

New Scholars

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Charles Irudayam, *Towards an Ethical Framework for Eradicating Poverty: A Critical Reflection on Amartya Sen's Capability Theory in the Light of Catholic Social Teaching, Faculty of Theology, KU Leuven.*

“Indeed, the test of orderliness in a country is not the number of millionaires it owns, but the absence of starvation among its masses” (Mahatma Gandhi).

Universal Declaration on Human Rights 1948, article 25(1) says, “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself or herself and of his or her family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social service.” But in reality, according to UNDP annual report 2006, more than 800 million people suffer from hunger and malnutrition, 1.1 billion people do not have access to clean drinking water and, every hour, 1,200 children die from preventable diseases mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asia. This phenomenon of poverty is a paradoxical one, because the universe harbours enough resources for all to have a life worthy of human being and technology has made tremendous break-through in almost all aspects of life and its findings should guarantee a dignified living to all. Yet, in spite of all this, poverty remains a very substantial feature of human existence because the poor do not have access to natural resources and the economic growth or technological innovation has not benefited the bottom two-thirds of the world population.

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Despite the fundamental principle that the human person is the 'source, subject, and goal' of all economic and social life (GS, 63), a vast multitude of people is suffering under the intolerable burden of poverty (SRS, 13). Great many people lack the absolute necessities of life, while some live in luxury or squander wealth. While a few enjoy very great power of choice, the majority are deprived of acting on their own and often subsist in living conditions unworthy of a human person. Conscious of this problem the Second Vatican Council has urged all to work for the relief of the poor (GS, 69) and counts the dichotomy between faith and life as one of the serious errors of our time (GS, 43). Against this background this research is a critical reflection on the writings of Amartya Sen and Catholic social teaching made in view of arriving at an ethical framework for poverty reduction.

The hermeneutical privilege of the poor has a therapeutic role, which means, it creates conditions for Christian theologians and ethicists to examine and discover an ethical framework for poverty reduction and hence to keep theology and ethics according to the 'signs of the time.' Our study has elucidated the understanding of the concept of poverty in the light of Amartya Sen and Catholic Social Teaching. It has four chapters. The first chapter tries to show that poverty is an ambiguous notion that is relative, gradual, multidimensional, and thus difficult to define. It is a process with many dimensions and complexities. For Sen, "Poverty is ultimately a matter of capability deprivation." We could say that poverty is a condition in which a person is unable to meet the basic needs of human existence. Our investigation shows that deprivation of opportunity is seen as one of the main causes of poverty. The word "social" in the expression "social opportunity," is mainly a reminder not to view individuals and their opportunities in isolated terms. The options available to a person depend greatly on relations with others and on what the state and other institutions do. Sen states, "Individuals live and operate in a world of institutions. Our opportunities and prospects depend crucially on what institutions exist and how they function." (Sen, *Development as Freedom*, 142) Henceforth we have particularly focused on those opportunities that are strongly influenced by social circumstances and public policy. For Sen, being poor does not necessarily mean living on an imaginary poverty line but having an income level, which does not allow an individual to cover certain basic necessities.

The second chapter focuses on Sen. The first part examines Sen's early life, his education, and his status as a Nobel Laureate of 1998 in the economic world. The second part concentrates on his research and contributions in the field of economics focusing on

economic development of the marginalized poor people in the world and shows how his approach became as an innovative step to improve the classical theories of poverty. This research has focused on the ethical implications of his capability theory. It emphasizes that for Sen, "Poverty is ultimately a matter of capability deprivation" (Sen, *Commodities and Capabilities*, 3). His idea of different forms of rights, particularly his concept of "meta right" is highlighted in detail. We discuss the importance of democracy and analyse the various functions and values of democracy, mainly democracy as a universal value. We argue for the importance of democracy as a necessary precondition to bring about economic development through empowering the powerless and creating an opportunity for all to lead a decent way of living.

The third chapter investigates the understanding and presentation of the concept of poverty in CST starting from *Rerum Novarum* of Pope Leo XIII. The first section explores the sources, the development, and the principles of CST. The attention is paid especially to the biblical sources. We critically examine the development of CST in the history of the Church and the contributions made by the *Pontifical council for justice and peace* and the *Pontifical academy of social sciences* towards strengthening these principles that help the Church to understand and act in favour of the marginalised. We show how the principles of CST remain stepping-stones to move further to create an ethical framework towards poverty reduction. The second section made a critical scrutiny of the documents of the Church dealing with poverty reduction. In addition we have an assessment of FABC and USCCB and their contributions towards alleviating the sufferings of the underprivileged in the society. We underlined how Asian Church, as the Church of the poor, could contribute towards dialogue of life which it recognises as a root metaphor for social transformation. We have briefly highlighted the recent studies made on CST focusing on poverty reduction by theologians coming from Europe, Latin America, and Asia. We took for our further examination an Asian theologian, Aloysius Pieris and his contributions towards liberation theology and thus to liberate the poor from the clutches of the oppressors. We have also focused our attention on the different strategies proposed by CST and shown how they are vital for the economic development of the poor.

The final and fourth chapter is directed towards an ethical framework for poverty reduction and has highlighted in its first part the convergences and divergences between Sen and CST and analysed how far they are inadequate in their approaches and how each one can serve as corrective to the other. We have made

some concrete suggestions for the improvement of the official Catholic approach to poverty. We have criticised Sen for his too much concentration on the individual freedom and CST for its abstract and vague concept of the common good. We hold that both aim to arrive at the point of helping the poor but they start from a different point, for Sen, individual freedom and for CST, the common good. They both do not value the starting point of the other as important as their own starting point. In the second part we emphasise the shared responsibility of all, because we have either positive or negative duty to help the poor. We attempt to highlight the insufficiency of 'duty of assistance', which is always at the forefront of any Catholic social teaching. We insisted on the role of state governments and the international organisations and institutions towards poverty reduction. We outline our moral obligations to the needy and the need to respond globally as moral agents. We propose an institutional ethical framework for poverty reduction, because an institutional conception postulates the fundamental principles of social justice, which apply to institutional schemes and thus become standards for assessing the ground rules and practices that regulate human interactions.

Geo Pallikunnel, CMI, *Elevation to the Divine State through Holy Qurbana*, Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, 2009.

Introduction

Integration into Christ (christification) and elevation to the divine state is the end of human being and the creation. The whole economy of salvation (*mdabbrānutā*) is moving towards this end in Christ through the Holy Spirit. Concretely, this happens in the Church, through its liturgy, especially in the Eucharistic Liturgy. In this doctoral dissertation we discuss the concept, subject, premises, and process of elevation to the divine state in the Eucharistic Liturgy (Holy Qurbana) of the East Syrian tradition, focusing on the Divine Liturgy of the Syro Malabar Church.

1. The concept

The understanding of the concept of elevation to the divine state in the (early) Syriac theology, which served in the early centuries as the theological background of the developing Eucharistic Liturgy of the East Syrian tradition at that time, is essential to understand the concept and process of elevation to the Divine state in the Holy Qurbana. Longing for the Divine and seeking Him is natural to

human being. The religions of the world are the expressions of this deep longing in man to reach God. And even the natural creation itself is longing for the liberty of the children of God (cf. Rom 8:18-22). Though human being cannot know and reach the Divine completely on his own, God in his mercy revealed himself and willed to draw the human being and creation up in Christ. God created human being in his own image and likeness, and called him to participate in God's glory, but he tarnished this image of God in him through sin. He lost his garment of light and glory. God who is holy, life, light and glory, draws the fallen human nature (and the whole creation) in Christ through enlightenment, sanctification and vivification. Christ through his incarnation, life and teachings, death, resurrection and ascension accomplished this elevation in himself by the power of the Holy Spirit. The Church as Christ's body continues this process of elevation here and now, in and through the liturgy, especially in the Eucharistic Liturgy, the summit and celebration of Christian life.

2. The Subject and the Premises

The liturgical community, which symbolizes the human being, both personal and corporate, is the subject, and the liturgical space-time-orientation which symbolizes the cosmic order is the premises. Christ integrates this whole created reality in him and raises it to the divine realm. The Eucharistic Liturgy integrates the subject in different levels, personal, communitarian and cosmic, into Christ. The weak and sinful nature of the fallen human condition is strengthened in Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The integrated community in Christ in the liturgy is the symbol of the original paradise community and also the eschatological community. The church building symbolizes the spiritual cosmology, which is the premise of human elevation. The ordinary space-time-orientation moves towards a liturgical space-time-orientation in the Liturgy. Christ integrated space-time-orientation in him, so also the Church, the liturgical community, here and now integrates them and looks forward to the total integration of the realty in the *eschaton*.

The liturgical space in this tradition is the symbol of the heaven-earth integration. The main parts of the church building, *madbhā*, *qestromā*, and *hayklā* with its *bemā*, integrates heaven and earth symbolically and elevates the natural space into sacred space. The incarnational aspect of the divine, God among his creation, is also emphasized here. It is a space filled with divine presence, symbol of the Church, the body of Christ. The *bemā* at the centre of the *hayklā* is the symbol of the Word in the world, a place of divine-

human encounter. The liturgical orientation is the symbolic orientation of the humankind and the creation, towards Christ (who is “the *Orient*”). This is possible in and through the movement of the subject of elevation, the community which represents the humanity and the whole creation, from historical time to the liturgical time and sacred time, and from earth (*hayklā*) to heaven (*madbhā*). In the Eucharistic Liturgy the spatial-temporal notion is fused into eternity, as Christ united in him temporality and eternity. This movement in Christ also reflects the eschatological elevation and the offering of everything to the Father (cf. 1 Cor 15:24-28).

3. The Dynamics

From the concept, subject and premises we now come to the analysis of the celebration of the Holy Qurbana itself and the themes related to it in order to understand the dynamics of the process of elevation to the divine state. This analysis of the liturgical celebration makes us to understand the meaning and the deep symbolism of the celebration and the flow of the action of the Divine (Economy of Salvation) unfolded in it. The liturgical exposition has further opened up themes related to our main subject. The theological themes expose the dynamics of divine action in the Liturgical celebration.

The incarnation and manifestation of the Word is celebrated amidst the liturgical community in the first part of the Holy Qurbana, the Liturgy of the Word, with its introductory part, the *Enarxis*. The introductory part of the Liturgy of the Word, the *Enarxis*, serves as the preface for both the Liturgy of the Word and the whole Eucharistic liturgy in general. According to the liturgical commentators of this tradition here the community remembers and celebrates the OT background of the new dispensation up to the preaching of John the Baptist. The Liturgy of the Word with four readings, and the prayers, psalms, interpretative hymns, alleluia hymn, Gospel-procession with candles and incense, which concludes with the dismissal of the catechumens, celebrated at the *bemâ*, is the symbol of Word in the world. Analysis of this part leads us to a number of themes related to our main theme, like heaven-earth meeting, holiness and the call to holiness, descent of the Word among men, and the enlightenment and participation in the glory of God. The whole Liturgy of the Word is a celebration of the ‘Word made flesh and dwelt among us’. It is meeting Christ, the light and the glory of God, and become luminous in him.

The Anaphora (*Quddāšā* – Hallowing / Sanctification) is the central part of the Holy Qurbana, the offering (*qurbānā*) and sanctification, and its introductory part is its preparation, both spiritual and

material. The preparation of the gifts and its transference to the altar is the main part of the material preparation. The prostration ceremony, washing of hands, the Symbol of Faith, and the entrance to the *madbahâ* are all part of the spiritual preparation. The anaphora is both *qurbânâ* and *quddâšâ*, offering and sanctification. The four *g'hanta* cycles, culminating in the anamnesis and epiclesis, show the sacrificial, anamnetic, and sanctifying dimensions of the Holy Qurbana. The central event of the economy of salvation, the paschal mystery, the passion, death and resurrection of Christ, is remembered and celebrated in this part of the Holy Qurbana. The offering in Christ is the movement of human being to the Divine and the sanctification by the Holy Spirit the divine descent. It is the transforming act of God in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The last part of the Holy Qurbana, the Communion with its preparatory part, fraction-consignation and the liturgy of reconciliation, is the sacramental summit of the process of elevation to the Divine. The fraction and consignation is the material preparation for the Communion, and the Rite of Reconciliation the spiritual preparation. Calling God "our Father" and remembering the "holiness" of God and the unworthiness of human being the community receive the 'holy, life-giving and divine mystery', the communion in Christ and the Holy Spirit. The elevation of human being through the resurrection in Christ and the eschatological life are remembered and celebrated here in this part of the Holy Qurbana. The medicinal and life-giving aspect of the Eucharist is the predominant theme here. The body and blood of Christ is the bread of immortality and the medicine of life, both aspects emphasize the 'living and life-giving mystery'. It is the eschatological bread, which points towards the life in *parousia* and the eschatological wedding-feast, where the believer enters the eternal bridal chamber of Christ. This drawing up or elevation of the person to the Divine state in Christ completes only in the eschatological kingdom.

Conclusion

In short the Divine plan for humankind and this created universe is integration into Christ and the elevation to the Divine State. God, who is light, holiness, and life, illuminates, sanctifies and gives life to human being and the whole creation in Christ. This saving plan of God is the inner current of the Eucharistic Liturgy of the East Syrian tradition. The whole Eucharistic Liturgy is illumining, sanctifying and vivifying. Specifically, the Liturgy of the Word illumines, the anaphora sanctifies, and the Body and Blood of Christ gives life.