

**ASIAN
HORIZONS**

Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2014

Pages: 318-336

WE ARE ONE IN HEART THOUGH DIFFER BY FAITH

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Abstract

Pope Francis in October 2013, has convened an Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops to be held in Vatican in October 2014, on the theme "The pastoral challenges of the family in the context of evangelisation". The *Instrumentum Laboris* of the above mentioned 3rd Extraordinary General Assembly, under the sub-head "Special Situations" deals with "Disparity of Cult". I think it is timely to reflect on this issue of "Disparity of Cult" in our Indian context where such marriages under disparity of cult are in constant increase in the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church stresses on the importance of Marriage preparation courses as "Remote Preparation", "Immediate Preparation" and as "Post Matrimonial Preparation". But the Post Matrimonial Preparations are not conducted in very many dioceses. Hence it is my earnest desire, through this article, to invite our venerable Bishops and Pastors, to think and to reflect, to work and promote Post Matrimonial Programs for our married couples and very particularly to understand the various issues involved in the life of the families formed out of "Disparity of Cult" and to come up with specific and concrete programs to promote pastoral care towards such families.

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Introduction

God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them (Gen 1:27). God is the author of the human family and contemporary families have to learn to turn back to the original plan of God. John Paul II in *Familiaris Consortio* (17) notes: "Accordingly, the family must go back to the "beginning" of God's creative act, if it is to attain self-knowledge and self-realization in accordance with the inner truth not only of what it is but also of what it does in history."¹

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC, 2203) states: "In creating man and woman, God instituted the human family and endowed it with its fundamental constitution."² Almost all major religions of the world believe that God is the Creator of the world and of humanity. The family constitutes the primary unit of society. The family is equally the centre of human history. The importance of family is always relevant to any time and age. Thus any issue on family is a relevant subject of study. Such a study is useful when it re-emphasizes the spiritual, moral and temporal good of the family. Hence we can say that Pope Francis has prophetically felt the need to look into the life of the family today in the context of evangelization. Thus it was timely that Pope Francis has convened a Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2014. "Reflecting on the theme of 'the Pastoral Challenges of the Family in the Context of Evangelization,' the Oct. 5-19 third extraordinary synod of bishops was called by Pope Francis last fall in order to prepare the ordinary synod in 2015."³

Marriage is the foundation of a family. The Catholic marriage is a sacrament. Of course other religions, particularly the Hindu religion considers it so. Pratap Chandra Chunder states quoting Jayaswal: "The Dharma school, it should be remembered, regarded marriage as a sacrament."⁴ It is obvious that there are rich moral values found in other religious traditions. *Nostra Aetate*, 2 declares: "Let Christians, while witnessing to their own faith and way of life acknowledge,

¹John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *The Role Of The Christian Family In The Modern World – Familiaris Consortio*, Boston: St Paul Editions, 1981, 31.

²*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Dublin: Veritas, 1994, 476.

³Vatican releases the Outline for October Synod on Family, available from: <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/vatican-releases-outline-for-october-synod-on-the-family-91356/>, (accessed on 05.08.2014).

⁴Jayaswal K. P., *Manu and Yajnavalkya*, Calcutta, 1930, 221, cited by Pratap Chandra Chunder, *Kautilya on Love and Morals*, Delhi: Gian Publishing House, 1987, 41-42.

preserve and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found among non-Christians..."⁵ Such values can be an inspiration too for Christians while Christians themselves are called to give witness to Christ through living out their Christian values. Pope John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor* (94), observes: "In this witness to the absoluteness of moral good Christians *are not alone*: they are supported by the moral sense present in... the great religious and sapiential traditions of East and West..."⁶ Theologians are invited,⁷ on behalf of the believing community, to search for and find out those spiritual and moral values in other religious traditions and to bring them to the knowledge of their fellow Christians. In this line of thought, the *Instrumentum Laboris* of 3rd Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops notes that: "The *Instrumentum Laboris*... reflects on the role of the family today, the 'fundamental cell of society, where we learn to live with others despite our differences and to belong to one another.'⁸

Today in our Indian context, marriages take place not only between individuals of same faith but also between persons of other faith. The Catholic Church, particularly in India and elsewhere, was challenged to respond to a new social situation caused by educational, technological and economical growth of the society. The relationship between young members of the society has dramatically changed from yester years. Particularly, today the Information Technological industry brings together our youth, belonging to any faith and cast and culture across the world into a net-world. They have to work together in the same offices and share the work load and interact with each other on the slots given to them and slog for the sake of a fat salary which is very lucrative. Other than this, various other types of jobs also bring our youth together. In this scenario, our youngsters fall in love and religion and faith matters at that point, less. Thus there are often marriages which take place between parties of different faith. Their hearts are united while they differ by their faith.

⁵Vatican Council II, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions – *Nostra Aetate*, 28 Oct. 1965, *Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Eng. trans., ed., Austin Flannery, new rev. ed., Vol. 1, New York: Costello Publishing Company, 1998, 739.

⁶John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *The Splendor Of Truth – Veritatis Splendor*, Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2003, 116.

⁷ See, John Paul II, *The Role Of The Christian Family In The Modern World*, 50.

⁸ *Instrumentum Laboris for the Synod on Families*: available from: <http://brandonvogt.com/download-instrumentum-laboris-synod-family-free-kindle-nook/>, (accessed on 05.09.2014).

The working document for the upcoming Synod of Bishops on family, *Instrumentum Laboris* (78) rightly notes:

In some geographical areas, like Asia and North Africa, given the low percentage of Catholics, a great number of couples in families is made up of one who is Catholic and the other who comes from another religion. Some responses, while recognizing that these couples bring great richness to the Church, highlight the inherent difficulties of these unions in the Christian upbringing of children, particularly where civil law has an influence in determining the religious affiliation of the couple's children. Sometimes, different religions in the family are seen as an opportunity or a challenge for growth in the Christian faith.⁹

In what has been mentioned above in the working document, *Instrumentum Laboris*, it is my sole interest to bring to the forum through this article, the issues on families formed out of marriages between a Catholic party and non-baptized party which are known as mixed marriages. Hence I wish to share with you, why today the Catholic Church allows marriages between persons of Catholic faith and of other faith which was once not allowed? On what condition the Church blesses the marriage of such parties and what it is known as? What are the consequences the couples have to face before their marriage or after their marriage? What are the responsibilities of the Catholic partner towards the Church and towards his/her spouse who belongs to other faith? Ultimately to provide a possible pastoral care towards the families formed out of marriage between a Catholic party and non-baptized party.

Marriages of Disparity of Cult in the Catholic Church in South India

At the very beginning of this article I wish to establish the fact that the marriages under the disparity of cult are constantly growing in India. My survey on marriages of disparity of cult that has taken place in a few major Archdioceses in India, particularly in South India, give a clear indication that those marriages of disparity of cult are steadily growing. On the other side family pastoral care for these couples and families is not available in many archdioceses in South India. From the letters of the chancellors of the archdioceses of Pondicherry and Cuddalore, Chennai, Trivandrum (Latin archdiocese) and Bangalore, it may be seen that such marriages of disparity of cult are on the increase. The following are data of marriages of disparity of cult celebrated in the above dioceses.

⁹Synod of Bishop, III Extraordinary General Assembly, available from: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20140626_instrumentum-laboris-familia_en.html, (accessed on 05.09.2014).

The data for marriages celebrated according to disparity of cult in the archdiocese of Bangalore is as follows: -

2005 – 127; 2006 – 132; 2007 – 119; 2008 – 141 and 2009 – 156.¹⁰ Former Chancellor Rev. Fr. A. Michael writes that pastoral care after marriage for couples married with dispensation for disparity of cult is mandatory, but it is verified from the information received from the officials working at FWC and others that there is no such pastoral program after marriage for couples married under disparity of cult.

The data for marriages celebrated according to disparity of cult in the Archdiocese of Chennai is as follows: -

2005 – 53; 2006 – 54; 2007 – 73; 2008 – 80; 2009 – 73 and 2010 – 14 (till April 2010). Chancellor Rev. Fr. Charles Kumar mentions that there is no specific official pastoral program to foster the faith of these couples and families which are formed out of disparity of cult.¹¹

The data of marriages celebrated according to disparity of cult in the Archdiocese of Pondicherry and Cuddalore is as follows:-

2005 – 18; 2006 – 10; 2007 – 17; 2008 – 12; 2009 – 16 and 2010 – 3 (till February 2010). Chancellor Rev. Fr. Melchizedech does not state whether they have an organized family pastoral program. He says that it is left to the parish priest, who has assisted at these marriages, to take care of their faith and practice of religion.¹²

Other data of marriages of disparity of cult celebrated in the archdiocese of Kerala-Trivandrum is attached at the end of this article.¹³ The official letter from FWC of the Archdiocese of Bangalore would provide information about the number of participants in marriage preparation courses intending to marry under dispensation for disparity of cult.¹⁴ However, the former Chancellor of the Archdiocese of Bangalore has provided the exact number of marriages that have taken place in the Archdiocese during the period Jan. 2005 - Dec. 2009. Given this information, there is an urgent need to formulate a family pastoral program for these couples married with dispensation for disparity of cult to foster their faith and mutual relationship. John Paul II (FC4) notes: “Since God’s plan for marriage and the family touches men and woman in the concreteness of their

¹⁰ See, Appendix ‘A’.

¹¹ See: Appendix ‘B’.

¹² See: Appendix ‘C’.

¹³ See: Appendix ‘D’.

¹⁴ See: Appendix ‘E’.

daily existence... the Church ought to apply herself to understanding the situations within which marriage and the family are lived today, in order to fulfill her task of serving."¹⁵

The Canon Law urges the Bishops who are the Pastors of the souls to provide proper pastoral care to married couples (cf. CIC cc. 1063 # 4, 1064 & 1128). It is my sincere desire that this article may provide a reason for CCBI Family Commission and the Diocesan Family Commission to develop family pastoral care towards the families formed out of disparity of cult and help the spouses understand the goodness in each other and the moral values found in their respective religious traditions. It is the duty and responsibility of the Church to foster the well-being of the families through pastoral service to the Christian families.

Thus the families founded by the spouses of the Catholic party and the person of other faith, may learn essential family moral values present in each of their religious traditions and appreciate each other's values and put them into practice in their family life. Second Vatican Council reminds us that: In Indian context, often marriages take place between Catholics and Hindus. May Christians and Hindus help each other to defend family moral values in an emerging technological and globalized world where religious and ethical values are often overlooked, where individuals are "...reduced to the level of a mere producing machines."¹⁶ Unless the family moral values are protected and defended, it will be impossible to establish a healthy human society. Having established the fact of growing number of marriages of disparity of cult in the Catholic Church, let us examine those elements such as the reason why the Church blesses these types of marriages and other issues which I have mentioned in the introduction.

The Church has Opened her Doors for Mixed Marriages

Let me clarify what it means by *mixed marriage*. This could mean the marriage that takes place between Catholic parties with a Christian party. It could even mean marriage between Catholic parties with non-baptized party. When the marriage is between Catholic parties with non-baptized party, then it is called as "marriage of disparity of cult" (cf. CIC c. 1086 # 1). One may ask how

¹⁵ John Paul II, *The Role Of The Christian Family In The Modern World*, 14.

¹⁶G. Njarakunnel, "A Human-oriented Value System," *Jeevadhara* 23/138 (1993) 459.

come the Catholic Church which once prohibited any Catholic to marry a person who is not baptized, now she does allow that. In order to understand this issue we need to know what is the primary task and responsibility of the Catholic Church in the world. Her primary responsibility is to evangelize the world and re-evangelize the evangelized. The Mother Church considers that it is her duty and responsibility to save the souls for Christ. She has to remain faithful to the Divine Master who commissioned her to proclaim the Gospel and thus she has to remain equally faithful to the Scripture and the holy traditions of the Catholic Church. Church as *Mater et Magistra* has the authority to educate her children in family moral values.¹⁷ John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor* (95) notes: "But the Church's motherhood can never in fact be separated from her teaching mission..."¹⁸

The Catholic Church being *Mother and Teacher*, in her motherhood, in response to the signs of the times, in her motherly understanding, particularly towards those children, who in their youthfulness, have happened to be engaged in love with each other, though they are consciously aware that they both differ in faith. This has caused in earlier times a great deal of stress, animosity, misunderstanding, hurt feelings, loss of family relationship and at times faith in Christ, if not, in the Mother Church. Thus the Church, after deep reflection and inspired by the same Spirit which guides her always, opened the doors of her heart and of the very church towards such children in order to protect their faith; now their marriage is blessed in the Church, of course with certain terms and conditions, which conditions will be mentioned later, and whose marriage is equally governed by the divine and ecclesial law.

However, the Church which is *Magistra* remains firm in teaching the Christian doctrines, without any compromise in it, and in her Christian values and principles. John Paul II, in *Veritatis Splendor* (95), states: "...the Church's motherhood can never in fact be separated from her teaching mission, which she must always carry out as faithful Bride of Christ, who is the Truth in person."¹⁹ Thus the Church which once refused to administer any sacrament to Catholics who had married a person of other faith now has reconsidered its stand and blesses their marriage by granting the dispensation, with

¹⁷ John Paul II, *The Role Of The Christian Family In The Modern World*, 49-51.

¹⁸ John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 117.

¹⁹ John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 117.

certain specific conditions the Catholic party has to observe and fulfil, for the benefit of the Catholic party and of their progeny. Again this is for the same reason as above mentioned, for the salvation of souls. In good faith, the Church believes that the Catholic party may become an instrument in bringing Christ to his/her partner through an exemplary life so that the other person may embrace Christ and His Church in freedom of spirit. John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor* (95) teaches:

In fact, genuine understanding and compassion must mean love for the person, for his true good, for his authentic freedom. And this does not result, certainly, from concealing or weakening moral truth, but proposing it in its most profound meaning as an outpouring of God's eternal Wisdom, which we have received in Christ, and as a service to man...²⁰

Conditions for Blessing the Marriage between the Baptized and non-Baptized Persons

After the Second Vatican Council, there is a change in the teachings of the Catholic Church which now allows marriage between Catholics and other Christians as well as with non-baptized. However, a continuity of the past understanding is stressed by *Matrimonii Sacramentum*, when it notes: "It does its best to ensure that Catholics marry Catholics."²¹ At the same time, it speaks of "mixed marriages" in the Church. Today the Church permits 'mixed marriages' and marriages under '*disparity of cult*'.²² Such marriages may be celebrated provided the faith of the Catholic party and the up-bringing of their children in the Catholic faith are safeguarded. Before marriage, the non-baptized party has to be made aware of all those promises made by the Catholic party.²³

Some Issues before and after the Mixed Marriage

There are many issues the couples have to face in order to enter in wedlock by those who belong to two different faiths. Primary obstacle for the marriage between Catholic party and the non-baptized party could be their own parents and relatives. I have come

²⁰John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, 117.

²¹Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, "Instruction On Mixed Marriages – *Matrimonii Sacramentum*," (18 March 1966), *Vatican Council II, The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Eng. trans., ed., Austin Flanery, 474. (Henceforth this document will be mentioned in the footnote as "Instruction on Mixed Marriages").

²²Can., 1086#1; 1129.

²³"Instruction on Mixed Marriages," 475-78.

across so many cases of this nature. Especially in our Indian context, people believe that if one of their children is married to a person of other faith, for the other children to get married within the fold of their faith would become hard for other families may deny giving their children in marriage to such a family. Caste is another evil of the Indian society, which plays a vital role even today, particularly in marriage. Though this scenario is changing, that it is yet alive is a sad reality of our life. The following quotation about inter caste marriages among Hindus shows that it is something very recent and that such marriages would have been impossible in ancient India.

For years, Indians had an orthodox mindset. They couldn't imagine inter caste marriages. They had a conception that marriages are only possible in the same community and caste. Talking about inter caste and inter religion marriages in India was a taboo for most people in the earlier days. However, with time, things changed and inter caste marriage also became a part of the society... Today, in Indian society, though we can see inter caste marriages, but mostly it is the part of the city culture.²⁴

Modern Hindu thinkers like S. Radhakrishnan were opposed to all kinds of caste and class discrimination. He suggested that, "A moral revolution to match the technological revolution has to be effected. We must develop a heart and a conscience, a feeling that we are all members of a brotherhood that knows no race and class."²⁵ But the truth is that: "Though the Indian constitution has abolished untouchability, it is still an unpleasant reality in the lives and minds of many Hindus even today."²⁶

If this is the case of inter-caste marriage, what could be the case of marriage between persons of different faiths? What Sri Radhakrishnan said above seems prophetic since, today in the urban world, in India, it is this technological revolution, as I have mentioned earlier, that has made the marriage possible between persons of different faith. The Church has understood to read the signs of the time and respond to it in a positive manner. However, let no one think that the disparity of cult marriages is permitted in general in the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church still invites the

²⁴"Inter Caste & Inter Religion Marriages" available from: <http://weddings.iloveindia.com/features/inter-caste-marriages.html> (accessed on 28. 10. 2010).

²⁵Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *The Spirit Of Religion*, New Delhi: Hind Pocket Books, 2009, 109.

²⁶Klaus K. Klostermaier, *A Survey of Hinduism*, New York: Albany State University of New York Press, 1989, 326.

Catholics to remain faithful to the Catholic tradition and choose partners among the believers.

Returning to issues, the parents of both of the parties or one of the parties whereby one is a Catholic and other is of another faith, may object to their children's marriage. In my experience, I have come across the parental objections, even among the Catholics on the basis of caste, leave alone of the religion. You may now imagine how much these young souls have to struggle to fulfil their dreams, yet they have to pacify their parents, accept the terms and conditions of the Church which does not easily grant permission to get married since one is a baptized person while another is a non-baptized person. Further the Church invites the Catholic party to promise and assure the Church that the Catholic party ensures the Church that the faith of the Catholic party and the upbringing of their children in the Catholic faith is safeguarded. Before marriage, the non-baptized party has to be made aware of all those promises made by the Catholic party.

Here is another issue altogether new. That is, what if the non-baptized party would not agree to the promise made by the Catholic party as acceptable? What if, the non-baptized party would not agree that their children can be baptized? May be just for the sake of getting married, one may agree at that time when informed, but if he/she changes mind at a later time, probably because of the parents or relatives force? What assurance the Catholic party has that his/her spouse will allow him/her to practice his/her faith? Particularly in our Indian context, if the Catholic party happened to be woman, then very less are the chances their children could be brought up in the Catholic faith. There are very many cases notified, particularly in the case of marriage between a Catholic woman and a Muslim man. But there are also cases I have come across, the Hindu man fulfilling the promise of the Catholic partner and encouraging their children not only giving them baptism but also to live actively their faith.

Another serious issue is when the child is growing and begins to understand one's faith and reasons over it, then finds that its father and mother worships a different God and observes different religious traditions, what sort of religious dilemma the child would go through? What if the child who has cultivated deep relationship and love for the parent who is non-baptized person, now desires to follow that parent's faith? In the process of its discernment, if serious religious questions the child would ask, is the Catholic parent

prepared to answer knowledgeably? If he/she fails to answer, what can happen? Can the Catholic parent say, "this is our faith, this is how we live and this should not be discussed or questioned for our faith and our God is the only true God and we do not worship any other God and hence do not question?" Finally one last issue I wish to reflect with you, that is, what if the non-baptized party happens to die, where he/she will be buried? In the Christian cemetery or in the cemetery of the religion one belongs to? Will they allow him or her to be buried in their cemetery? The Church which blesses these couples of disparity of cult, does she allow the non-baptized party to be buried in the Christian cemetery? To answer to this question, I would say that there is no common rule in the Catholic Church and this is a matter left to be the decision of the Local Authority who may decide according to pastoral situation of the Local Church. Another possibility is that it could be thought about well ahead of time together as spouses, where one wishes to be buried and write a will.

To marry is a responsible and thoughtful decision and a free choice, which should be based on proper reason and not merely on likes and dislikes. Especially those who fall in love out of infatuation, sooner or later they have to face the realities of life. Hence, one has to be aware of mere infatuation to that of real love which is based on free, yet well discerned and responsibly chosen to love. To love is a decision and it carries with it serious responsibility and accountability. A person has to be matured enough to make such decision.

Pastoral Care for Families

During the 25th Plenary Assembly of CCBI conducted at Vailankanni in the year 2012 February, in which I too participated in the quality as National Executive Secretary for CCBI Family Commission, discussing about the Family Pastoral Program, the bishops brought out six priorities to be part of Family Apostolate. Among the Six Priorities for the Family Apostolate, the third priority states: "Remote; immediate and post matrimonial courses are to be conducted at different points of life stage. Immediate marriage preparation courses are to be taken seriously and the couples should undergo an adequate preparation before the celebration of Holy Matrimony."

In the light of the above statement of the bishops, I wish to propose some suggestion as part of *post matrimonial pastoral care*, particularly towards *families formed out of marriage of disparity of cult*. The Church

which asks the Catholic party to remain faithful and live the faith actively and bring up the children in Catholic faith, does it make sure that the Catholic party is keeping the promise? Does the Church provide any program towards helping these couples to build their bonds and live with mutual respect and love? Does the Church provide any program to facilitate the couples to see the goodness and human values present in life and religion of both the Christian and non-baptized parties? To the best of my knowledge there is no post matrimonial program (PMP) in 99.5% of our Catholic dioceses of Latin Rite. If there is no pastoral program towards those Catholics who have married Catholic, then how to expect a post matrimonial program for those married of disparity of cult? Hope this would help to understand the growing need to promote PMP in all the dioceses.

The Code of Canon Law states: "Local Ordinaries and other pastors of souls are to see to it that the catholic spouse and the children born of a mixed marriage are not without the spiritual help needed to fulfill their obligations; they are also to assist the spouses to foster the unity of conjugal and family life."²⁷

It is clear from the above mentioned Code of Canon Law that it emphasizes the pastoral care to be given to spouses and children born of a mixed marriage, which includes the pastoral care towards spouses and children born of a marriage of disparity of cult. Having affirmed the need for PMP, particularly towards the couples who are married of disparity of cult, I wish to give a few suggestions that can be considered for preparing an effective PMP particularly for spouses of disparity of cult. This requires, as Canon Law 1128 suggests, the support and collaboration of the bishops, pastors (Parish Priests), animators, matured couples who live actively their faith and family experts, along with those who have deep scientific knowledge of other religions and persons who are involved in interreligious dialogue and who are social scientist. Thus the above mentioned Canon Law states:

Practical suggestions towards formulating Post Matrimonial Program:

1. Identifying number of families formed out of disparity of cult in each parish.

²⁷Code of Canon Law, Available from: <http://www.catholicdoors.com/misc/marriage/canonlaw.htm>, (accessed on: 27. 06. 2014).

2. Parish Priest, after identifying those couples, may invite them after a year of their marriage, as a cordial meeting to find out the well-being of the spouses.

3. Prepare a short program for about 2 or 3 hours, at deanery level, as a preliminary encounter between spouses married under the disparity of cult.

4. Based on the previous program, noting down the experience shared by the spouses, prepare a proper program which would further the preliminary encounter by enhancing it through different discussions, suggestion and other methods of finding the family life situations and issues that may arise between the spouses on a day to day basis. This program may be a daylong at deanery or diocese level.

5. Building on the experience of the day long programme, after proper discussions, brain storming among the organizers, particularly between those the key persons mentioned above, could draw up a Post Matrimonial Programme for spouses of mixed marriage.

6. Such programmes are to be conducted at least once in six months if not more at diocesan level by the diocese family commission.

For the success of this PMP, the collaboration and encouragement of the Parish Priest is inevitable along with the good will of the experts in family apostolate, particularly married laity.

Conclusion

I am sure, I have not exhausted in suggesting how a Post Matrimonial Program could be practically worked out which will build the family relationship of the spouses and strengthen their love and mutual respect. I hope and pray that the upcoming Synod on Family may throw greater light on this issue of "Disparity of Cult" and urge the Bishops to promote Post Matrimonial Programs for married couples and particularly towards the families formed out of "Disparity of Cult". Thus the faith of the Catholic party and of their children can be fostered and protected.

This is my prayer to our Venerable Bishops to promote PMP in their respective dioceses which should also help the spouses to know that the moral and religious values present in the religion of the spouse of another faith, are similar to that of the Catholic partner, and thus to appreciate each other and re-strengthen their bond. This I say because during trials and misunderstandings, it is often heard that

one spouse accuses the religion of the other wrongly and out of contempt for the religion of the partner. I wish to stress again that, it is the need of the time to provide well prepared pastoral program, as part of the Family Apostolate, to support and foster the spouses and their families which are formed out of disparity of cult. Having truly understood the goodness in the spouses and in his/her religion, they may grow with deep respect and love towards each other and they may say: "We are one in Heart Though We Differ in Faith."

Let me conclude by quoting the last few lines of the prayer of Pope Francis to the Holy Family:

Holy Family of Nazareth,
may the approaching Synod of Bishops
make us once more mindful
of the sacredness and inviolability of the family,
and its beauty in God's plan.
Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
graciously hear our prayer!
Amen.

ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ಮಹಾಧರ್ಮಕ್ಷೇತ್ರ
ARCHDIOCESE OF BANGALORE

ಮಹಾಧರ್ಮಾಧ್ಯಕ್ಷರ ನಿಲಯ
ಅಂಚೆ ಚೀಲ 2, 75, ಮಿಲ್ಲರ್ಸ್ ರಸ್ತೆ
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06.05.2010

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Precious Blood Missionaries

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Dear Rev Father Michael Peters,

PEACE OF THE RISEN LORD.

Number of marriages taken place in our Archdiocese between a Catholic party and Hindu party

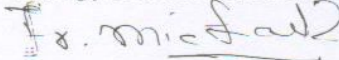
1. 2005 - 2006	127
2. 2006 - 2007	132
3. 2007- 2008	119
4. 2008 - 2009	141
5. 2009 - 2010	156

Total	675
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2. After the marriage between these couples Pastoral Care "After Marriage" is mandatory in the Archdiocese Cf., Pastoral Handbook, Archdiocese of Bangalore, Published on Feb 19, 2009, and pp.226 – 228.

3. Yes there is a Family Pastoral Program, at FAMILY WELFARE CENTER, Bangalore. The program is both pre marital and post marital.

Wishing you all the best, Fraternally yours in the Risen Lord



Very Rev Fr Michael Antony



CHANCELLOR
ARCHDIOCESE OF BANGALORE



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REV DR N A CHARLES KUMAR DCL
CHANCELLOR
ARCHDIOCESE OF MADRAS-MYLAPORE

30th April 2010

Rev Fr Maria Michael Peter C PP S
Precious Blood Missionaries
154, St Gasper Bhavan
12th Cross, Bharathi Layout
P B No.2905
Dharmaram College PO
Bangalore – 560 029

Dear Fr Michael

Greetings from the Archbishop's House!

Here below we give you the details that you had asked for with regard to the disparity of cult marriages conducted with due dispensation. We, as of now, do not have any follow-up programmes organized by the Archdiocese. There is no family pastoral program either to initiate a dialogue between the couples.

Year	Disparity of Cult Marriages
2005	53
2006	54
2007	73
2008	80
2009	73
2010	14
Total	337

I wish you all success in your study and research.

Yours sincerely

Rev Dr N A Charles Kumar DCL
The Chancellor



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Archdiocese of Pondicherry & Cuddalore
Marriages between a Catholic Party and Hindu Party through Dispensation
between the Years 2005 - 2010

To
Rev. Fr. Michael Peters,
Precious Blood Missionaries
St. Gasper Bhavan
Dharmaram College, PO,
Bangalore - 560 029.

Dear Fr. Michael Peters, greetings in the Lord!

As you have requested for the data of marriages of disparity of cult, here are the information of it from the year 2005 to 2010

2005	18
2006	10
2007	17
2008	12
2009	16
2010	3 (Jan. to Feb. 2010).

Note:

1. **Follow up programs:** Every Parish Priest, who was responsible for blessing such Marriages, follows them up and encourages them to live a life of faith and to practice their religion.
2. **Family Pastoral Program:** This is arranged by the Pastor of Sacred Heart Church, Pondicherry. The would-be couple will have to attend this program for 2 weeks. At the end a certificate is given to them. It is really effective.



A. Melchizedech

Rev. Fr. A. Melchizedech
CHANCELLOR
ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE,
P. B. No. 193, Cathedral Street,
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LATIN ARCHDIOCESE OF TRIVANDRUM

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To

17.08.2010

Fr. Michael Peters, C.PP.S
NBCLC
Hutchins Road, II Cross,
Post Box no. 8426.
Bangalore – 560084

Dear Rev Father Michael Peter,

As you have requested I am giving the following report,

Statistics of number of marriages taken place in the Archdiocese of Trivandrum between a Hindu party and a Catholic party, under the 'Disparity of Cult' with dispensation between the years 2006 to 2010. For the year no record is available.

In the year 2006 we had 4 disparity of cult marriages and 40 mixed marriages with catholics and non catholics and 1727 Catholic marriages between catholics
In the year 2007 we had 5 disparity of cult marriages and 59 mixed marriages with catholics and non catholics and 1904 Catholic marriages between catholics
In the year 2008 we had 9 disparity of cult marriages and 66 mixed marriages with catholics and non catholics and 1871 Catholic marriages between catholics
In the year 2009 we had 9 disparity of cult marriages and 59 mixed marriages with catholics and non catholics and 2011 Catholic marriages between catholics
In the year 2010 we had 9 disparity of cult marriages and 15 mixed marriages with catholics and non catholics

2. Are there any follow-up family pastoral program towards the couples married under the disparity of cult to foster the faith of the Catholic partner and to find out that these Catholic partners are allowed to practice their faith by the Non Baptized party?

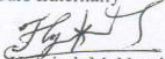
There is no follow up family pastoral programmes towards these couples under the disparity of cult to foster the faith of the Catholic partner. Normally it is seen that if the couples live with catholic family surroundings the faith is preserved. If not the faith suffers. Also it is noted that as for us the love is strong between the couples and the catholic faith is strong then the faith is preserved and practiced.

3. Are there any family pastoral program to initiate dialogue between these couples and their family to integrate their family life and to help to know the faith of each other and to promote openness and possibility of sharing the faith of the Catholic partner with his/her Hindu partner?

No such programmes.

Wish you all success for your study I remain

Yours fraternally


Fr. Hyacinth M. Nayakam
Chancellor

CHANCELLOR
LATIN ARCHDIOCESE OF TRIVANDRUM
ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE, VELLAYAMBALAM
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Family : A School of Deeper
Humanity

Archdiocese of Bangalore

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Family Welfare Centre

21, Museum Road, Bangalore - 560 025. Phone : 25587674
e-mail : fwcblr@vsnl.net

The following statement is given to Rev. Fr. Maria Michael Peters, C.P.P.S for the purpose of his studies. This list consists of the couples who participated in the Marriage Preparation Course at the Family Welfare Centre, Archdiocese of Bangalore. This following list is of inter-faith marriage between Catholics and Hindus from the year 2006 – 2009.

<u>Year</u>	<u>No of participants</u>
2006	8
2007	82
2008	64
2009	88

Yours in Christ!

Pramila Dorairaju.

Mrs. Pramila Dorairaju

FAMILY WELFARE CENTRE
21, Museum Road
Banglore – 560 025, Ph.: 25587671