

## ASIAN

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**BOOK REVIEW**

**Naiju Jose Kalambukattu**, *Apostolic Roots of Syro-Malabar Liturgy: The first Apostolic Proclamations and the Thomistic Christ-Experience in the Syro-Malabar Liturgy*, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2011. Pages: xiv+168. ISBN 978-81-89958-43-5.

*Apostolic Roots of Syro Malabar Liturgy: The First Apostolic Proclamations and the Thomistic Christ-Experience in the Syro Malabar Liturgy* is the latest scholarly work in the expanding area of Liturgical Studies in East Syriac (Syro Malabar) Tradition. Naiju Jose Kalambukattu (NJK), a budding liturgist, has clarity and conviction in stating that liturgy is the sublime expression of the life of the Church. It is upon this foundation that he bases his analysis on the Biblical and Patristic roots of one of the oldest and authentic Liturgical traditions in the universal Church. Though the book is academic in outlook, as it is the author's Licentiate dissertation, it is understandable even for an ordinary faithful. What originated as an academic requirement, has become an invaluable asset to the Syro Malabar Church and guides anyone into a journey to discover a truer meaning to the Syro Malabar Liturgy (SML).

The book begins with a General Introduction that makes the work of any reviewer easy, if not envious. NJK gives a blueprint of what is in the subsequent pages in an open and transparent manner. Apart from the background of the book, relevance of the theme, sources and method are presented. What makes the book more attractive and the author well accepted is his admittance of his limitations, as he himself admits in the General introduction. The main constraint is that there do not exist vast printed volumes of research works in English or Malayalam about SML. Most of the great liturgists of the Church in the modern era are alive and NJK has either met them in person or has used their works extensively.

The book is divided organically and progressively into two sections, namely, the First Apostolic Proclamations (FAP) and Apostolic Christ-Experience. The FAP of Peter and Paul especially from the Acts is analyzed in the first chapter. Apologia and Kerygma Sections of the FAP are explained clinically. In the second chapter, the sublime beauty of the SML is brought out poetically through the comparison of the FAP.

Section two also has two chapters which are about the Christ-Experience of the Apostles including Thomas and the Thomistic Christ-Experience enveloping the SML. Johannine presentation of the uniqueness and importance of Thomas and its influence in the SML are the best aspects of this book. Though limited to just 22 pages, the final chapter on the Thomistic

Christ-Experience in the SML is classic. This last chapter is more than enough for any Syro Malabar faithful to love SML and keep it close to one's heart. There is ample scope in doing research and writing volumes and volumes on it.

While the Table of Contents helps the reader to identify the topics presented in the book, an index at the end could have helped a researcher better. A vast majority of the footnotes are just citations and hence could be clubbed with the systematic bibliography given at the end.

The author never gives an impression that he is a novice in the field. Though he admits his limitations such as not doing the studies in the original classical languages, he has extensively used the Syriac words and concepts which will reinforce in the reader the richness of the Syro Malabar Tradition.

I strongly recommend this book to anyone who is either taking off studies in Liturgy or is already on one, to see the beauty of the East Syriac Liturgy in the Syro Malabar Tradition.

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