucharist. We would hereafter participate devoutly and prayerfully in this ministration.

Let us pray

*Make us worthy O Lord God, to receive Thy Holy body and drink thy propitiating Blood that we may inherit Thy heavenly kingdom with all those who have pleased Thy good will, our Lord and our God for ever. Amen.
(Prayer before Receiving the Holy Communion – The Book of Holy Eucharist)*

Further Reading

Read and meditate on the biblical passages scheduled for this week.

Unit 6

Dogmas of our Faith

Chapter 22

The Holy Trinity

Learning objectives: Let us understand the belief in Holy Trinity followed by the Christian Church. Let us also understand the Old and New Testament bases of our belief in the Holy Trinity. Let us understand the significance of belief in the Holy Trinity in Church life. Let us also praise the Triune God.

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

Learning Aids

1. A picture of Christ’s baptism.
2. The Holy Bible.
3. The Liturgical book of the Holy Eucharist.
4. Book of family worship.

Introduction

One feature of Christian Church is the belief in the Holy Trinity. We believe in a Triune God containing the three persons of Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. All these persons are completely God. Christian Church doesn’t believe in several Gods. Our God is a Triune God that is, One God and Three Persons at the same time. God is immeasurable and indefinable. We cannot delimit God in numerals like one, three etc. God is a mystery beyond the human intellect. Man’s intellect is only a creation of God. A creation cannot fully comprehend the creator. However we should understand the fundamental principles of the Holy Trinity. Let us learn about the Holy Trinity today.

Reading passage

We confess our belief in the Holy Trinity in all our prayers and sacraments begin with praise of the Holy Trinity. “In the name of the Father, and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, one true God.” We recite ‘Shubaho...’, the Syriac version of “Glory be to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost” amidst our Canonical prayers and hymns recited during the sacraments. This is also a praise of the Holy Trinity. The prayers also end with a benediction in the name of the Holy Trinity. After the celebration of the Sossaffa during the Holy Eucharist, the priest gives the first benediction to the people in the name of the Holy Trinity. “May the love of God the Father, the grace of the Only Begotten Son and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

St. Paul also concludes his second epistle to the Corinthians with this benediction (2 Corinthians 13:14).

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

Pause and Reflect

1. What is meant by Triune God?
2. List the liturgical hymns that commemorate the Holy Trinity.
3. What is the significance of the Holy Trinity in the Holy Eucharist?

The Holy Trinity in the Old Testament

The Jews believed in one God. “O Israel, listen: Yahweh is our God, Yahweh alone” (Deuteronomy 6:4). This verse was the creed of the Jews. However we can find indications of the Holy Trinity throughout the Old Testament.

Before the creation of Adam, the three persons of the Holy Trinity spoke among themselves.

“Then God said, “Let us make a man – someone like ourselves” (Genesis 1:26).

“So God made man like his maker. Like God did God make man” (Genesis 1:27).

In the first verse plural form (us, ourselves) and in the second verse singular form (his) is used to designate God. These verses indicate that God is three in form and One God simultaneously.

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

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

The Holy Trinity in the New Testament

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

The first manifestation of the Holy Trinity is in the baptism of Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ was baptized in River Jordan, St. John witnessed that “the heaven was opened. And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him and a voice came from heaven which said “You are my beloved Son; in You I am well pleased” (St. Matthew 3:16-17, St. Luke 3:21-22, St. Mark 1:10-11 and St. John 1:32-34).

In Jordan River the Son in human form, the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove and the Father with His voice were present.

There are several references to God the Father in the teachings of Jesus Christ. ‘The Lord’s Prayer is addressed to our Father who art in heaven.’

Even though Jesus Christ addresses the first person of the Holy Trinity as ‘Father’ the Father’s manifestation in the New Testament is only through sound. God is beyond human thought and intellect and is invisible.

Besides the manifestation at River Jordan, God the Father revealed Himself and witnessed the Son during the transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabore, saying “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him” (St. Matthew 17:5, St. Mark 9:2-10, St. Luke 9:28-36, 2 Peter 1:17-18).

The Holy Spirit too is invisible and beyond human intellect. The Holy Spirit manifested Himself in the form of dove at Jordan, in the form of tongues of fire on

the Day of the Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4) and in the form of wind in the beginning of creation (Genesis 1:2). The Holy Spirit assumed different forms of manifestation because He was formless.

Pause and Reflect

1. Quote the biblical basis of the Holy Trinity from the Old Testament.
2. List the Instances where the Holy Trinity is referred to in the New Testament.

The Holy Trinity in our Church life

The Triune God is a ‘Community.’ The believers who are joined with Christ through the sacrament of baptism and who live in Christ through the Holy Communion come near to this ‘community.’ This is known as Communion. This word indicates our life with the Holy Trinity. The Communion with the Holy Trinity is possible only through prayer. We join with Christ through baptism and through the anointment of the Holy Chrism the Holy Spirit comes and dwells in us. Thus we are transformed into children of heavenly Father. Each prayer strengthens our relationship with the Holy Trinity.

And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father! Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ” (Galatians 4:6-7; see also Romans 8:15).

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

Let us think

1. How do we express our belief in Holy Trinity through our prayers?
2. Describe briefly the hints of the Holy Trinity found in the Old Testament.
3. List the two instances in the New Testament in which the Holy Trinity was revealed.
4. Describe the concept of the word ‘Communion.’
5. The position of the Holy Trinity in our Church life.

Hymn

(Maramathinuyire... Karthave...)

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

Our Decision

We have understood the biblical basis and significance of the Holy Trinity. We have understood how the Holy Trinity is important in our Holy Sacraments and worship. We will worship and praise God as Holy Trinity.

Let us pray

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

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

Further Reading

Read and meditate on the biblical passages scheduled for this week.

Chapter 23

Priesthood in Christianity

Learning objectives: Let us learn the fundamental concepts of Christian priesthood. Let us also compare the features of priesthood in the Old Testament and the New Testament. Let us understand the various types of ordinations in the New Testament and their significance. We shall develop respect for the ordained priests.

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

Learning Aids

1. The Holy Bible
2. The Liturgical Book of the Holy Eucharist
3. Book of Common Prayer

Introduction

Which are the various positions of priesthood in our Church? We have bishops (Metropolitans), priests (Kashisha) and deacons. What are the responsibilities of each position? Today we are learning the features and significance of Christian priesthood.

Reading passage

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

Israel and the Kingdom of Priests

God told Israel “And you shall be a kingdom of priests to God, a holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). The epithet ‘Kingdom of priests’ means that each person in the nation should fulfill his ‘priestly mission.’ God entrusted with each Jew the responsibility to preach the love and mercy of God to all people and pray for their sake.

Even though Israel as a whole was called a ‘priestly nation,’ God selected the Levites from them to lead the people in worship and to make offerings. Among the Levites Aaron and his sons were specially selected to lead the nation in worship.

In the New Testament, the Christian Church is described as the New Israel. 1 Peter 2:9 says “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people...” this indicates that Christian church is the New Israel. The Christian Church has got the position of ‘Kingdom of Priests.’ Each Christian is called to preach the love and mercy of God to the world and pray for the whole world. Lord Jesus Christ founded Christian priesthood to lead the Church, lead in worship of God and perform the Holy Sacraments, as God had done in Old Israel.

Jesus ordains His disciples as priests

Epistle to the Hebrews describes Jesus Christ as ‘High priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek’ (Hebrews 6:20, 7:26-28, 8:2). St. John saw Jesus Christ adorned with the vestments of the High Priest in the Book of Revelation. “And in the midst of the seven lamp stands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band” (Revelation 1:13). The garment down to the feet (Exodus 28:4, 29:55) and the embroidered belt (Exodus 39:29) were part of the vestments of the Old Testament priests.

Jesus Christ made His disciples partners in His mission and authority. He entrusted the ministry He had been doing with them. “And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease” (St. Matthew 10:1-2).

Similarly Jesus Christ gave His disciples authority to absolve sins “Assuredly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth, will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (See St. Matthew 18:18; St. John 20:21-23).

The Old Testament priests used to make offerings for the remission of sins of the people. Jesus Christ gave His disciples the gift to absolve sins.

Pause and Reflect

1. What were the differences in the concept of a priest during the Old Testament period?
2. What are the features of the priesthood of Jesus Christ?

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

Christ’s disciples select other people as partners in their priestly ministry

Just as Christ conjoined the disciples in His ministry, the disciples also selected other to their priestly ministry. One example is the selection of Mathias as apostle in place of Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:15-26). The selection of new candidates and making them partners in the priestly ministry of Jesus Christ is known as Ordination.

After the selection of Mathias, the Church selected “seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3). “Whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them” (Acts 6:6). First of all the apostles ordained seven deacons. Since the Apostolic times the candidates for priesthood were ordained by laying on of hands on the head. Hence, ordination is also known as ‘Laying on of hands.’

Other ordinations in the New Testament

1. When Saul (St. Paul) and Barnabas set off for their first missionary journey, the ministers of the Church of Antioch laid hands on them and authorized them. “Then, having fasted and prayed and laid hands on them, they sent them away” (Acts 13:3).
2. Barnabas and St. Paul ordained the elders of the Churches they founded by laying hands on them. “So when they had appointed elders in every Church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed” (Acts 14:23). The elders or presbyters thus ordained were called ‘Presbyteros’ in Greek and ‘Kashisha’ in Syrac. This biblical passage tells us that Paul and Barnabas ordained ‘Kashishas.’

The New Testament also contains references to the bishops (Episcopos in Greek) ruling over the churches (Acts 20:17; 28; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:7; 1 Timothy 3:2).

After the Ascension of Jesus Christ, the apostles gave leadership to the churches directly. They ordained bishops and 'Kashishas' in the Churches they founded. The deacons were ordained as assistants of bishops and priests. These three hierarchical positions give leadership to all Apostolic Churches in Church administration and ministry of sacraments.

Christian priesthood was founded by Lord Jesus Christ to sustain the unity and faith of the Church.

Let us think

1. What is the relevance of a separate priesthood in the ministering of sacraments if the Church as a whole is a 'Kingdom of Priests'?
2. When did Christ Ordain His disciples as priests?
3. Describe briefly the instances of ordination ministered by the apostles.
4. What are the three hierarchical positions of Christian priesthood?

Activities

1. List down the Characteristics of Melchizedek as priest. (Read Hebrews 7:1-4) and write your answer).
2. Illustrate the three hierarchical positions of priesthood by drawing a triangle.
3. Conduct a discussion in the class on the characteristic features of Christian priesthood.

Hymn

(Aadyacharitwam kaikond...)

When the priesthood passed on down,
Moses got it, Aaron too;
Moses passed it to skar-iah,
Passed Skar-iah it on to John
John did pass it to our Lord
Christ ordained apostles twelve;
They sent forth by Him
Passed it on throughout the world.

(Moriyo Rahemelain uadaryn)

Our Decision

We have understood the fundamental concepts of
Christian priesthood.
We would participate devoutly in the sacrament of ordination
of the Church and would respect the priests.

Let us pray

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

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

Further Reading

Read and meditate on the biblical passages scheduled for this week.

Chapter 24

The Vision of End of Ages (Christian Eschatology)

Learning Objectives: Let us understand the vision of the End of Ages. Let us understand the New Testament description of the Vision of End of Ages and the importance of this vision in Church life. Let us also compare the vision of the End of Ages with the Resurrection of the dead. Let us also compare and understand the features of life in the Kingdom of Heaven with the worship of the Church. Let us prepare ourselves and wait for the experience of eternal life.

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

Learning Aids

1. The Holy Bible
2. The Book of Holy Eucharist
3. Book of Common Prayer

Introduction

One day our world will come to an end. This day is known as ‘End of Ages.’ End of Ages will happen during the Second coming of Lord Jesus Christ. The Last Judgement and Eternal Life are connected with the End of Ages. Today we are learning about the End of Ages as given in the New Testament.

Reading Passage

In the Nicene creed we confess our faith in the triune God comprising of Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. We also confess our faith in the Holy Church, One Baptism and Eternal life in the world to come. These are the fundamental dogmas of the Church.

Vision of End of Ages in the New Testament

The importance of the End of Ages is the Second coming of Lord Jesus Christ. At the time of Ascension of Jesus Christ two heavenly angels told the disciples. “This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). The Holy Bible ends with the prayer “Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus” (Revelation 22:20).

The First coming (Birth) of Jesus Christ, even though many people did not come to know about it, became a turning point in history. History is divided into BC (Before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini – Year of the Lord) based on the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. However the Second coming of Jesus Christ will be the end of history and the beginning of eternal life.

St. Mark 13:26 says “Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.” This means that the entire world will see the Second coming of Jesus Christ.

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

Words like Revelation and manifestation are also used in the New Testament to describe the Second coming of Jesus Christ. During the second coming of Jesus Christ the meaning of life, the state of soul after death and the essence of eternal life will be revealed. These words indicate that the Second coming would reveal things invisible and inscrutable to mankind.

Pause and Reflect

1. Which are the fundamental dogmas of faith of the Church?
2. The birth of Jesus Christ was a turning point in history. Why?
3. What is the meaning of the Greek word ‘parousia’?

The Vision of the End of Ages and Church life

When we say that Jesus Christ would come again, it does not mean that today we don’t have His presence in the Church and the world. St. Matthew 18:20 says: “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst

of them.” Jesus Christ is present in all our worships. He is present in the Church as its head, its groom and its shepherd. Christ is present in the life of each believer who has received his sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion and who maintains a live relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ abides in us as our very life. “Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life and I will raise him up at the last day” (St. John 6:54).

However we would experience the totality of Christ’s presence and life only at His Second coming. The New Testament exhorts us to pray and live in the hope of Second coming. We pray “Thy kingdom come” in the Lord’s Prayer with this hope in mind. We confess our hope in the Second coming of Jesus Christ in our Holy Eucharist as well.

“We commemorate Thy death, O Lord, and confess Thy resurrection, and await Thy Second coming. May Thy blessings be upon us all.”

Even though the Second coming is a certainty, the New Testament doesn’t specify when that would happen. In St. Matthew 24:42 Lord Jesus Christ commands “watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.” Prayer is a sign of awakening. We say each of our prayers in hope of the Second coming of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ himself has suggested that His Second coming would be from the east.

“For as the lightening comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the son of Man be” (St. Matthew 24:27).

We say our prayers facing the East and bury our dead with their faces turned eastwards in hope of this second coming from the east. The canonical prayers and the treatises of Church Fathers also contain the hope that Jesus Christ, the Sum of Righteousness (Malachi 4:2) would arise in the East at the End of Age. The Church Fathers describe the End of Age ‘as the dawn of Resurrection.’ This is because the Second coming of Jesus Christ will be the dawn of a New Age as well.

The End of Age and the Resurrection of the Dead

The most important event during Second coming would be the Resurrection of the Dead. The New Testament gives a detailed description of the Resurrection of the dead at Second coming.

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an arch angel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the

clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). (This passage is read during the Funeral service of women)

After resurrection we would assume a body and a life different from that of today (1 Corinthians 15:35-57)

There would be the Last Judgement accompanying the resurrection of the dead. “For the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice. And come forth – those who have done good to the resurrection of life and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation” (St. John 5:29).

Eternal life or the life in heaven would be a life in fellowship with the large community of saintly people. When we compare the kingdom of heaven to a marriage feast it indicates a life of fellowship (St. Matthew 8:11-12; 22:1-14).

One feature of life in heaven is incessant worship. “And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be into, and His servants shall serve Him” (Revelation 22:3).

The worship of the Church is a pre-sign of the eternal worship in heaven. St. John writes in Revelation 22:4. “They shall see His face.” What we get through the worship and sacraments of the Church is a fore-taste of the eternal life in which we would see the face of God forever.

Let us think

1. List the fundamental dogmas of faith of the Church.
2. What are the words used in the New Testament to indicate the Second coming of Jesus Christ? Write short notes on explaining the meaning of each of these words.
3. Why do we pray facing the east?
4. What are the features of life in the kingdom of heaven?
5. Describe briefly how the vision of the end of Age is expressed in our liturgy.

Activities

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

Hymn

(Hey – Mruthigathare...)

Oh-departed-Resurrection is at hand
Do...n't-be sad at – the loss of – your flesh
The one who made – you as beautiful
Has given – resurrection in body
The good Lord gives – reward to-all upon their merit.

Our Decision

We have understood the biblical basis of the End of Age.
We would participate in the True worship of the Church and
observe prayer, fasts and fasting without fail.
We would prepare ourselves and wait for eternal
life in heaven.

Let us pray

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

Further Reading

Read and meditate on the biblical passages scheduled for this week.

Unit 7

Great men of God

Chapter 25

H. H. Catholicos Baselius Gheevarghese II (1874-1964)

Learning Objectives: Let us read the biography of H. H. Catholicos Baselius Gheevarghese II and follow the example of that Church Father in our lives.

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

Learning Aids

1. Books on Church History authored by Z. M. Paret, Dr. Joseph Cheer etc.
2. Malankara Church Fathers – Dr. Samuel Chandanappally
3. Encyclopedia of Church History – Dr. Joseph Cheeran
4. Church Encyclopedia
5. The Holy Bible, The Book of Holy Eucharist, Book of Common Prayer
6. A picture of H. H. Catholicos Baselius Gheevarghese II

Introduction

In Malankara Church, up to 1876, there had been only one Metropolitan. He was known by the titular name ‘Metropolitan of Malankara’ in those days. This Metropolitan had been the only Episcopal and administrative authority in those days. The 1876 Synod of Mulanthuruthy brought about a change in this state of affairs. Along with the Malankara Metropolitan, six other metropolitans were

consecrated. In 1912 the Supreme Head of the Malankara Church adopted the new title of Catholicos and a new administrative system was formed. The modern age of Malankara Church history began thereafter.

After the founding of the Catholicate in 1912, seven Catholicoses has reigned over our Church. Today (2015) we are led by the eighth Catholicos. Among these Supreme heads of the Church, the one who reigned for the longest period is H. H. Catholicos Baselius Gheevarghese II. Today let us learn about the contributions made by this Father to the Church.

Reading passage

A biographical sketch

H. H. Catholicos Gheevarghese II was born on June 16, 1874 as the son of Ulahannan and Achiyamma of Kallasseriyl house Kurichy, Kottayam, Kerala. His pet name was Punnoose. Gheevarghese was his baptismal name. Later he came to be known as 'Kallassery Bava' or 'Kurichy Bava' based on his family name and name of native place respectively. During his childhood he had a serious illness which was cured through prayer. Then his parents dedicated him for full time service of God and he remained steadfast in that vow throughout his life.

The period of his life and work was a critical period in the history of Malankara Church. Pulikkottil Joseph Mar Dionysius II had been leading the Church in a progressive manner. St. Gregorios of Parumala was a source of spiritual strength for the Church at that time. Vattasseril Ramban and Punnoose Ramban worked as disciples of St. Gregorios of Parumala. Such a strong spiritual leadership could successfully stall the storm of Reformation movement that blew against the Church in those days.

This Church Father was ordained a deacon in 1892 and a priest in 1898. On the very third day of his ordination as priest, he took vows of a complete monastic life and was professed Ramban. He resided with St. Gregorios of Parumala and served the saint along with learning the disciplines of monasticism. When St. Gregorios of Parumala passed away on November 2, 1912 he was appointed as Manager of Parumala Seminary. He visited the Holyland in 1908. In those days it had been a trouble some and spiritually enlightening journey. On September 8, 1912 he was consecrated Metropolitan and took the name Gheevarghese Mar Gregorios. A few days after his consecration as Metropolitan that is on September 15, the first Catholicos was consecrated in Malankara. He gave leadership to this consecration ceremony in his capacity as Metropolitan. When the second Catholicos too was consecrated, he

was at the forefront organising ceremony. On February 15, 1928 he was chosen as the third Catholicos of Malankara. During this period he was at the helm of the dioceses of Niranam and Kollam. He founded a Seminary at Kundara, Kollam and caused a great spiritual awakening in that region. The Reformist teachings had gained much influence in these regions. The saintly life and authoritative teachings regarding True faith became instrumental in retaining several people in True Faith. He published several books like 'secret prayers.' 'History of Martyrs of the Church' 'Penkisa Syrian Offices' 'Paradise' etc. We should remember that these publications were made in times when printing facilities were quite rare.

Vattasseril Metropolitan passed away on February 23, 1934. The Malankara Christian Association which met on December 25 of the same year, entrusted the position of Malankara Metropolitan also with the Catholicos. Thus H. H. Gheevarghese II became the first Catholicos to function in the twin offices of the Catholicos and the Malankara Metropolitan. The position of Malankara Metropolitan traditionally has been the material authority of the Church. The position of the Catholicos founded in 1912 indicates spiritual authority of the Church which includes consecration of Metropolitans, consecration of the Holy Chrism and Presiding over the Episcopal Synod. Even though these two positions had been held by two different Church Fathers because of historical reasons, subsequent history proves that the same person holding both these positions has done good for the effective administration of the Church.

Pause and Reflect

1. Why do we often call H. H. Catholicos Gheevarghese II 'Kallassery Bava' and 'Kurichy Bava'?
2. What did we learn about the special features of the period in which he lived?
3. Describe the activities of this Highpriest in Kundara.
4. What do we understand when we say that "the positions of Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan converged in a single person?"

Let us come back to the biographical sketch of this Church Father. He had been Metropolitan for 52 years, during which he functioned as Catholicos for 32 years and held the twin offices of Catholicos and Malankara Metropolitan for 26 years. Our Church can't boast of another Church Father who had such a long tenure in these high offices. Several people have called him Father of Renaissance of Malankara Church and the description seems quite apt when consider his multifaceted

contributions. He entered into eternal bliss on January 3, 1964 at the age of 90. He was interred at Catholicate Palace, Devalokam, Kottayam which had been bought by the Church during his tenure. He was the first Catholicos to be buried at the Catholicate palace, Devalokam.

Contributions of this Church Father

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

A great ascetic

His spiritual rigours and ascetic practices were exemplary. He found in his teacher, St. Gregorios of Parumala, a model for his asceticism. He was enthusiastic and vigilant about following prayers of Canonical Hours, Fasts, Fasting and sacraments. He followed them intensively without a taint of laziness. He had illuminating spiritual experiences which included hearing God's answers in his solitary prayer and meditation. As a result his word and vision became a rich spiritual experience for the believers. His life and observances helped even those who felt inclined towards Reformation, to appreciate the flavours of oriental spirituality.

His powerful Christian witness

He lived during a period in which Malankara Church was undergoing bitter factional squabbles. Even though several court cases were in progress, he relied on God's grace in settling the disputes. Hence he was undaunted when the verdict of 1951 went against him. He emboldened the believers with the optimistic statement "Truth with Triumph." He did not keep any bitterness against those who opposed him. On the other hand he extended his love and affection to all of them. When the Supreme Court Verdict of 1958 became favourable, he did not feel excessively proud about it. Neither he be little or scoff at the opponents. He accepted them into his fold with Christian love and reigned over the united Church as its High Priest till the end of his life.

Pause and Reflect

1. Who is the 'Father of Renaissance' of the Malankara Church?
2. What were his qualities as an ascetic?
3. Point out an example for the powerful Christian witness of this Church Father.

His social recognition and Acceptance

Even though he was the Head of a small Church, he was recognized and accepted as if he were the head of a very large church. The world council of Churches which met at Edinburgh in 1937 looked upon him as great Oriental Father and he earned the attention and recognition of all who attended the meeting. The 'spiritual glow' of the countenance earned by men of God is extolled by oriental theology. It was this facial glow that attracted several people towards him. He also visited the Patriarchs of Alexandria, Yugoslavia and Serbia. During his tenure the Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selasi, the Cyprus Ruler and Patriarch Makarios and the Armenian Patriarch Vaskan visited the Malankara Church. H. H. Gheevarghese II gave leadership to the Church during a period when India was progressing from slavery into independence. Various political and religious leaders of the times showed great love and respect to the Catholicos. Leaders like Shri. Mannath Padmanabhan, Shri. R. Sankar were among them. Within the fold of Church, lay leaders like Joruanlist Jacob Kurian, K. C. Mammen Mappila, Advocate John Elanjikkal and A. M. Varkey gave staunch support to the Catholicos in leading the Church and in animating the spiritual organizations. He could also resist the onslaught of the Malankara Catholic movement which originated in 1930. In 1947 he proclaimed Mar Gregorios of Parumala and Yeldo Mar Baselius of Kothamangalam saints of the Church. He elected H. H. Augen I as his successor and passed away in peace and hope from this world. His feast of commemoration is observed annually at Kothamangalam on January 3.

Let us think

1. Evaluate the contributions of H. H. Baselius Gheevarghese II.
2. How does the Catholicos exemplify oriental spirituality?
3. What was special about the meeting at Edinburg?
4. Why is the Catholicos often called 'Father of Renaissance' of Malankara Church?

Activities

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

Hymn

(Episcopanmarakum...)

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

Our Decision

We have learned the biographical sketch of
H. H. Baselius Gheevarghese II.
We would always remember this Church Father who has boldly
led the Church through different crises during his long tenure.
We would follow the good examples set by him.

Let us pray

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

Further reading

Read and meditate on the biblical passages scheduled for this week.

Chapter 26

H. G. Paulose Mar Gregorios (1922-1996)

Learning Objectives: We have learned about the Cappadocean Fathers including St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Gregory of Nazianzen. Our Church too has produced a great scholar who could be designated Mar Gregorios of India. Let us learn about him through this lesson.

Verse to be memorized: “Receive my instruction, and not silver, and knowledge rather than choice gold” (Proverbs 8:10).

Learning Aids: Church Encyclopedia, Church Fathers of Malankara (Samuel Chanadanappally) Gregorios: The teacher (Fr. Dr. K. M. George) The autobiography of Paulose Mar Gregorios etc.

Reading passage

The eminent scientist Albert Einstein condoled the martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi through the renowned statement. “The future generations won’t believe that such a man lived on Earth in flesh and blood.” Gandhiji’s life was extra ordinary enough to invite such a comment. The life of Mar Gregorios was also an extra ordinary one on another plane. He was a great scholar. Our Church cannot boast of a greater scholar than him during the two thousand years of our history. Such a multifaceted genius is not seen in the entire history of all Christian Churches in India. Dear students... you may not be able to understand his intellectual prowess at your age. Hence let us learn his biographical details today. We shall read his books when we grow up.

Childhood and Education

Haven’t you heard about the hardships suffered by Abraham Lincoln during his childhood? He had to wade through several childhood hardships before he became a great man. The childhood experiences of the Metropolitan too mere similar. He was born on 9 August 1922 as the son of Paily Master and Eli Paily of Thadikkal

family in Thrrippunithura. He was called Paul Varghese at home. He has written in his autobiography (The Freedom of Love: A Great Mystery) that even though he studied in several renowned universities, he learned the basic lessons of his theological studies from his mother. This mother who imparted prayer and love to her son later became a mental patient. This was a great blow to Paul Varghese during his childhood day. His father and four siblings were greatly grieved by this and all domestic affairs including housekeeping and cooking were in shambles. Paul wrote his school final exams amidst these hardships. Yet he passed the examination in first class with a high rank. However he could not enjoy the happiness of his academic success. His father, who had been a school teacher, was not wealthy enough to continue his collegiate education. His father had to give primary education to the siblings as well and hence was in serious financial constraints. Paul Varghese was grieved at this misfortune but was not disappointed. He believed that God would open up a path before him and struggled to earn his own livelihood. He spent the next ten years of his life in material struggles. He worked as journalist for a newspaper and later in a transporting company. Along with his work, he found time to study on his own. Consequently he wrote the competitive examination of the post and Telegraph Department and earned a job hands down. Since he grew up amidst hardships of life, he could naturally empathize with the working class. He worked as a union leader in the Postal Department and worked for the welfare of the employees. But he didn't give up his desire to acquire higher education.

A teacher in Ethiopia

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

Higher Education England and America

In Ethiopia, Paul Varghese was not satisfied with the job beyond his eligibility. God gave him an opportunity to pursue his greatest goal of theological studies. He

joined Goshen College USA for his under graduate studies. Later he studied in Oklahoma, Union Theological Seminary, New York and Princeton Seminary and earned his graduation and post graduation in theology. The next two years he worked in Fellowship House, Aluva, Kerala and in the student Christian Movement (SCM). Within the short span of these two years, he became well known throughout Kerala as a biblical scholar and theologian.

Paul goes again to Ethiopia and Abroad

The Emperor of Ethiopia himself directly invited Paul to Ethiopia. Emperor Hailey Selasi who arrived as the guest of Government of India in 1956, participated in the 100th Feast of Commemoration of Mar Dionysius of Cheppad and certain other programmes of the Malankara Church. During the visit the Emperor obtained the consent of H. H. Catholicos Baselius Gheevarghese II and took Paul Varghese along with him to Ethiopia. It is abundant God's grace that enabled a child born in a village in Thrippunithura to become an advisor in the personal staff of the Emperor of a foreign country. Even though Paul had a lot of opportunities and temptations for material growth, he didn't yield before them. He kept up his burning desire to serve his Church and through it, the entire mankind. With this goal in mind, he left Ethiopia before the emperor lost his crown.

He went for his higher studies in oxford through yale. His studies about Cappadocean Fathers, especially St. Gregory of Nyssa, brought him to the forefront of the leading theologians of his times. He was slowly becoming a world citizen. He became the Associate secretary of World Council of Churches. Meanwhile peace and unity were established in the Malankara Church in 1958. He was ordained a deacon in the same year and was ordained priest in 1962.

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

He was a member of various bodies of World Council of Churches including the central committee before he became its president. He participated in various international struggles for justice, in issues which affect mankind. He participated in

UN General Assembly, Perestroika experiment of Gorbachev in the Soviet Union, and issues like disarmament, World Food Scarcity, Drinking water issue and protection of nature. He earned several doctorates and awards.

Principal of Orthodox Theological Seminary and metropolitan of Diocese of Delhi

He did not forget his own Church even when he was engrossed in various national and international issues. He became principal of Orthodox Theological Seminary in 1967 and continued in that post till his death. In 1975 he was consecrated the metropolitan of Diocese of Delhi. He was actively engaged in theology in his capacity as principal of Orthodox Theological Seminary and as the metropolitan of Delhi engaged himself in social, religious and political fields. His mission was to transform all people, irrespective of their caste or religion, into the kingdom of God as revealed through Lord Jesus Christ. He pointed out that all religions, ideologies, sciences, art, politics and literature have a role to play in this transformation. He firmly believed that it was God who would transform this world ultimately. However everyone should play one's role in this process. He taught that wherever there is goodness, its source is God. He visited various continents and several countries. During his flight from England to Germany in 1993 he had a stroke for the next three years he could work only within the limitations imposed by this stroke. He passed away on November 24, 1996 in New Delhi. He was buried on November 26 at Orthodox Theological Seminary Kottayam. His life seems surprising and unbelievable. We should learn more deeply about this great Metropolitan.

Let us think

1. What was the greatest crisis encountered by H. G. Paulose Mar Gregorios during his childhood?
2. What are the posts held by H. G. Paulose Mar Gregorios in foreign Countries?
3. What aspect of his life has influenced you most, after reading his biographical sketch.
4. The Metropolitan tells us that he learned the basic lessons of theology from his mother. Has anyone influenced you in a similar way?

Let us pray

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

Chapter 27

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

Learning objectives: We have heard and learnt about Deacon Athanasius who defended Orthodox faith at the Great Council of Nicea (AD 325). We have had several such non-bishops who fought for our faith. Today let us learn about one such great priest in the hither to history of Malankara Church.

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

Learning Aids: Church Encyclopaedia, Church Fathers of Malankara – Samuel Chandanapally, The books and treatises of Fr. V. C. Samuel in both English and Malayalm.

Reading Passage

He was born on April 6, 1912 as the fifth child of the nine children of E. J. Cherian and Annamma of Edayil Family, Omalloor. His father was a school teacher and held education in high esteem. He completed his primary education in his father’s school at Pathanamthitta and had his high school education at Kozhencherry. Even though he was a brilliant student, he could not continue his higher education for a while because of the prevailing social circumstances.

His life at Manjanikkara Dayara

His life in Manjanikkara Dayara (monastery) shaped his vision and perspective of life. After the mortal remains of Patriarch Elias III were interred in the Dayara, a representative of the Patriarch always resided there. Ramban Abdul Ahad (Later Patriarch Yakub III) who thus resided there had close association with H. G. Mar Yulios and this enabled Samuel to acquire deep knowledge in Syriac and Hebrew. Along with this he acquired mastery in English language through his wide reading.

This was the beginning of his language studies. Later he mastered several languages like Greek, Latin, German, Kannada and Tamil.

Higher Education

He could go for higher education only thirteen years after completing his school education. He began his higher studies in 1944 and continued it till 1957. He completed his BA in philosophy from UC College Aluva, MA in Philosophy from Madras Christian College, BD from UT College Bangalore, STM from New York Union Seminary and finally Ph. D from the famous Yale University. He completed all his degrees securing high ranks in each.

A Truth seeking Researcher

Even though he was born and brought up in a Syrian family with professed lenience to Antiochian faith, he had from childhood, an earnest desire to understand truth objectively. He was interested in enquiring whether there was any truth in branding Oriental Orthodox Churches as Monopolysites. He enquired into the background of the Council of Chalcedon which caused the first split in the Christian Church and the truth behind One Nature, Two Nature theories. His findings regarding the issue became beneficial to the Church subsequently. He proved in a scholarly fashion that the controversies regarding One Nature and Two Nature originated because of the Sociopolitical conditions in those days and because both factions did not understand each other. His doctoral thesis published as 'Council of Chalcedon – Re-examined' was an eye opener for the entire Christian Church.

Pause and Reflect

1. List the details regarding Fr. V. C. Samuel you have learned till now.
2. What circumstances enabled him to learn Syriac?
3. How, do you think, Fr. V. C. Samuel's research benefits the entire Christian Church? Discuss in groups.

The search for an Indian Church

Fr. V. C. Samuel had great vision and interest regarding an Indian Church free from the hegemony of Western Churches (including the Syrian Church of Antioch). His studies in this direction were carried out at CISRS (Christian Institute for

studies in Religious sciences). Bangalore established by Dr. P. D. Devanandan. He also got the fellowship of Rockefeller Foundation for carrying out Post Doctoral Studies. He made in depth studies of Vedanta of Indian Philosophy, Vivekananda, Sri. Ramakrishna, Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Movement. He argued that Indian Churches should have a National Character and wrote several books and articles on the topic. His self critical book on Malankara Orthodox Church titled 'is this and Indian Church?' is the most important book authored by him. The challenges raised by this book, written several decades ago, still remain unrealized.

An Ideal Teacher

His career as a teacher of Syriac language at Manjanikkara Dayara soon found new platforms in great centres of learning. He taught at Serampur, UT College Bangalore. Holy Trinity Theological College in Adis Ababa (Ethiopia), Ecumenical Institute, White field and finally for a decade at Orthodox Theological Seminary Kottayam and Federated Faculty (FFRRC). Students from various Churches could experience his scholarship, humility and love.

In Ecumenical Movements

He earnestly tried to bridge the differences of faith between Churches. Most of his higher studies were in this direction. He presented treatises on Ecumenism at four assemblies of World Council of Churches. These assemblies are Ivanstone (USA) 1954, New Delhi 1961, Upsaala (Sweden) 1968 and Nairobi (Kenya) 1976.

Faith and Order

He served for 23 long years (1961-1984) in Faith and Order, the theological fellowship of various Churches which includes the Roman Catholic Church. He presented knowledgeable papers at all the seven assemblies of this fellowship which took place during this period.

He gave active leadership to the dialogues between Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches and also to 'Pro Oriento', the fellowship between Oriental Orthodox Churches and the Roman Catholic Church.

While giving leadership to international fellowships, he did not discard the ecumenical movements in India. He gave active leadership to Kerala Council of Churches (KCC) as well as National Council of Churches (NCC).

Pause and Reflect

1. Discuss your response to the question ‘Is this an Indian Church?’ raised by Fr. V. C. Samuel.
2. Expand the following
CISRS.....
FFRRC
KCC.....
NCC.....

Activities in the Church

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

Writer, Scholar, Orator

He was not an orator at religious conventions. His speeches were scholarly ones. He has written several books and articles. His book on Vattasseril Metropolitan titled ‘Truth Triumphs’ was a book with a difference. His autobiography titled ‘On the stage of Own Experiences’ is a sketch of a truthful life.

He was a true philanthropist. His love had no boundaries of religion, caste, denomination or nationality. His book ‘Who is Jesus Christ?’ is a peerless work in Christology and is published by CLS, Thiruvalla. He has also authored books included in the curriculum of ‘Divyabodhanam!’ (Lay Spiritual Education) of Malankara Church.

He spent his last days in Bangalore. He left for the heavenly abode on 18 November 1998 at the age of 86. Children of Malankara Church should study him in detail. This chapter should serve as an introduction to him.

Activities

List the works of Fr. V. C. Samuel

Let us Pray

*O Lord Jesus Christ... Help us to stand for True Faith like Fr. V. C. Samuel
Strengthen us to transform us into an Indian Church. Let everything be for
Your glory and according to Your will. Amen.*

Unit 8

Good Habits

Chapter 28

Righteous Utilization of Wealth

Learning Objectives: Let us understand the need to utilize wealth righteously. Let us understand the various ways in which wealth can be utilized righteously and follow those paths in life.

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

Learning Aids: The Holy Bible, Book of Common Prayer

Introduction

Today man considers wealth more important than anything else. We live in a society which believes and propagates that wealth in all. In this chapter let us understand what the Holy Bible says about earning, keeping and spending money.

Reading Passage

Man needs wealth to meet his needs. Earning, keeping or spending money is not a sinful act. But we must examine whether the means of earning money is rightful. Loving and adoring wealth is wrong. We should always think that wealth is God-given. We should reflect on why our wealth is entrusted with us by God.

We have several forms of wealth around us. House, Vehicle, landed property, domestic animals, various types of stores and business houses, factories, bank deposits,

share investments, gold, money etc. are various forms of wealth people own. Today wealth decides what we eat, what we drink and even what we breath in.

Many people think that wealth in the basis for defining relationships, forming friendships and deciding social status. Let us understand the various aspects of utilizing wealth.

1. Acquisition of wealth

Wealth is God-given. Wealth is the reward given by God when we work according to God's will. God is always pleased with acquiring wealth according to His will. Jesus Christ calls such people "Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little" (St. Luke 19:17). This verse was pronounced by Jesus Christ while lauding the servant who gained profit using the talents given to him.

Earlier the important sources of income included; agriculture, trade, employment in government and private institutions, employment in factories etc. Now a day people are more focused on amassing wealth rather than earning it as a means of livelihood. With this goal in mind people resort to usury, bribes, corruption, trafficking, black market, black money and profit hikes.

When people try to amass wealth illegally, the number of criminals who engage in theft, robbery, murder and looting will increase in the society.

Shall we reflect for a moment? Christians often sing the song

"I have nothing else to count as my wealth Jesus is my only wealth."

Can we confess that Jesus is our only wealth?

2. How should we spend our wealth?

We should be righteous not only in acquiring wealth but also in spending it. In India, 75% of the wealth of the country is handled by 25% of its population.

Today wealthy people try to display their affluence before the society. Luxury cars ply or roads. Some people use vehicles as large as a bus for personal travel. Yet others build palatial mansions for their nuclear family. Birthdays, baptism, marriage and even funerals have become occasions to display wealth. These are all evident examples of squandering money.

Not only individuals but also institutions, Churches, religious institutions and parishes don't refrain from this kind of display of wealth. Spending money on things which don't have a spiritual basis, during Church feasts and festivals, is also a squander of money.

Pause and Reflect

1. What are the different forms of wealth?
2. What does Jesus call those who earn wealth according to His will?
3. What is the message given by the hymn “I have nothing else to count as my wealth?”

3. Wealth given by God is for all people

The wealth for the world, including that which we enjoy personally and squander upon our personal needs, is the common inheritance of the entire mankind. The wealth given to us by God is also meant to be given to the needy. If our neighbours lead a life of squalor when we live in affluence, we will have to answer it before God.

Jesus tells the wealthy young man who wants to enter the kingdom of heaven: “Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow me” (St. Luke 18:22).

The Holy Bible teaches us that we should keep ten percent of our wealth to help the needy. Similarly we should delimit our luxuries in life.

4. The influence of the society

Today we are living in a consumerist society. We should not fall into the influence of advertisements and should not become slaves of consumerism. We shouldn't spend money unnecessarily.

There are some people who even borrow money to imitate the rich and to show their snobbery. We see several people who become alcoholics under the influence of others. Alcoholism leads not only to poverty and ignominy but even to health hazards and suicide.

Many children spend a lot of money in buying readymade junk food which contains a lot of chemical substances as preservatives. Such food has no nutrient value and is harmful to health.

5. Need we earn for future?

In the Holy Bible, we read Jesus Christ telling the wealthy man who filled his granary with crops “Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?” (St. Luke 12:20).

Emperor Alexander the Great who conquered most parts of the world, proved that he do not take any wealth with him in death. We cannot store money as our wealth. Money is meant to be exchanged. Only then it will become wealth. Jesus Christ has told us that the talent buried in soil is not wealth. Those who received five and two talents should increase them as ten and four talents respectively and should give them back to God. Then it will become wealth. We should not amass or bury the money we get. Instead we should invest and increase it and utilize it for social good.

Many families amass wealth needed for their succeeding generations to live as well. This tendency is ingrained in our social system. Even though some amount of earnings are beneficial for our oldage, we should not devote our entire life to acquisition of wealth.

Pause and Reflect

1. How can we utilize wealth properly?
2. How is wealth useful to man?
3. “Wealth is a good servant but a bad master.” Explain this proverb.

As a student, what can you do about the issue of wealth? We should take some decisions now itself. Let us see how

- i. We are in a period of growth. We are in a state of transformation from a child to a socially responsible individual. Try to assess whether the money earned, stored and spent in your house is done righteously.
- ii. You should spend your pocket money meaningfully. You shouldn't squander it. Instead, you should make sure that the money you spent should be beneficial to others also.
- iii. Remind the members of your family to spent ten percent of their income on charity. Pledge to keep ten percent of your income for charity when you start earning on your own (Read Malacci 3:8).
- iv. Don't try to make wealth through unjust ways. Don't discriminate people on the basis of their wealth. Firmly believe that all are equal before God.
- v. Instead of looking upon money alone as wealth, we should consider all talents given by God as wealth and should try to develop those talents.

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

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

Let us think

1. Explain the various aspects of spending our wealth.
2. “Wealth is the reward given by God.” Substantiate.
3. What are the various instances of squandering of money we see in the society. What is your opinion about those squanderings?
4. What are the benefits of leading a simple life?
5. How can we develop the talents given to us by God and convert them as our wealth?
6. As a student, what can you do to ensure the righteous utilization of money?

Activities

1. Find out biblical verses on greed for money and earning money through unjust ways.
2. Conduct a discussion on ‘Righteous utilization of money.’

Hymn

(Sambannanam...)

Richest wealth – earnings given by
God alone gives us happiness

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

(Richest wealth...)

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

(Richest wealth...)

Our Decision

We have understood how we can righteously spend our wealth.

We would implement these principles in life.

We would eschew squandering of wealth and luxuries of life.

We would set a part our ten percent and utilize it for charity.

We would wish only for the wealth given by God.

Let us pray

O God help us to rely on your blessings and lead a life without relying on our material wealth. Lead us to the understanding that all the good gifts enjoyed by us are out of your mercy and enable us to share them with others.

Further Reading

Read and meditate on the biblical passages scheduled for this week.

Chapter 29

The Significance of Counselling

Learning objectives: Let us understand the significance of counseling. When we encounter mental and emotional problems we should make use of good counseling. We should not seek shortcuts and remedies that destroy our lives. Similarly we should be able to advice others to seek the help of counseling when they face similar issues.

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

Learning Aids

1. Books included in the curriculum of ‘Divyabodhanam’ like ‘In the path of life’ and ‘Mind and Life’ by Fr. Dr. O. Thomas.
2. The Holy Bible, Book of Common Prayer.

Introduction

All people face mental and emotional problems. Good counseling will help us to overcome these problems. Do we need counseling? We should understand who we should approach for counseling. Let us learn about counseling in detail.

Reading Passage

An introduction to counseling

Do we have the word counselor in the Holy Bible? We do not come across that word in the Malayalam bible. But in the English bible we see the word counselor on various occasions. Words like Prelate and counselor are often found in the description of the Holy Spirit. A believer requires God’s answers beyond human intellect. We should not always insist that God reveal. His answers directly to us. The Holy Spirit

will reside in the hearts of believers and will reveal things beyond human intellect to us. God makes use of man as a means to reveal his answers.

In olden days the elders in the family, priests and teachers functioned as good counselors in the society. They had the ability to impart good advice to lead the young generation in the right path. These advice contained spiritual truths. The Proverbs of Solomon, the wise are spiritual instructions on how to lead a good life. As the branch of knowledge called psychology developed, the techniques of psychology were also employed to find remedies. Modern counseling has developed out of this. Counseling which excludes God and spirituality is not good for the community of believers. Believers should give importance to a counseling which includes both spirituality and psychological principles.

Pause and Reflect

1. Do we have the word 'counseling' in the Holy Bible? In what sense do we use the term in the Holy Bible?
2. What were the earlier forms of counseling? Who functioned as counselors in olden days?

What is counseling?

In olden days parents, teachers and priests etc. used to give advice to those who faced mental and emotional problems. But his method won't work with those who are not inclined to accept advice. Today this method has undergone some changes. Even those who have mental emotional and spiritual problems haven't lost their capacity to take decisions on their own. Besides, those who take their own decisions will feel the drive to implement them. Many people don't like decisions being imposed on them. All people don't have the ability to assess their problems realistically. Hence modern counseling conjoins two things – the ability of the counselor to evaluate the problems as well as the ability of the individuals to take responsible decisions on their own. Modern counseling is founded on these two aspects. This process can be compared to looking into a mirror. We can't look at our own face directly. But when we look into a mirror, we can see our face and find out how it looks like. We can rectify the faults of our face from the images we see. We can define counseling using this analogy. Counseling is the act of sharing our mind with those who know how to analyze various aspects of our mind. This would provide us with insights in order to take our own decisions to solve our problems. A psychologist named Seeward Hilkner defines counseling as "Helping

others to help themselves.” If people who analyze the mind have spiritual insight as well, their counseling will be more beneficial to believers.

Pause and Reflect

1. What are the draw backs of the old counseling method of giving advices?
2. How does counseling promote the ability of individuals to take their own decisions?
3. What are the features of modern counseling?
4. Define counseling.

Who all need counseling?

Some people have the mistaken notion that counseling is meant for people suffering from mental diseases. People with psychotic disorders require medication. Counseling might be beneficial to them along with their medicines. But this does not mean that counseling is solely meant for mental patients. Are there people who haven't encountered difficulties and problems in life? Similarly stress has become a common feature of modern times. Our difficulties will increase if we suppress these tensions in our mind. If we can share our difficulties with others, we would definitely feel relieved. This is also a form of counseling. If we can find a good counselor when we go through a lot of mental stress, we will be able to prevent our mind from becoming much disturbed.

There is a lot of stress involved even in the natural development of an individual. When a mother goes to work leaving behind her infant child at home, both the mother and the child suffer mental stress. When children go to school they are stressful in adapting to the school environment. Examinations create stress in students. When we grow into adolescence and youth, we encounter a lot of stressful situations. Immature love relationships, bad habits acquired from peer influence, inclination towards alcohol, drugs and pornography etc. are some of them. The estranged relationship between husband and wife within the family is another stressful situation. If the parents are estranged their children will experience a lot of stress. Old people become stressful when they are neglected by their children. Mental stress caused by financial difficulties, debt and disease is also very deep. Certain mental stress leads some people to suicide. Thus we can see a lot of situations involving mental and emotional stress in social life. Mental stress of wives and children caused by alcoholic men is also on the rise in society. Psychology centred counseling alone is not sufficient to encounter all these. Several stressful situations

are caused by the increase of evil in man. Hence knowledge given by psychology alone is not sufficient. We also need spiritual thoughts and insights to make us men of God. Hence today we need a counseling which integrates both technical and spiritual knowledge. We need to provide counseling facilities in every Sunday School to help students suffering from mental stress, deviant behavior and emotional immaturity.

Let us think

1. What is the relevance of counseling in today's world?
2. Is counseling meant for mental patients? When all do we require counseling?
3. Who all need counseling? Who should we approach for counseling?

Activities

1. Is counseling based only on psychological techniques acceptable to us? How can we connect counseling with spirituality? Discuss.
2. Think of providing counseling facilities in Sunday School. Share your suggestions with the headmaster and the teachers.

The relevance of counseling

Even though counseling is an English word, we use the same word in Malayalam language as well. The personal advice given to mentally stressed people and the interview attended by students seeking admission to professional courses are alike designated counseling. Hence this word has different meanings according to the situation. Here we are referring to the counseling extended to people who feel stress.

Counseling is not for mental patients

Several people have the mistaken notion that counseling is for mental patients. Mental patients might require counseling along with medication. However counseling is often provided to find remedies to difficulties and problems in normal life. If such interventions are not provided in time, some people are likely to fall into psychological diseases. Mental tensions are an invariable feature of life. The remedies we are familiar with might not be sufficient for us in certain situations. In those situations, a trained counselor's help will become useful. Hence it is advisable to seek a counselor's help in any situation in which we feel we can't find solutions on our own. No one will be branded as a mental patient by seeking a counselor's help.

What is counseling?

We shall understand what counseling is by using the analogy of a mirror. We all use mirrors because none of us can directly look at our face. When we look at the mirror we can see our face clearly. We can't change our face into another one by looking at a mirror. But the mirror reveals the defects of our face to us and tells us what we should do to make it more beautiful. The mirror in itself doesn't do anything to beautify. But when an individual acts according to the self consciousness he has gained from looking at the mirror, his face can be made more beautiful. The same process takes place in counseling also. Here the counselor functions as the mirror of our mind. Our thoughts and emotions include both healthy ones and unhealthy ones. A counselor will point out the mental disposition which an individual cannot see on his own. If we change our attitudes accordingly, we can overcome several mental conflicts. For example a young man who doesn't have friends and who doesn't like to form friendships goes for counseling. The counseling revealed that the young man withdraw from friendships because he had a lot of inferiority complex about his physical beauty. From counseling the young man understood that he should develop the attitude of recognizing his own physical appearance in order to escape from his withdrawal tendency. Counseling thus helps people to identify their problems. Counseling can be defined as the process of realistically analyzing issues which trouble us and finding solutions to them on our own.

Early forms of counseling

In all cultures we find wise men, parents, teachers, priests, ascetics and celibate elders giving advice to those who approached them with problems. Young people in those days used to listen to the advice of these wise old men who had good spiritual quality and mature perspective on life. In joint families the younger generation would listen to the censures of the elders and greatly benefitted from them. But this situation changed with times. People started doubting whether the elders are spiritually mature enough to impart advices. The young generation refused to give authority to their advice as in olden days. Hence the concept that giving advice is detrimental to personality development and so individuals should be allowed to take decisions on their own became prominent. Moreover philosophical principles of the west centred on the individual, led to the thought that we should not interfere in the lives of others. Thus counseling became an intervention which doesn't interfere with the freedom of the individual. Besides it was decided that instead of giving advice, the individual should be helped to take decision on his own. In one sense we need not try to look upon it as a new system being introduced. Instead we should see it as a

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

Who needs counseling?

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

Who should we approach for counseling?

Believers should be discriminatory in choosing, their counselor. Secular counseling based only on psychological principles might not be suitable for a believer. Such counseling doesn't give much importance to God reliance and spiritual experience. Since man is ultimately a creation of God, he should try to assess the problems of life and find solutions in his relationship with God. He can make use of insights provided by psychology along with his God reliance. Hence it would be better for believers to approach a pastoral counselor who has received his training in both psychology and theology. We should seek counseling for solving problems at their beginning stage, without which these problems would grow into a big crisis for us.

Activities

1. Write an essay on the relevance of counseling in life.
2. Think of a problem that worries you. Try to find a solution to the problem in the light of what you have learned in this chapter.
3. Submit your problems to God and pray for solutions.

Let us pray

O merciful God! We pray to You looking into the ocean of your tender mercy. We submit all those who suffer from distress and sorrow before You and pray for their sake. O Lord Jesus, Great Doctor, send Your Holy Spirit and heal them.

O Jesus Christ! Don't abandon us or them in sins. Save us and heal us. Amen.

Further Reading

Read and meditate on the biblical passage scheduled for this week.

Chapter 30

God calls us

Learning objectives: We are students today. After our studies, we would take up a job and its responsibilities. There are several jobs open before us. God would delegate us to take up a particular job. Hence we should prayerfully hear the call of God and choose our vocation in life.

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

Learning Aids: A picture of burning bush of Moses pictures of H. G. Pathrose Mar Osthathios and H. G. Dr. Geevarghese Mar Osthathios.

Introduction

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

Reading Passage

We are servants of the kingdom of God. Wherever we are and whatever we do, we work for God. God has given us life to spend it on God. We can thank God and make our lives meaningful only in this manner. If we act according to our will and our selfishness it will be impossible for God’s will to be done in us. Therefore whatever be the path of life we choose, we should use it for God and the glory of God.

Can you say the endowments given to us by God? We are provided with health, intellect, wealth, opportunities, friends, beautiful landscape etc. We have a few needs

to lead a good life. They are food, clothing, shelter, love recognition, ability to work etc. If we analyze everything at close quarters, we would realize that we lack nothing. The goal of our life and the secret of success in life is submitting gladly to God all what He has endowed us with we should serve God throughout the span of our life.

Another truth too is revealed here. God serves and provides for us in every moment of our lives. Even our life breath is in God's hands. If God forsakes us for a moment, we cannot even exist thereafter. Don't we have the duty to serve God thankfully, since He leads us forward in life? We submit ourselves to God through such service. We serve God by serving man, animals and nature. God has sustained this world on the principle of mutual service. In fact God has called us for the responsibility of such service.

People who heard God's call

Though God called Moses directly, the latter was at first hesitant to respond. But later he became the Lord and prophet of God and the leader of the people.

Abraham was called to become the Father of a vast nation. Abraham accepted this call with humility and lived faithfully. Humility and lived faithfully. Humility and obedience made him a great man. The right response to God's call involves not only listening to God's commandments but also acting according to his instructions.

Samuel who was a child was called by God from sleep in the dead of the night. God then revealed the good and evil of the contemporary society to him and made him the judge of Israel.

The Apostles, who were the disciples of Lord Jesus Christ, accepted the call of their master. They gave up all of their master. They gave up all matters of the material world and freely followed Lord Jesus Christ. They were made the Lords and judges of the entire world.

Thus we can see that God delegates to great responsibilities, all those who have accepted His call with humility and earnestness. St. Mary was called by God through Archangel Gabriel. Thereafter St. Mary was elevated to the highest position of Mother of God. The incident of God calling St. Paul is dramatic. That 'selected vessel' became the greatest benefactor and leader of the Christian Church.

We have hundreds of such great models before our eyes. God has certain specific goals, whatever be the path to which he calls us. All people were not called with the same goal. Some were called to become apostles. Others were called as prophets. Yet others got the calling to become martyrs. The call for Fr. Damien was to go to Molocoi Island in Africa, nurse the lepers there and die of leprosy. Jesus called Mother Teresa to take care of the destitute and the dying Ida Schader who started CMC, Vellore

had the conviction that God had sent her to serve the villagers and poor people of India who might die without proper medical care.

These examples reveal one principle to us. When those people called by God accept the call and work with humility, it is God who works in them and through them. God will not then forsake us and leave us alone in the hour of need. God will then be our companion in joys and sorrows alike. God suffers along with us in our tribulations. God selects some of those He calls for specific tasks. It is often said that “Those who are called are numerous, but those who are chosen are quite few.”

Points to be taken care of while responding to God’s calling

If we neglect God’s call, it would be gross thanklessness to God and the Church. God calls His people, according to the needs of the hour.

The Church needs committed and ideal priests to serve it. Priests, ascetics and missionaries can provide awakening to the Church.

Jesus Christ calls us to take His gospels and love to the cities and villages of India. Majority of the Indian population lives in villages. Most of them are ignorant about Jesus Christ. Hence Jesus Christ calls us too, to work in the villages replete with poverty, disease lack of educational facilities, superstition and exploitation. We can do gospel work and works of charity whatever be the jobs in which we are placed. We would feel proud when we learn that it was British government employee who spread Christianity in Nepal. Haven’t we heard the hymn? “For God’s service... From childhood days...” This hymn is recited on the day of feast of St. Gregorios of Parumala. St. Gregorios of Parumala was a saint who eschewed the luxuries of the material world and lived for purity of life and glory of God. He lived according to God’s calling and worked for the upliftment of the society around him. He founded educational institutions and worked to enlighten a number of people. Similarly the work for H. G. Pathrose Mar Osthathios who confessed Christ in homes of the depressed classes in order to uplift them also inspires us.

We need a pool of ascetics who eschew world and worldliness and dedicate their life for prayer, and missionary work. An ideal ascetic is one who abandons himself completely in the service of God. Such ascetic men and women would be the strength and source of energy of the Church. St. Antony became an ascetic taking the biblical verse “What benefit if one earns the whole world but loses his soul?” as God’s calling for him.

We should identify ‘God’s calling’ for us. God’s calling can be identified from reading of the Holy Bible, listening to homilies, advice of others, inspiration of spiritual guides etc. God calls us too, just as he calls others. What is the use of amassing some money and living without helping others? Let us lives be of use to both God and man. We should die only after illuminating our surroundings like a candle. God works

wanders with those who are ready to take risks for the sake of God. Let us join with fold of those who respond to God's calling. It is God who gives us the reward. Let the example of St. Paul who submitted his life to Jesus Christ be a role model to us.

Let us think

1. We are the children of the kingdom of God. Who should we work for?
2. What has God provided us with?
3. How can we submit our lives to God?
4. In what manner has God sustained this world?
5. The mission work of H. G. Pathrose Mar Osthathios.
6. The biblical verse which St. Antony, the father of monasticism.

Activities

1. Prepare a list of Old Testament Fathers who obeyed God's commandments.
2. Read the biblical incident of God calling His disciples and conduct a discussion in the class.
3. Prepare a list of institutions founded by Dr. Gheevarghese Mar Osthathios. Who was the pioneering Father of missionary work in Malankara Church.

Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ... You have taught us about several people who heard and responded to Your call kindly show us the calling for us. Help us to work only according to Your call and take up Christian duties accordingly. Amen.

Hymn

(Balyathil thanne...)

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

Supplementary Reader
St. Gheevarghese Mar Dionysius
(Vattasseril Metropolitan)

The Sun of Malankara Church
(Malankara Sabha Bhasuran)

Introduction

We commemorate several saints of the Church since the period of the early Church and seek refuge in their intercession. We have included only two Church Fathers from Malankara in that list of saints. St. Gregorios of Parumala, and St. Dionysius of Vattasseril. People of different faiths and religions come to the tomb of St. Gregorios of Parumala and seek intercession. If we consider this popularity as the criteria of saint hood, we might feel confused regarding the saint hood of St. Dionysius of Vattasseril. No one should feel doubtful about his saintliness. We should not compare the saintliness of different people. The twelve disciples selected by Lord Jesus Christ had different levels. God makes use of different people in different ways. St. Dionysius of Vattasseril was God's instrument. We need to examine in detail why he was declared a saint of the Church. This brief biographical sketch of the metropolitan is included as the Supplementary Reader of Class X in order to lead us into a detailed analysis of the saint's life. You have already studied the biography of St. Gregorios of Parumala.

Chapter 1

A biographical sketch

Gheevarghese was born as the fifth son of Joseph and Eliyamma of Vattasseril house, Mallappally on October 31, 1858. One of his brothers too was a priest. He completed his primary education from CMS School Mallappally and high school education from CMS High School Kottayam. During that period, Western missionaries

were working in the field of education. He was ordained a deacon during his high school days. He was ordained by Patriarch Peter III of Antioch who had come to Malankara to convene the Synod of Mulanthuruthy. The ordination took place on October 12, 1876 at Puthuppally Church. During this time Malankara Church had intimate relationship with the Church of Antioch.

After the ordination, he studied at Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam for four years. He became intimate with St. Gregorios of Parumala during this period and acquired good scholarship in Syriac language. H. G. Paulose Mar Ivanios who resided at Vettickal Dayara during this period taught him theology and Syriac. He was ordained Full Deacon on October 16, 1879 and priest on January 18, 1880. St. Gregorios of Parumala ordained him priest and appointed him manager of the Parumala Seminary. He worked there as the manager for a long period. In 1895 he accompanied St. Gregorios of Parumala in the journey to Jerusalem. In those days very few people had in depth knowledge in Syriac, Creed of the Church, Canon, Church history, Teachings of Church Fathers etc. Fr. Geevarghese had deep knowledge in these fields and he was designated 'Malpan of Malankara' in honour of his scholarship. He was also appointed the 'Malpan' or the principal of Orthodox Theological Seminary Kottayam. Rev. Fr. Mathen of Konattu was his colleague in the seminary. Both of them jointly prepared 'Books of Prayer' for the Church. This will be discussed in detail in the subsequent chapters.

Principal of M. D. School

During this period, the then Malankara Metropolitan Pulikkottil II or Mar Dionysius V established several schools in Malankara. One such school was the MD Seminary School Kottayam and Fr. Gheevarghese Malpan was appointed as its principal. He worked both at Orthodox Theological Seminary and MD School simultaneously and performed his duties at the MD School for 8 years. St. Gregorios of Parumala passed away on November 2, 1902. Rev. Gheevarghese Malpan was professed Ramban on the first death anniversary of St. Gregorios of Parumala. The help and support of Ramban Gheevarghese was a great aid to the then Malankara Metropolitan, Mar Dionysius V. He desired that the Ramban should be consecrated a Metropolitan during his life time and should become his successor. God led the Church in this direction. The Syrian Christian Association which met at Orthodox Theological Seminary on February 14, 1908 decided to get him consecrated as Metropolitan. In those days Episcopal designates used to go to Syria to get consecrated as Metropolitan. Accordingly Gheevarghese Malpan reached Jerusalem in May 1908 and was consecrated Metropolitan on May 31st by Patriarch Abdulla. However he was not given the Sthathikon (Letter of Authority) usually given to Metropolitans on consecration. This was because Gheevarghese Mar Dionysius was unwilling to

comply with Patriarch Abdulla's demand that the latter had temporal authority over Malankara Church. Mar Dionysius returned to Malankara Joseph Mar Dionysius V of Pulikkottil, the then Malankara Metropolitan gladly abdicated his throne and head quarters to the new Metropolitan and changed his residence to Kottayam Cheriapalli. When Mar Dionysius of Pulikkottil passed away on 12 July 1912, Mar Dionysius of Vattasseril became the sole Malankara Metropolitan and started residing in Orthodox Theological Seminary Kottayam.

Subsequently several events like the prohibition issued by Patriarch Abdulla, the founding of the Catholicate in 1912, the consecration of the second and the third Catholicoses (this will be described in detail in the subsequent chapters), the renunciation of faith by his favourite disciple Mar Ivanios etc. made his life turbulent. However by virtue of his steadfast God-reliance, pure devotion and sharp intelligence he overcame everything successfully. He prepared the draft of the constitution of the Church. He passed away on February 23, 1934 and was interred in the tomb at the Orthodox Theological Seminary Chapel. Considering his self-effacing struggles for the Church and his Sainly life, the Church proclaimed him Saint on February 24, 2003. He is commemorated on February 22 and 23 every year and his memory is observed in Orthodox Theological Seminary and various Churches on these days.

Chapter 2

The Historical Background of his life

If we want to understand the contributions of St. Dionysius of Vattasseril, we should also understand the peculiarities of the age in which he lived and worked. Even though changes have happened in all ages, when we reflect upon history we can see that certain events are more important than others. The relationship of Malankara Church with the Anglican Church, which began in the first half of the 19th Century, evolved through different phases. When the foreign missionaries tried for Reformation of faith, Malankara Church severed its relationship with them through Mavelikkara Padiyola (Decisions) of 1836. However a group of people in the Malankara Church developed affinity towards Reformation. They wanted gain domination in the Malankara Church and sent a person to Antioch to be consecrated Metropolitan. Thus Mathews Mar Athanasius Metropolitan of Palakunnathu got himself consecrated in Antioch and returned to Malankara. This led to our relationship with the Church of Antioch. This incident happened in 1842. Malankara Church too followed this example under the impression that if we get our metropolitans consecrated by the Patriarch of Antioch, it would give us more legitimacy. Pulikkottil Metropolitan (Mar Dionysius V) also received his consecration from the Patriarch of

Antioch in 1865. This caused the establishment of Patriarchal authority over the Malankara Church. The most visible result of this relationship was the Synod of Mulanthuruthy of 1876. Patriarch Peter III of Antioch not only came over to Malankara and convened the Synod, but also divided the Malankara Church into seven dioceses in order to weaken the sole authority of the Malankara Metropolitan. Moreover he also obtained a covenant of allegiance from the metropolitans he consecrated. As a result of the Royal court Verdict of 1889, the court cases with the Reformists came to an end. The Reformists broke away from the Church forming a new Church called the Marthoma Church. Thereafter the issue of the supremacy of the Antiochan Church originated. Even though the Royal Court Verdict clearly stated that the Patriarchs of Antioch had no material power over the Malankara Church, Patriarchs from time to time tried to impose their claim over the material possessions of the Malankara Church. Since a faction of the Malankara Church is and has always been ready to support them, we cannot successfully check such claims over Malankara Church. Thus two factions originated in the Malankara Church – The supporters of the Patriarch (Bava kakshi) and the supporters of Malankara Metropolitan (Metran kakshi). Even though the supporters of Malankara Metropolitan are more in number, the supporters of the Patriarch are strong in certain pockets.

The Prohibition Order of the Patriarch Abdulla

This factional tussle in the Malankara Church became an open feud with the Patriarch during the time of Mar Dionysius of Vattasseril. We read in the last chapter that Mar Dionysius Vattasseril went to Jerusalem to get consecrated as Metropolitan. Even though Patriarch Abdulla asked him to submit a covenant of allegiance, Mar Dionysius refused to do so. Hence Patriarch Abdulla did not give him Sthathikon (Letter of Authority) placing the Malankara Church under his authority. The only Sthathikon issued was that he was consecrated a Metropolitan and it did not indicate any authority vested with him. The Patriarch also came to Malankara before long. Both the Patriarch and the Malankara Metropolitan lived in adjacent rooms in the Orthodox Theological Seminary Kottayam.

Another agonizing incident

The trustees of the Malankara Church were expected to take sides with the Malankara Metropolitan when the latter had differences of opinion with the Patriarch of Antioch. Unfortunately this did not happen. Mathan Malpan of Konattu who was the Clergy Trustee and C. J. Kurian who was the lay-Trustee supported the Patriarch. This was extremely agonizing for St. Dionysius of Vattasseril. Moreover the other Metropolitans who were consecrated by the Patriarch also signed the

covenant of allegiance to him. Thus mar Dionysius of Vattasseril was alone in his fight. However he was not ready to surrender the authority of Malankara Metropolitan over the material possessions of the Malankara Church, granted through the Royal Court Verdict. The patriarch who became angry at this state of affairs prohibited Mar Dionysius of Vattasseril on 27 July, 1911. This prohibition was later observed by various court verdicts as 'denial of even natural justice' because not even an explanation was sought prior to this prohibition.

The canonical laws of the Church and moral justice did not support this prohibition. God's intervention in this issue came through the real Patriarch of Antioch, who had lost his power because of political reasons. Patriarch Abdel Messiah removed the prohibition of Mar Dionysius of Vattasseril within two months, precisely on 17 August 1911. Thus the metropolitan was relieved of his prohibition which was against the canons, moral laws and natural justice. One cannot imagine the agonies he had suffered during this period. Even though the trustees for sook the metropolitan, the managing committee of the Malankara Church which met after the prohibition, gave strong support to him.

The order of Prohibition issued to Mar Dionysius of Vattasseril was an unprecedented, unique incident in the history of the Malankara Church. However he encountered this crisis with God-reliance. He ultimately became victorious in the court cases on the issue. "One will have to bear the cross in order to stand for truth. Yet one should remain steadfast in truth." This precept of Mar Dionysius became his practice. What we should uphold is that Mar Dionysius suffered all his agonies for the sake of the Church.

Chapter 3

The founding of the Catholicate

The founding of the Catholicate was the greatest of the contributions made by St. Dionysius of Vattasseril. The Early Church did not have positions like Patriarch, Catholicos or Pope. They were formed as the Christian Church grew up in the subsequent centuries. When the Great Council of Nicea was convened in AD 325, there were certain Church heads bearing these names. There were Patriarchs in Rome, Constantinople Antioch Alexandria and later in Jerusalem within the Roman Empire. Outside the Roman Empire, there was a Catholicos of the East in the Persian Empire. There are also historians who disagree with these opinions. Similarly some argue that there were two Catholicates in the Persian Empire, outside the Roman Empire – One an independent Catholicate and the other a Maphrianate under the Patriarch

of Antioch. Some argue that that since our Catholicate was founded by the Patriarch of Antioch, it was actually a transplantation of the Maphrianate to Malankara. Let us learn about it in detail later. Now let us think about the importance of the Catholicate founded under the initiative of St. Dionysius of Vattasseril...

What was the basis for the founding of the Catholicate?

The Oriental Churches require a prelate like the Catholicos, to execute certain functions of the Church. Such major functions include consecration of bishops and consecration of the Holy Chrism for Baptism. Malankara Church had depended on heads of Foreign Churches to execute these functions. We had intimate relationship with the Persian Church. This is evident from the fact that our forefathers followed the East Syrian liturgy. After the invasion of Islam religion, the Persian Church was destroyed and our ties with that Church was broken. Ever since the Reformits of the Malankara Church approached the Patriarch of Antioch for consecration of a bishop in 1842, we established relationship with the Church of Antioch. The Patriarchs of Antioch were not satisfied with spiritual authority alone and wanted authority over the material wealth of the Church. Mar Dionysius of Vattasseril did not submit to his demand and hence, as we learned in the previous chapter, was prohibited. This led to the thinking that we should have a Prelate of our own for Malankara Church in order to solve the problems created by our dependency on foreign Prelates. St. Dionysius of Vattasseril made incessant efforts to develop and fulfil this thinking in Malankara.

Orthodox churches don't have a global head like the Pope of the Catholic Church. Orthodox Churches are independent in various countries and they have independent leadership. Mar Dionysius desired to create a similar administrative system in Malankara too. It was perhaps due to our relationship with the Persian Church that we desired to create a Prelate with the title 'Catholicos.' Even though efforts in this direction had been taken by several predecessors they were not successful. In one sense, the prohibition issued on Mar Dionysius was the immediate cause of founding the Catholicate. It was like a curse becoming a boon in reality. Even though the Prohibition on the Metropolitan was not justifiable, it was issued by the same person who consecrated him. Hence if an Ecclesiastical authority of equal rank removes this prohibition, it would alone be canonically unchallengeable in later ages. All these state of affairs led to the thought that there should be an independent Prelate in Malankara.

Inviting Patriarch Abdel Messiah

Patriarch Abdel Messiah had lost his position because of the political conditions in Turkey. His position as Patriarch was not defective as per the laws of the Church. He had lost only his material power. He gladly accepted the invitation of Malankara

Church and arrived here in 1912. Even before that on 17 August 1911, he had issued the order cancelling the Prohibition of Mar Dionysius of Vattasseril.

Patriarch Abdel Messiah who arrived here consecrated Ramban Punnoose as Metropolitan under the name Gheevarghese Mar Gregorios. Gheevarghese Mar Gregorios later become the third Catholicos of Malankara. The Patriarch with the support of Mar Dionysius of Vattasseril and Gheevarghese Mar Gregorios of Kallasseril consecrated Mar Ivanios of Murimattathil as the first Catholicos of Malankara on 12 September 1912. The consecration ceremony took place in Niranam Church. The Catholicos was given the title Baselius. The first Catholicos was named Mar Baselius Paulose I. The Catholicos was issued with a Sthathikon (Order of Authority) to consecrate bishops and consecrate the Holy Chrism. The Malankara Church which had remained independent since the first century thus removed its dependencies that crept in during the course of history and gained a sovereign and independent Catholicate. The advantages gained by the Church due to the founding of the Catholicate are:

1. It needn't have to depend on anyone for consecrating bishops and Holy Chrism thereafter.
2. Malankara Church became an independent Church like any other Orthodox Church.
3. The Children of the Church earned the freedom to elect the supreme Head of the Church.
4. The Church got opportunity to stand along with Indian culture.
5. The Church could foster ecumenical relationships in its status as an independent Church. Malankara Church became a member of the World Council of Churches even before Churches like the Russian Church joined it.
6. Moreover the Catholicate could reiterate the apostolic tradition of St. Thomas.

All these were realized as a result of the foresightedness and self sacrificing work of Mar Dionysius of Vattasseril.

Chapter 4

True Faith and True Worship

The Church has no existence without true worship and true faith. All oriental churches give great importance to both these aspects. The Church is sacred since it is the body of Christ, however because of the short comings of the sinful believers, deviant thinkings and thoughts are likely to creep into the Church. We see such thinkings even in the history of Early Church. When the Church developed through

time, space and various cultures, different perspectives regarding faith developed. We have learned about the Great Councils in the previous classes. St. Paul teaches us that there is only one faith and one baptism (Ephesians 4:4-6). The universal Church has clarified the one faith through the Nicene Creed. Prayers of all canonical hours and sacraments end with the recital of the Nicene Creed. With the change of times, a number of subjects like liturgy, sacraments, intercession to St. Mary and other saints, Prayer for the Departed etc. required a clear perspective based on the Nicene creed. Even though these perspectives evolved in the first centuries themselves, they did not reach a far away land like India. There were several reasons for this. The liturgical language and spoken language of our Church were different. We had relationship with the Persian Church till we established relationship with the Church of Antioch. The language used here for worship was the East Syrian language, intimately connected with Aramaic, the language of Lord Jesus Christ. Even though the dogmas of faith were inbuilt in the liturgy, they were not documented separately to teach the laity. Even Malayalam language had not developed in those days. Hence it is doubtful whether there existed a practice of learning faith by cataloging it. It was a drawback of this ancient Church that it did not have authoritative texts to teach its faith to the laity. Mar Dionysius removed this major drawback through a book authored by him.

‘The Essence of Religious Instructions

Some historians look upon the fight of Mar Dionysius against foreign domination and the founding of the Catholicate to maintain the independence of the Church as his greatest contribution. Since the fight against foreign domination continues even today, this perspective of historians have gained more prominence. But the teachings of Mar Dionysius regarding the faith of our Church are equally important. If our forefathers had a clear idea of our faith, they would not have been attracted towards the Western Catholic and Reformist faiths. Mar Dionysius who had been the Malpan at Orthodox Theological Seminary expounded what he taught his students, in a book titled ‘The Essence of Religious Instruction.’ The preface of the book clearly states that if we do not learn true faith first, we would turn towards the teachings of others and would think that their teachings are true. This book was an effort to prevent such deviations in faith. The book quotes Church Fathers while teaching the true faith of the Church and mentions the names of heretics and provides a synopsis of their heresies. Each topic is treated under the title ‘Essential truth.’ There are 34 ‘essential truths’ altogether and their biblical bases are expounded. Since several books have come out in subsequent periods, some people might not understand the significance of this seminal work. Like God who created the universe from nothingness, St. Dionysius of Vattasseril too

authored. 'The Essence of Religious Instruction' from nothingness. This book gives clear definition and knowledge of the Holy Trinity and sacraments like Baptism, Holy Eucharist, Confession, Holy Chrism, Ordination, Marriage and Anointing of the sick. Moreover it is unparalleled in its instructions regarding the fundamental faiths of the Church like observance of Sundays, the significance of Moronaya festivals, the need for prayer, Fasts and fasting the intercession of Mother of God and saints and prayer for the departed. If we take each of these subjects individually, several books describing them in detail have come out in later ages. The very word 'Orthodoxy' stands for worshipping God in true faith. In that sense Malankara Church was confirmed in Orthodoxy by St. Dionysius of Vattasseril.

True worship

Study of faith is more or less an intellectual exercise. It is true worship that elevates knowledge at the cognitive level, to the level of experience. In other words, what we explain at the intellectual level is the God experience we receive through worship. Orthodox spirituality commingles both knowledge and experience. There is no knowledge without worship and there is no worship without knowledge. Hence the correct principle is that we should worship in the language we know. But there was no facility for this in those days. As mentioned earlier we followed the East Syrian liturgy first and then, after establishing our relationship with Antioch, followed the West Syrian liturgy. Both languages were not the spoken language of the people. Hence two books in that direction were published. Mathan Malpan of Konattu helped Gheevarghese Malpan in this attempt. The most important feast as per the Oriental liturgy is Easter. Hence the Prayer book of 'Kyemta' or Resurrection season was first published. Prayers of seven canonical hours are very important for an Orthodox believer. These seven Canonical Hours are divided into two for the convenience of the believers. It was Gheevarghese Malpan who divided None, Vespers and Compline as Evening worship and Nocturn, Matins, Terce and Sext as morning worship. The prayers of canonical hours stipulated for each day are available today. Similarly we have Holy Cross season and Resurrection season prayer books and prayer books for Moronaya festivals and other feasts. Mar Dionysius of Vattasseril was one of the major forces behind the compilation of these prayer books. A Church cannot exist without faith and worship. Faith and worship are more important than the administrative mechanism in holding the Church together. We can undoubtedly state that it was because of Mar Dionysius of Vattasseril that we enjoy administrative freedom and freedom of worship today.

Chapter 5

Features of his personality

St. Dionysius of Vattasseril had an extraordinary personality. He had several imitable good qualities. Let us discuss some of these good qualities.

A person who minded Being and Doing

Gandhiji's message to the world is often quoted by several people. When asked what was his message to the world, Gandhiji replied that his life was his message. Gandhiji's life was rich enough to make such a statement. Even though Mar Dionysius did not say these words, his life too proceeded in this direction. Several people today suffer from fossilization of personality. This can be avoided only through spirituality. However such progressiveness of personality is not seen even in spirituality today. What a devolution! Some people have sinless personality, but they don't do any significant good to Church or society. They have taintless heart but their actions lack in quality. There are yet another group of people. They are very prompt in actions and may often hit headlines of newspapers. They may even resort to crooked means to steal the limelight. The actions of such people are good but their being or identity is not up to the mark. Several people are unable to keep off from this dichotomy. But the life of Mar Dionysius was an exception to this. He integrated being and doing in himself. The Metropolitan's life was a fulfillment of the Lord's words that "A good tree would bear good fruit."

A life of deep rooted prayer

Mar Dionysius was the ideal disciple of St. Gregorios of Parumala and imitated the latter's life completely. He was enthusiastic about compiling prayers of canonical hours because he used to pray at all these hours. Like St. Gregorios of Parumala, this saint also gave good definitions of prayer. Let us look at one of those definitions. "Prayer is lifting up of one's heart towards God the Creator and communicating with oneself. This is done by realizing one's duty to and the goodness earned from the Creator, by singing His praises and thus earning His liking. Prayer is made in order to earn from the creator things one need for the salvation of the soul and prosperity of the body" (Samuel Chandanappally 'Malankara Church Fathers' Volume 1, Page 268).

The Metropolitan has instructed us that along with public prayers we should also say secret prayers. He overcame all conflicts in life, including numerous court cases, through the strength of prayer.

Sincerity

One danger that might creep into a life of devotion is hypocrisy. Assuming devotion in order to gain popularity, has been a great temptation in all periods of history. This can happen in any ritualistic community.

Such hypocrisy had been a hallmark of Judaism. Jesus Christ condemned Jews for their façade of prayer, charity and fasting. Jesus taught His disciples to give alms pray and observe fasting in secret (St. Matthew 6:1-21). Mar Dionysius who took prayer in secret prayer, hated hypocritic in devotion. There are instances where his opponents in the factional fued of the Church, made attempts on his life. These enemies were frightened and withdrew from their attempt when they saw him genuflecting in secret prayer in his room. He did not hesitate to scold those whom he found to be hypocrites in devotion. He preferred to read his, favourite books 'Imitation of Christ' and 'the Holy Bible', without being seen by others. Gandhiji's intimate friend C. F. Andrews understood the holiness of the Metropolitan and sought special prayers and blessings from him.

Undaunted Courage

Those who rise to leadership will have to face crisis in social life and spiritual life alike. The touchstone of their greatness is how they face this crisis. Mar Dionysius had to face several crises including the prohibition on him. No other metropolitan in Malankara had to face such a measure since he stood firm for the independence of the Church, he had to face incessant threats and numerous court cases from those who opposed him. In the meantime his opponents brutally murdered his bodyguard. In his old age, he had to encounter yet another deeply wounding incident. He had a favourite and brilliant disciple named Fr. P. T. Gheevarghese. Fr. P. T. Gheevarghese had gained much respect because he possessed a post graduate degree and was the founder of 'Bethany' ascetic community. It was perhaps because his intellect had out grown his devotion that he sought a panacea for ending the factional fued in the Malankara Church by joining the Roman Church. He named his movement 'Reunification.' The concept of Reunification was not consistent with theology or Church history. The Syrian Christians of Kerala or those who followed the path of St. Thomas had stood independent till the time Western came here. This historical truth was neglected by him. He was attracted by the material prosperity and institutional organization of the Roman Church to join it. This incident happened in 1930; just four years before the demise of Mar Dionysius. Mar Dionysius never gave consent to this move by his favourite disciple. However Fr. P. T. Gheevarghese forsook his master and joined the Roman Church and became a separate rite. His move could neither bring peace to Malankara Church nor destroy the Church founded

by St. Thomas. The end result was that yet another Church was formed in Malankara which had been shattered by the arrival of westerners. Mar Dionysius could stand like a rock in all these crises because of his God reliance. 'Great men won't tremble even if mountains tumble.' This proverb was fully realized in the life of Mar Dionysius of Vattasseril.

He treated friends and foes alike

Since Mar Dionysius stood steadfast for the independence of the Church and true faith, he earned a lot of friends and foes alike. In those days Metropolitans were quite few. There were only three or four Metropolitans other than Mar Dionysius. There was a group of earned laymen who strongly supported Mar Dionysius. They included K. C. Mammen Mappila, Advocate E. J. John, Raosaheb O. M. Cherian, M. A. Chacko, M. P. Varkey, Journalist Jacob Kurian and A. Philippose. Their support empowered the Metropolitan. At the same time, there were several people who opposed him as well. We have seen that even the trustees of the Church turned against him and the favourite disciple renounced the Church. But Mar Dionysius kept no ill will against them. Some of his speeches are available to us and are recorded by Dr. Samuel Chandanappally in his book 'Church Fathers of Malankara.' Mar Dionysius never referred to his opponents without respect. Even though he stood uncompromisingly firm in his standpoints and justified them oft and on, he never tried to belittle or scoff at those who had difference of opinion. We do not find him speaking a single word even against the Patriarch who prohibited him. He literally obeyed the Lord's command to 'love thy enemies.' His was a unique personality in all senses of the term. He was a true Man of God. As we mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, his life became a Christian witness and message.

Chapter 6

Malankara Sabha Bhasuran (The Sun of Malankara Church)

The Metropolitan was declared a saint on February 24, 2003. Even before this declaration he was given the sobriquet Malankara Sabha Bhasuran (The Sun of Malankara Church). Sun is a star that shines on its own. It provides light and heat to others. Mar Dionysius functioned like a sun by shining on his own and by illuminating others. In ancient India there were kings belonging to the sun dynasty. It is said that kings of this dynasty stood for truth and righteousness. Mar Dionysius also stood in that royal tradition. Just as the planets revolve around the sun, the Church during the times of the Metropolitan revolved fully around him.

The sun of righteousness which dispelled darkness

During the age of Mar Dionysius, Malankara Church was in the grip of darkness. When the Church freed itself slowly from Reformist ideas, it fell into another bondage unknowingly. Since the Reformists had differences in matters of faith, our relationship with them, was maintained with caution. But such a caution was not kept in our relationship with the Church of Antioch. We might have believed that those brethren who followed the same faith, same baptism and communion in the Holy Eucharist would not harm us in any way. That was why 'Mavelikkara Padiyola' (The Decisions of Mavelikkara assembly) of 1836 upheld our relationship with Antioch as the means of protecting True Faith. Mar Dionysius of Cheppad even abdicated his throne for Mar Koorilos who came from Antioch. Christians of Malankara never thought that there would be an invasion from the brethren who held the same faith. The Patriarch of Antioch was considered another Father like 'Our Father who art in Heaven' Mar Dionysius of Pulikkottil who led the Malankara Church after Mar Dionysius of Cheppad was a powerful leader. Yet during his time, the Patriarch of Antioch arrived here, convened the Synod of Mulanthuruthy, divided Malankara Church into seven dioceses and consecrated Metropolitans. Mar Dionysius of Pulikkottil tried his best to prevent total submission to the Patriarch. However it was Mar Dionysius of Vattasseril had to suffer the most cruel face of hegemony. He was forced to suffer punishments including 'prohibition' for not professing his allegiance to the Patriarch. But Mar Dionysius rose to the occasion. He exemplified the proverb 'A violent sea creates an able captain.' The metropolitan had to tread along the path of Moses who led the Israelites to the land of Canon. He was a brave warrior and he remained undaunted throughout his struggle. He places his reliance on the Holy Cross of Lord Jesus Christ. He spoke about the cross thus "The Holy Cross is the preparedness to suffer hardships for the sake of truth and justice." He was ready to suffer any amount of hardship for the sake of truth and justice. The darkness that eclipsed the Church was aggravated by the joining of a faction of Malankara Christians and the Church Trustees, with the Patriarch. Yet another incident was Mar Ivanios forsaking the Church. When the favourite disciple who was an M. A. holder forsook the Church, Mar Dionysius found out another M. A. holder and consecrated him bishop. Mar Philexinos of Puthenkavil thus consecrated was a famous rhetorician. Thus he worked out the Chinese proverb "Instead of blaming darkness when it spreads, we should dispel it by lighting a lamp."

The architect of Church Constitution

Even though the independence of the Church could be established through the founding of the Catholicate, Malankara Church lacked a constitution, which could sustain this Catholicate. Mahatma Gandhi who led the country in its freedom struggle

and Ambedkar who drafted the constitution of the country, merged in Mar Dionysius as far as Malankara Church was concerned. Even though the constitution of our Church came into force after the demise of the Metropolitan, he was chief architect of this constitution. The independence of the Church becomes meaningful only when the laity too get a role in Church administration. Today the laity of the Church enjoy the right to select the Supreme Head of the Church, the Metropolitan and the trustees of the Church. The administration of the Church is carried out by the managing committee and the working committee which also includes representatives of the laity. Each individual parish of the Church enjoys the right to take decisions in all material aspects except in matters of faith, ordination and punishments with the consent of the Metropolitan of the diocese. Even though Church Heads of some other Churches too assumed the name 'Catholicos' in subsequent times, none of them are independent heads. Instead they function under foreign Church Heads. In this sense, there is only one real Catholicos in India - the Catholicos of Malankara Orthodox Church who reigns on the throne of St. Thomas. All this was made possible because God used Mar Dionysius, the Sun of Righteousness, as His instrument. The name 'Malankara Sabha Bhasuran' has become meaningful in all senses.

Let us conclude this supplementary reader quoting the words of H. H. Catholicos Baselius Gheevarghese II, who commemorated Mar Dionysius on the latter's Day of Domise. "Mar Dionysius was a great and impeccable spiritual man. Several people did not know about this aspect of the Metropolitan. He did not have any pretensions of spirituality. I have lived with him ever since my childhood. I haven't seen anything contrary to God's will in his actions. He was a great 'Malpan' (religious teacher) ... His demise was quite peaceful. His face didn't display any expression of agony at the hour of death. The breath went out of him like the pendulum of a clock coming to a standstill. We had been chanting prayers and hymns near his deathbed. When we completed reciting the Nicene Creed at 12 O'clock on Friday, the very hour of crucifixion of Lord Jesus Christ for the salvation of mankind, his soul departed peacefully from this earth... We should identify the holy men of God, the saints, in this manner. Our Church has lost a great saint. He had hitherto been protecting us under his wings. Let us seek comfort in the thought that he would intercede for our sake, since he is sympathetic towards us. The prayers of the righteous have great strength" ('Church Fathers of Malankara' p. 248-50).

Let us praise God since the Sun of Malankara Church is shining in heaven as the Sun of righteousness. Let the intercession of that saint be a fortress for the Church and its believers.

(The tomb of this saint is in Orthodox Theological Seminary, Kottayam. Those students who haven't visited this tomb should seek the help of their teacher and arrange a pilgrimage).